Article

A Kingdom For A Stage :
The Making of History in Richard III and Henry V

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Abstract

Although Shakespeare's history plays are named after English kings, the plays are concerned primarily with history itself. History may appear to be a blind, irrational monster, but a unified vision of history lies behind the sporadic events that are the material of these history plays. Richard III is a play about the instability of England under the reign of a malignant king, whereas Henry V is a play about the strength and unity of England under the reign of a benign king. These two seemingly antithetical works—both conclusions of the two tetralogies (the first beginning with the three parts of Henry VI and the second consisting of Richard II and Henry IV, parts I and II)—share the same vision of history: history is controlled by man, chance, God, and by history (historical precedent) itself. In this paper, I look at Richard III and Henry V, highlighting examples from these two great plays, examples of Shakespeare's vision of history.

Perhaps Shakespeare's history plays are less well-known than many of his comedies, tragedies, and romances, but Richard III and Henry V are staples of the English and American repertory theatre (and have inspired films—most recently Kenneth Branagh's Henry V [1989] and Al Pacino's Looking For Richard[1996]). These two plays conclude Shakespeare's two historic tetralogies (Henry VI, parts I, II, and III and Richard II and Henry IV, parts I and II, respectively), which chronicle events between the houses of York and Lancaster, culminating in the War of the Roses. Richard III and Henry V could not be more different in terms of their portrayal of the two protagonists—two very different kings. Richard III is a bloody tyrant who stops at nothing to achieve power, as he brings England to its ruin, while Henry V is a war hero who unites England in patriotic glory. But Shakespeare maintains a vision of history that is the same in these two plays: history is controlled by man, chance, God and by history (historical precedednt) itself.

I

Although Richard III is fated to lose his kingdom and his horse in every faithful production of Shakespeare's play, he appears to be in control of events. We can see this in the oft-quoted opening lines: "Now is the winter of our discontent/Made glorious summer by this son of York...." [1] Comparing himself to the sun, Richard suggests that he has the power to reverse the seasons. Perhaps Richard's poetic metaphor leans to the side of hyperbole, but this malcontented Machiavellian has the power to reverse the fortunes of the lives around him. Lady Anne—who had the misfortune of losing her husband and son to Richard's murderous plots—recognizes Richard's power as she scorns his too friendly advances: "Foul devil, for God's sake hence, and trouble us not,/For thou hast made the happy earth thy hell,/Fill'd it with cursing cries and deep exclaims." (I.ii.50-52)

Richard is changing the course of history. Even though his reign will be cut short within two years, he is changing irrevocably the lives Lady Anne, Clarence, Hastings, Buckingham, and many others. Murder does just that. Not only does Richard change history by eliminating human life, but he also sets historical records in the process. According to Sir James Tyrell, the murder of Edward IV's sons has no historical precedent: "The tyrannous and bloody act is done,/The most arch deed of piteous massacre/That ever yet this land was guilty of." (IV.iii.1-3)

Richard is a character in history, who creates history. The modern Polish writer Jan Kott takes this a step further and calls Richard history itself:

> Richard is impersonal like history itself. He is the consciousness and mastermind of the Grand Mechanism. He puts in motion the steam-roller of history, and later is crushed by it. Richard is not even cruel. Psychology does not apply to him. He is just history, one of its ever-repeating chapters. He has no face.[2]

The facelessness of Richard is a subject for debate—as Lady Anne is strangely attracted to Richard's hideous visage—but I agree with kott that Richard "puts in motion the steam-roller of history." This idea recognizes individual responsibility within the colossal realm of the non-human, the Grand Mechanism. Even though non-human forces ultimately control the action in Richard III, the initial historic steps are taken by the soon-to-be king. Richard makes choices each time he commits a crime. But Richard's choices are political ones, not moral choices. What separates Richard from other kings in Shakespeare—think of the blood-fearing anaemic Macbeth—is that he has no conscience, no social responsibility. Even on the brink of death, Richard does not repent.

Unlike Richard, Clarence expresses remorse over the murder of Edward, the Prince of Wales, as he pleads with the assassins—who were not hired by Clarence's brother Edward, but by

Richard—to kill him: "Alas! for whose sake did I that ill deed?/For Edward, for my brother, for his sake./He sends you not to murther me for this,/For in that sin he is as deep as I." (I.iv.211-214) Even the Second Murderer becomes remorseful as he reminds himself of Judgement Day: "The urging of that word 'judgement' hath bred a kind of remorse in me." (I.iv.107-108) The Second Murderer keeps his hands clean, but not his conscience. He lets the First Murderer collect the full commission for the homicidal deed: "I would he knew that I had sav'd his brother!/Take thou the fee and tell him what I say,/For I repent me that the Duke is slain." (I.iv.276-278)

The fact that Shakespeare continually reminds us of the power of conscience is significant. If humankind has no effect on history, what difference would it make if there were more sociopaths around? Richard III reminds us that humankind does have a responsible role in the shaping of history. Queen Elizabeth reinforces this idea as she refutes Richard's suggestion that her two brothers were destined to be eliminated:

> *King Rich*. Lo at their birth good stars were opposite.
> *Q. Eliz*. No, to their lives ill friends were contrary. (IV.iv.216-217)

I am not suggesting that chance plays no role in history. The Wheel of Fortune spins through Richard III. In Act I, Queen Margaret reminds us of the fate that awaits people in high places: "They that stand high have many blasts to shake them,/And if they fall, they dash themselves to pieces." (I.iii.258-259) Because the Wheel of Fortune does not rest forever at the top, the idea of permanence becomes a gnawing question. Richard recognizes fortune's fickleness during his coronation, when he is riding high on top of the wheel: "Thus high, by thy advice/And thy assistance, is King Richard seated; /But shall we wear these glories for a day?/Or shall they last, and we rejoice in them?" (IV. iv.3-6) Richard, of course, is already falling. He will soon be crushed by Richmond's armies. As Richard himself once said: "All unavoided is the doom of destiny." (IV.iv.218) But destiny in Richard III may be woven by a higher source than chance, namely God.

In his book Shakespeare's History Plays, Tillyard sums up the meaning of Richard III:

> the main business of the play is to complete the national tetralogy and to display the working out of God's plan to restore England to prosperity.[3)]

If Tillyard is right, Richard is doomed. From the beginning of the play, Richard is labelled an enemy of God. Queen Margaret calls him "hell's black intelligencer," (IV.iv.71) and Lady Anne refers to him as a "dreadful minister of hell." (I.ii.46): "Thy deeds inhuman and unnatural/Provokes this deluge most unnatural." (I.ii.60-61) The deformed Richard is outside the grace of God.

Richmond, on the other hand, fights in the name of God: "In God's name cheerly on,

courageous friends,/To reap the harvest of perpetual peace/By this one bloody trial of sharp war." (V.ii.14-16) The Ghost of Lady Anne recognizes Richmond's celestial connections: "God and good angels fight on Richmond's side...."(V.iii.175) And shortly before Richmond slays Richard, the former states: "God and our good cause fight upon our side;/The prayers of holy saints and wronged souls,/Like high-rear'd bulwarks, stand before our faces." (V.iii.240-242)

In this light, it is not Richmond who ultimately causes Richard's downfall. Richard is an instrument of God. And so although Richard is punished for his sins, he is overcome by what Tillyard calls "God's plan," not Richmond's armies. It is fitting that the last words of the play are appeals to God, not to man, for the prosperity of England:

> Abate the edge of traitors, gracious Lord,
> That would reduce these bloody days again,
> And make poor England weep in streams of blood!
> Let them not live to taste this land's increase
> That would with treason wound this fair land's peace!
> Now civil wound are stopp'd, peace lives again;
> That she may long live here, God say amen! (V.v.35-41)

Behind the facade of history lurk operations of man, chance, and God. But history itself also seems to be a controller of events in Richard III. The second scene of the play features the corpse of Henry VI on stage. Clearly, history is not buried. Richard of Gloucester's multiple-stabbing murder of Henry VI is not isolated in an historical vacuum. This deed haunts the present. We see this as Henry VI's ghost visits Richard on the eve of the Battle on Bosworth Field: "When I was mortal, my anointed body/By thee was punched full of deadly holes./Think on the Tower and me. Despair and die!/Harry the Sixt bids thee despair and die." (V.iii.124-127) Not only does the ghost of Henry VI come back from the dead—from history—but the ghosts of Prince Edward, Clarence, Rivers, Vaughan, the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, Hastings, Lady Anne, and Buckingham all pay a visit to Richard's bedchamber. The dead do not let the living rest. History controls the present.

Witnesses to history also keep the past alive. Queen Margaret's name is summoned as Lady Anne responds to Richard's claim of innocence concerning the death of Henry VI's sons: "In thy foul throat thou li'st! Queen Margaret saw/Thy murd'rous falchion smoking in his blood...." (I.ii.93-94) Queen Margaret—who is the only character that survives through all four plays of the tetralogy—is an authority on the remembrance of things past: "If ancient sorrow be most reverent,/Give mine the benefit of seniory,/And let my griefs frown on the upper hand." (IV.iv.35-37) It is significant that in her two appearances in the play, Queen Margaret enters the stage as an eavesdropper; before coming forward to make herself visible to the other characters on stage.

Margaret is always a reminder of the past, always coming forward to impose unpleasant history upon the present. Richard of course does not appreciate her constant references to the past:

> *Glou*. Foul wrinkled witch, what mak'st thou in my sight?
> *Q. Mar*. But repetition of what thou hast marr'd,
> That will I make before I let thee go. (I.iii.163-165)

Margaret is not the only woman who drives Richard to distraction. Elizabeth, the Duchess of York, and Lady Anne join Margaret in a wailing lament of female voices, a cacophonous quartet that features the tone-deaf Elizabeth, who reminds Richard of the slaying of her children. Richard requests another song: "Harp not on that string, madam, that is past." (IV.iv.364) In another attempt to suppress the music of the past, Richard instructs musicians from his entourage to drown out the voices of the female quartet: "A flourish, trumpets! strike alarum, drums/ Let not the heavens hear these tell-tale women/Hail on the Lord's anointed. Strike, I say!" (IV.iv.149-151)

But Richard cannot shut out history. He is always reminded of his inescapable past When Richard tries to convince Elizabeth that he would make a good husband, he is rebuffed for swearing on his crown, himself, the world, his father's death, and God. Richard then swears on something that he thinks he has not yet profaned:

> *K. Rich.* The time to come.
> *Q. Eliz.* That thou hast wronged in the time o'erpast.... (IV.iv.387-388)

Richard cannot build a future on the shaky foundations of the past. History is in control. And it is the strength of historical forces that make history more immediate, more decisive, and more horrifying for Richard, who has once again been visited by ghosts—this time at his battle camp—of the murdered: "By the apostle Paul, shadows to-night/Have strook more terror to the soul of Richard/Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers/Armed in proof and led by shallow Richmond." (V.iii.216-219)

The history that controls events in Richard III is cyclical. As Queen Margaret suggests to the Duchess of York, murder begets murder: "Thy Edward he is dead, that kill'd my Edward;/ Thy other Edward dead, to quit my Edward..../Thy Clarence he is dead that stabb'd my Edward, And the beholders of this frantic play,/Th' adulterate Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey,/ Untimely smoth'red in their dusky graves." (IV.iv.63-70) Edward IV had a hand in the killing of Edward, Prince of Wales. The murder of Edward V by Richard III is restitution for the murder of Edward, Prince of Wales. Clarence—who also had a hand in the killing of Edward, Prince of Wales—is murdered by Richard III. This cycle of homicide makes it highly unlikely for events to

take a new course. The senseless slaughter of one's own blood in The Third Part of Henry the Sixth—where fathers kill sons and sons kill fathers—is carried into Richard III. We see this as the Duchess of York mourns over the civil strife in her family:

> My husband lost his life to get the crown,
> And often up and down my sons were tossed
> For me to joy and weep their gains and loss;
> And being seated, and domestic broils
> Clean overblown, themselves, the conquerors,
> Make war upon themselves, brother to brother,
> Blood to Blood, self against self. (II.iv.57-63)

As Jan Kott points out, the Grand Mechanism "transforms the executioner into a victim, and the victim into an executioner." [4] Clarence and Richard III, both murderers, are murdered in turn. Hastings recognizes this violent cycle shortly before his execution: "Come, lead me to the block; bear him my head./They smile at me who shortly shall be dead." (III.iv.106-107) This cycle will only end with Richard's death, and Richmond's accession to the throne. Richmond calls for "perpetual peace," (V.ii.15), a break from the cycle, and the wars of the white and red roses come to an end.

II

Unlike Richard III, who is painted in dark hues, Henry V is portrayed in a most benevolent light in Shakespeare's play of the same name. According to Tillyard, "Richard Duke of Gloucester is a villain in his own right just as Henry V was a perfect king in his own right...." [5] However, behind the contrasting histories of these two monarchs lie similarities: history is controlled by man, chance, God, and history itself.

Henry V opens with an apologetic prologue:

> O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend
> The brightest heaven of invention!
> A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,
> And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!
> Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,
> Assume the port of Mars, and at his heels
> (Leash' d in, like hounds) should famine, sword, and fire
> Crouch for employment. (Prologue 1-8)

Although Henry is introduced in epic proportions, he is still "like himself," a man, and a great king. According to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely, Henry's royal maturation is attributed not to God, but to nature:

> *Ely*. The strawberry grows underneath the nettle,
> And wholesome berries thrive and ripen best
> Neighbor'd by fruit of baser quality;
> And so the Prince obscur'd his contemplation
> Under the veil of wildness, which (no doubt)
> Grew like the summer grass, fastest by night,
> Unseen, yet crescive in his faculty.
> *Cant*. It must be so; for miracles are ceas'd;
> And therefore we must needs admit the means
> How things are perfected. (I.i.60-69)

In an age when "miracles are ceas'd," it becomes necessary for a king to rely on his own power, as Henry V has always done. In the two parts of Henry IV, Prince Hal uses his socially-challenged tavern cohorts as a means to learn about the lower elements of society. For many years before his accession to the throne (in I Henry IV), the prince had been in control of his regal destiny:

> I know you all, and will a while uphold
> The unyok'd humor of your idleness,
> Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
> Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
> To smother up his beauty from the world,
> That when he please again be himself,
> Being wanted, he may be more wond'red at
> By breaking through the foul ugly mists
> Of vapors that did seem to strangle him. (I.ii.195-203)

We can see another example of the destiny-controlling prince in the famous tavern scene of the same play. While Falstaff is playing the part of Prince Hal, and Prince Hall is playing the part of Henry IV, Falstaff (Hal) tells the prince (Henry IV) not to banish Falstaff from his company: "banish plump Jack, and banish all the world." (II.iv.479-480) Hal replies, "I do, I will." (II.iv.481) Of course before the curtain rises on Henry V, the prince had already banished Falstaff. As Kim Pereira points out, "Even as he [Hal] plays, his vision is fixed far ahead on the task he must

undertake." [6] Edward Pechter comments on Hal's absolute control of events:

> "I do, I will" is another characteristic example of Hal's temporal control, his integration of past and future....we are made to sense the implications of Hal' s purposive mode of playing for the structure of the play itself: "I do" belongs to the play within the play, "I will" to the play, and to the pressure of Hal's character upon it, pushing it relentlessly toward an upbeat ending. [7]

But the "upbeat moral ending" of I Henry IV is only "moral" in the sense that England experiences a reunification of its powers. Prince Hal is a true Machiavellian: "Never was monarch better fear'd and lov'd/Than is your Majesty." (II.ii.25-26)

Like Richard III, Henry V contributes to the history of England. But this king is more conscious of his potential impact on history: "But if it be a sin to covet honor,/I am the most offending soul alive." (IV.iii.28-29) Henry knows that only the victors will make it to the written pages of history: "Either our history shall with full mouth/Speak freely of our acts, or else our grave,/Like Turkish mute, shall have tongueless mouth,/Not worshipp'd with a waxen epitaph." (I.ii.230-233) Anticipating victory at Agincourt, Henry rouses up the courage of his generals by pointing out that this day will be immortalized in the future:

> This day is call'd the feast of Crispian:
> He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
> Will stand a' tiptoe when this day is named,
> And rouse him in the name of Crispian.
> He that shall see this day, and live old age,
> Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbors,
> And say, "To-morrow is Saint Crispian." (IV.iii.40-46)
>
> And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
> From this day to the ending of the world,
> But we in it shall be remembered.... (IV.iii.57-59)

But because Henry V is only a man, his death will reverse the accomplishments he had fought for: "Henry the Sixt, in infant bands crown'd King/Of France and England, did this king succeed;/Whose state so many had the managing,/That they lost France, and made his England bleed...." (Epilogue 9-12) If God is on Henry's side, England's side, why would He make England "bleed" during Henry VI's reign? Shakespeare seems to suggest that humankind controls its own fate. The strong king builds and maintains an empire, while the weak king lets the country fall into

a state of civil strife. Perhaps failure is inevitable for all mortals, including Henry V. As Yeats suggests, Henry's "purposes are so intelligible to everybody that everybody talks of him as if he succeeded, although he fails in the end, as all great and little fail in Shakespeare." [8)]

Although humankind has a responsibility for its failures, chance also plays a role in the making of history. Like Richard III, Henry V is filled with allusions to the Wheel of Fortune. We see this as the learned Fluellen describes "Fortune's furious fickle wheel...." (III.vi.27):

> Fortune is painted blind, with a muffler afore his eyes, to
> signify to you that Fortune is blind; and she is painted also
> with a wheel, to signify to you, which is the moral of it, that
> she is turning, and inconstant, and mutability, and variation;
> and her foot, look you, is fixed upon a spherical stone, which
> rolls, and rolls, and rolls. (III.vi.30-36)

It is significant that Fluellen is talking to the lowlife Pistol about fortune, because it is the little men in Henry V that seem to be most affected by fortune's "fickle wheel." The petty thief, Bardolph, is caught stealing a holy relic from a church: "Fortune is Bardolph's foe, and frowns on him;/For he hath stol'n a pax, and hanged must 'a be...." (III.vi.39-40)

Similarly, Pistol is not on top of the wheel, as Fluellen violently forces him to eat a leek. This descent from fortune's wheel continues with the death of Pistol's wife: "Doth Fortune play the huswife with me now?/News have I that my doll is dead i' th' spittle/Of a malady of France,/ And there my rendevous is quite cut off." (V.i.79-83)

The prosaic misfortunes of Pistol and Bardolph, along with the deaths of Falstaff and the former Mistress Quickly, do not seem to exist in the same realm in which the king lives and breathes. While the Wheel of Fortune is quickly sending the low characters plummeting, Henry V seems to be riding high on top, on a much slower gear. Fortune grants victory to the English at incredible odds: Bosworth Field is littered with ten thousand dead Frenchmen, while only twenty-nine of the prince's troops are slain. But soldiers still have greater survival odds to surmount than the monarchy. We see this as Fluellen argues against going into the mines at Harfleur:

> To the mines? Tell you the Duke, it is not so good to come
> to the mines; for look you, the mines is not according to
> the disciplines of the war; the concavities of it is not sufficient.
> For look you, th' athversary—you may discuss unto the Duke,
> look you—is digt himself four yard under the countermines.
> By Cheshu, I think a' will plow up all, if there is not better
> directions. (III.ii.57-64)

Of course the Duke of Gloucester or the king do not have to fear being killed in the mines.

But the most heartfelt objection to military service is voiced by the common soldier, Williams, who argues that a mistake on the king's part would not justify the loss of fighting men:

> But if the cause be not good, the King himself hath a heavy reckoning to make, when all those legs, and arms, and heads, chopp'd off in a battle, shall join together at the latter day and cry all, "We died at such a place"—some swearing, some crying for a surgeon, some upon their wives left poor behind them, some upon the debts they owe, some upon their children rawly left. I am afeard there are few die well that die in a battle; for how can they charitably dispose of any thing, when blood is their argument? Now, if these men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the King that led them to it; who to disobey were against all proportion of subjection. (IV.i.134-146)

Clearly, good fortune is on the side of the generals. As Mark Van Doren points out: "For the King and his nobles the war may be a handsome game, but an undercurrent of realism reminds us of the 'poor souls' for whom there is no such thing." [9] Of course Henry is not able to admit this publicly, because casualties, according to his own regal protocol, are the result of God's will and vengeance: "Now, if these men have defeated the law and outrun native punishment, though they can outstrip men, they have no wings to fly from God. War is his beadle, war is his vengeance...." (IV.i.166-169)

Shakespeare makes Henry's collaboration with God obvious in every scene of the play. The king invokes the name of God more than thirty times in Henry V. After being challenged by the Dolphin's trunk of tennis balls, Henry declares war on France. But the outcome of the war "lies all within the will of God,/To whom I do appeal, and in whose name/Tell you the Dolphin I am coming on...." (I.i.289-291) Similarly, before marching his weary army towards the fields of Agincourt, Henry tries to put the fearful Gloucester at ease: "We are in God's hand, brother, not in theirs." (III.vi.169) And during the Battle of Agincourt, Henry calms the nerves of Westmoreland, who would not mind the assistance of an additional ten thousand men: "God's will, I pray thee wish not one man more." (IV.iii.23)

The fact that Henry continually invokes the name of God suggests the medieval notion that the king is the instrument of God. Henry is sent by God to carry out divine providence. As J.H. Walter points out, history in and before Shakespeare's time was controlled by God:

> Medieval and Tudor historians saw in the events they described

> the unfolding of God's plan, history for them was still a handmaid
> to Theology, queen of sciences. Henry V, the epic hero and agent
> of God's plan, must therefore be divinely inspired and dedicated. [10)]

But God's hand is not the only force that creates the circumstances out of which war may flourish. Like the events in Richard III, those in Henry V are somewhat determined by history. From history came the Salique law, which states that "No woman shall succeed in Salique land...." (I.ii.39) The Archbishop of Canterbury tells us that the French, who control the Salique land are descendants from the female line. This gives Henry the "right and conscience" (I.i.96) to claim the land. And so because of this historic law, the Battle of Agincourt could occur. In other words, history is controlling events. Exeter hints at this as he tells the French king that the Salique law is not buried history, but applicable to the early fifteenth century: "That you may know/'Tis no sinister nor awkward claim,/Pick'd from the worm-holes of long-vanish'd days,/Nor from the dust of old oblivion rak'd...." (II.iv.84-87) It is interesting to note that the Salique law at that time had not been passed recently, but was founded by King Pharamond, "who died within the year of our redemption/Four hundred twenty-six...." (I.ii.60-61)

Henry V is a product of his royal lineage. The King of France calls Henry "a stem/Of that victorious stock" (II.iv.62-63), which included Henry's great uncle, Edward, Black Prince of Wales. Henry's ancestors act as role models for the king as Canterbury pricks the king on to battle:

> Gracious lord,
> Stand for your own, unwind your bloody flag,
> Look back into your mighty ancestors;
> Go, my dread lord, to your great-grandsire's tomb,
> From whom you claim; invoke his warlike spirit,
> And your great-uncle's, Edward the Black Prince,
> Who on the French ground play'd a tragedy,
> Making defeat on the full power of France.... (I.ii.100-107)

Like the cyclical nature of time in Richard III, a war with France will be repeated.

A more immediate past also affects the king. Henry V apologizes to Katherine for his paternal heredity: "Now beshrew my father's ambition! he was thinking of civil wars when he got me; therefore was I created with a stuborn outside, with an aspect of iron, that when I come to woo ladies, I fright them." (V.ii.224-228) But Henry IV left his son an even less desirable legacy: Richard II's deposition and murder. In spite of Henry V's innocence of the murder, his sense of historic responsibility feeds on the guilt of his father's past. We see this immediately before the Battle of Agincourt:

Not to-day, O Lord,
O, not to-day, think not upon the fault
My father made in compassing the crown!
I Richard's body have interred new,
And on it have bestowed more contrite tears,
Than from it issued forced drops of blood. (IV.i.292-297)

Henry asks God "not to-day" to think about Richard's murder. Perhaps he should have asked Him "not ever" to think of that crime. With this historical event hanging like a dark cloud over Henry V's reign, it is no wonder that this king cannot bring lasting peace to England. The wars of the roses will follow, and blood will flow until Henry Tudor seizes the throne.

As we have seen in the events portrayed in Richard III and Henry V, history is not only a random phenomenon, but something that is a result of specific forces. This does not imply that history in Shakespeare is simple or "right," but it does suggest that cause and effect are related. Events do not occur in an historical vacuum. Man, chance, God, and history itself all play an important role in the shaping of history. History in Shakespeare's history plays cannot exist without these forces. And so, even though the conclusions of the first and second tetralogies are quite different in subject matter, they both recognize what goes on backstage in the theatre of history.

Notes

1) William Shakespeare, "The Tragedy of Richard III," in The Riverside Shakespeare, ed. G. Blackmore Evans, (U.S.A.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), Act I, scene 1, lines 1-2. (Further references to Shakespeare's plays will be included parenthetically in the body of the paper.
2) Jan Kott, Shakespeare Our Contemporary (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1964), p. 48.
3) E.M.W. Tillyard, Shakespeare's History Plays (London: Ghatto & Windus, 1964), p. 199.
4) Kott, p. 40.
5) Tillyard, p. 61.
6) Kim Pereira, "The Making of a King" in Shakespeare Bulletin, Fall 1994 (Illinois: Illinois Shakespeare Festival, 1994), pp 33-34.
7) Edward Pechter, "Falsifying Men's Hopes: The Ending of I Henry IV," in Modern Language Quarterly, Vol. 41, No. 3, September 1980, pp. 211-230.
8) W.B. Yeats, "Ideas of Good and Evil," from Essays and Introductions by W.B. Yeats (New York: The Macmillan Co., Publishers, 1961), reprinted in Henry V (New York: John Russell Brown, 1965), ed. John Russell Brown, pp. 217-222.
9) Mark Van Doren, Shakespeare (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1953), p. 149.
10) J.H. Walter, "Introduction to Henry V," in Shakespeare: The Histories, ed. Eugene M. Waith (N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1965), p.159.