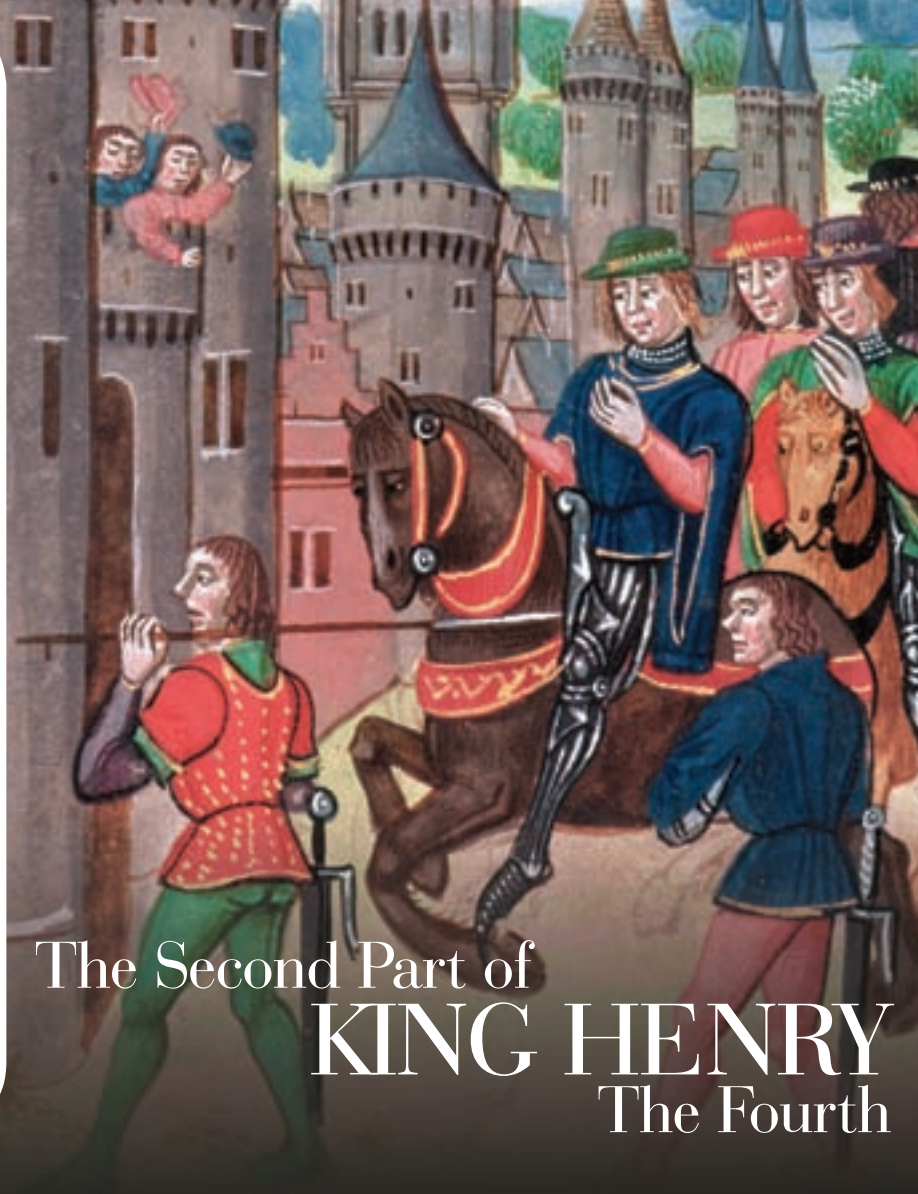


The New Kittredge Shakespeare

William Shakespeare



The Second Part of
KING HENRY
The Fourth

Series Editor: James H. Lake

Edited by
James Wells

New Kittredge Shakespeare

William Shakespeare

THE SECOND PART OF
KING HENRY THE FOURTH

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INTRODUCTION TO THE KITTREDGE EDITION

THE SECOND PART OF KING HENRY THE FOURTH was entered in the Stationers' Register on August 23, 1600, and the Quarto appeared in the same year.

The title page reads like a table of contents: "The Second part of Henrie the fourth, continuing to his death, and coronation of Henrie the fift. With the humours of sir John Falstaffe, and swaggering Pistoll. As it hath been sundrie times publikely acted by the right honorable, the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. Written by William Shakespeare."

PART I ends with the King's victory over Hotspur at Shrewsbury (July 21, 1403), and the closing speech is to all intents and purposes an announcement that a continuation may be expected. Doubtless Shakespeare began to write the SECOND PART soon after he finished the FIRST. As dates, 1597 for *Part I* and 1598 for *Part II* are probable.

Between the two plays there is only the interval needed to carry the news to Hotspur's father, the Earl of Northumberland. In the first scene of PART II the tidings reach the Earl's castle at Warkworth. In the same scene we learn that the Archbishop of York has raised an army against the King and that "more and less do flock to follow him." In fact, the Archbishop's rebellion occurred in May and June, 1405, almost two years after the Battle of Shrewsbury. PART II ends with the coronation of Henry V, which took place on April 9, 1413.

For most of the text the Quarto is the basis, but the Folio supplies several passages that the Quarto lacks. Important omissions in the Quarto are 1.1.181–194, 204–224; 1.3.20–23, 36–55, 85 (second part)–108; 2.3.23–45 (first part); 4.1.55–79, 106 (second part)–143. All these passages undoubtedly stood in the original text.

Some of the cuts were heedlessly made. Thus, when Morton's speech (1.1, 202–224) is reduced to the first two lines (187–188), it has no meaning and Northumberland's reply becomes unintelligible. In such cases the printer may have misunderstood deletions in his copy. Sometimes the cut seems to have a special reason. Thus the omission of 1.1.181–194, spares Northumberland reproaches that sound rather unfeeling. Cf. also lines 32–45, a part of the cut (2.3.23–45) in Lady Percy's long speech. The excision of 4.1.55–79, may be due to a feeling (perhaps on

the censor's part) that these lines sounded too much like a justification of Essex.¹ His trial took place in June, 1600, and he was not completely set at liberty until August, the very month in which the First Quarto was entered in the Register. The Folio omits a few short passages, amounting in the aggregate to about forty lines.

Oldcastle, not Falstaff, was in the original text, as the accidental retention of *Old.* by the Quarto in one speech heading (1.2.137) proves. This is corrected to *Fal.* in the Folio. The Epilogue, in announcing *Henry V* as in prospect, calls attention to the change of name: "If you be not too much cloy'd with fat meat, our humble author will continue the story, with Sir John in it, and make you merry with fair Katherine of France; where for anything I know, Falstaff shall die of a sweat, unless already 'a be kill'd with your hard opinions; for Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man."

For material Shakespeare drew upon Holinshed, as heretofore, and seems to have consulted Stow. He also made liberal use of *The Famous Victories*. The anecdote of the attack upon the Chief Justice illustrates his procedure. Holinshed says that the Prince struck the Chief Justice with his fist; in *The Famous Victories* he gives him a box on the ear; in Sir Thomas Elyot's *Governor* (1531), copied by Stow, he threatens violence but commits no assault.

In the old play the scene is dramatized. Shakespeare, suppressing the action, has the Justice describe the affair in defending his own conduct (5.2): "[You] struck me in my very seat of judgment." His speech echoes a phrase of the old play; but neither the old play nor Holinshed records the words that King Henry used in praising the sternness of the judge and the obedience of his son. These are found in Elyot (whom Stow copies). Shakespeare makes Henry V quote them (5.2.107–112):

So shall I live to speak my father's words:
"Happy am I that have a man so bold
That dares do justice on my proper son;
And not less happy, having such a son
That would deliver up his greatness so
Into the hands of justice."

In Elyot, Henry IV exclaims:

O mercifull god, how moche am I, aboue all other men, bounde to
your infinite goodnes! specially for that ye haue gyuen me a iuge who
feareth nat to ministre justice, and also a sonne who can suffre semblably
and obey iustice!

The conscription scene (3.2) takes a hint or two from *The Famous Victories*.

The scene of Falstaff's humiliation (5.5) was also suggested by the old play. Jockey and Ned and Tom, the Prince's roistering companions, have been present at

1 Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, a former favorite of Queen Elizabeth, who led a disastrous campaign against the Irish in 1599 and was convicted in 1600 of desertion from duty. Stripped of offices, he was released in August of that year.

the coronation and accost the king in the street as he comes out “with the Archbishop and the Lord of Oxford.” He repulses them and speaks their sentence: “Not vpon pain of death to approach my presence by ten miles space, then if I heare wel of you, it may be I wil do somewhat for you.” There is no such incident in Holinshed, who simply records the fact that, “whereas aforetime he had made himselfe a companion vnto misrulie mates of dissolute order and life, he now banished them all from his presence (but not vnre-warded, or else vnpreferred); inhibiting them vpon a great paine, not once to approach, lodge, or soiourne within ten miles of his court or presence.” As Shakespeare has adjusted the situation, the young king’s severity, which sentimentalists deplore, is stern necessity. There stands Falstaff, stained with travel and sweating with eagerness—a tun of man. Behind him is Pistol, that “roaring devil i’ th’ old play”—tall, stalwart, and long-haired, with the ferocious swagger of the professional bully. By Falstaff’s side is Bardolph, with his face “all bubukles and whelks and knobs and flames o’ fire.” And there too is Justice Shallow—a starveling figure of comic dignity, like a hermit’s staff with a head. “God save thy Grace, King Hal, my royal Hal!” Falstaff, infatuated, has doomed himself. There is no answer possible but King Henry’s:

“I know thee not, old man. Fall to thy prayers.
How ill white hairs become a fool and jester!”

INTRODUCTION TO THE FOCUS EDITION

The Second Part of Henry IV (c1598) is the third play in what is known as Shakespeare's second tetralogy (or "sequence of four") of history plays. This tetralogy also includes *Richard II*, *The First Part of Henry IV*, and *Henry V*. The first three of these plays dramatize Henry Bolingbroke's controversial overthrow of the Plantagenet king Richard II and the turbulent wake of civil strife that followed once Bolingbroke became King Henry IV. These events would culminate years later in the War of the Roses, a civil struggle fought between two related families of York and Lancaster. (This war is the subject of Shakespeare's first tetralogy consisting of the three *Henry VI* plays and *Richard III*.) The final play in this second tetralogy, *Henry V*, covers England's most renowned victory in the Hundred Years' War it fought with France.

As one would expect, *2 Henry IV* continues the unresolved action of *1 Henry IV*. Part Two depicts the total destruction of the Percy rebellion (to which in Part One the King's forces had struck a significant blow when they defeated Hotspur and Douglas at the battle of Shrewsbury). Part Two also continues the highly entertaining and finally moving story of Prince Hal's involvement with the witty fat old knight Sir John Falstaff. The verbal sparring and physical antics between the riotous old knight and the young prince under his tutelage generates much of *1 Henry IV*'s energy. In fact, one of the chief points of tension in both plays is how Prince Hal will be able to cast off Falstaff's influence and become the model King Henry V that Shakespeare's audience knew him to be. Part Two resolves this issue in the famous rejection scene, where the newly reformed young King publicly disgraces and banishes his old companion.

"Involvement" seems at once general, neutral, and uncomplimentary enough to describe a relationship that is extraordinarily complex and the source of much debate among scholars. On the one hand, Prince Hal's public claim to reformation could be sincere; he could have been the decadent youth he appeared to be, and Falstaff really might have been a "tutor and feeder of [his] riots" (5.5.60) and one of the "misleaders" (5.5.62) King Henry must banish for his reformation to be complete. Through the course of the two plays, we might have witnessed Henry's genuine maturation into the ways of upright kingship. However, it is difficult to give full (if any) credence to Henry's claims at the end of Part Two. Near the beginning of *1 Henry IV*, the Prince says he is only pretending to be debauched and to suffer the "unyoked humor" of Falstaff's idleness so that his apparent reformation will strike more awe in his subjects when he finally becomes King. If Henry's words are to be taken at face value, his reformation might merely be seen as the last act in an elaborate production he himself has created, one in which Falstaff becomes a casualty.

However, before we condemn Hal as scheming and opportunistic or feel too sorry for Falstaff, we should remember that Falstaff's motives for associating with the Prince are also far from pure. He sees the prince as a last-ditch means for social advancement. On hearing of Henry IV's death, Falstaff remarks only on his monetary and political gains that death will bring. Not to mention that Falstaff ridicules the Prince in his absence as often as he declares his love for Hal in his presence. The two might feel genuine affection for each other, but that affection is not enough for Falstaff to "leave gourmandizing" (5.5.51) or for Hal to risk the kinds of political failures that eventually drove his father to an early death.

We would expect such continuities as these from a sequel in a series of history plays. Surprisingly, however, the most striking feature linking the two plays is not progress but repetition. The play leans heavily upon its precursor for plot and structure. As in the first play, the action alternates between serious scenes featuring the King and rebels and comic ones with Falstaff. As in that play, Falstaff wittily escapes the law, and the Prince and Poins once again play tricks on him, now by disguising themselves as humble drawers (those who pour or "draw" ale) to see what Falstaff will say about them in private. Falstaff is again given a number of soliloquies that (like his famous one on "honor" in Part One) are meant to deflate the pieties of those whose pretenses to righteous living are less self-consciously put on than his own. This time his targets are a rich country Justice Shallow and the coldblooded, humorless Prince John. While the play expands the roles of old players in the rebellion and introduces new ones, such as Hastings and Lord Bardolph, it also produces a strong feeling of déjà vu. Once again, the rebels question the achievability of their goals. Once again, the reliability of Hotspur's father Northumberland is an issue. Once more the rebels deliberate on whether or not to accept the King's offer of amnesty.

Adding to the drag that repetition places on the tempo is the sense that the play's action has not only stalled but also lost ground. The first time we meet Hal in Part Two, he is idling away his time with his base companion Poins. He is not capitalizing on his heroic defeat of Hotspur and enjoying the return to normal relations with his father that should have followed saving his life in Part One. Instead, Hal seems to have slipped back into a skin he had sloughed off in the play before. We might even see Hal as unable to escape the pretense of the debauched Prince he claims to have chosen for himself. He complains to Poins that he cannot mourn his father's illness because doing so would make him "a most princely hypocrite" (2.2.44). If Hal were not playing the debauchee, his sincerity would only be questioned by the Falstaffs of the world. So Hal must redeem an honor that already seemed redeemed. He does so in a moving interview with his father, one that closely resembles their interview from Part One. Such reversions only add to the feeling that we have seen this all before.

The torpor into which repetition potentially casts the play might contribute to its lack of popularity relative to that of Part One and of *Henry V*. But other factors seem to be at work. One is the play's contingency. Appreciating, and even at times understanding, this play depends upon our first knowing what happens in Part One. To use an obvious example, Falstaff's banishment resonates more forcefully

when we remember how he turned his role as Prince Hal in the “play extempore” into the chance to plead on his own behalf, urging the Prince (who was playing his own father), “banish not him thy Harry’s company—banish plump Jack and banish the whole world.” Prince Hal’s response, “I do. I will,” proves prophetic, and, in retrospect, strengthens the audience’s suspicion that Hal might have stepped out of his adopted role and starting speaking on his own behalf. However, the first part colors its successor in numerous indirect and often subtle ways that, nevertheless, are essential to the experience that the play provides.

Modern production practices confirm Part Two’s dependence on Part One. Although the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) has put on *2 Henry IV* numerous times in its 100-plus year history, and even increased the frequency since the 1960s, it has not staged Part Two without including Part One in the same season since 1926. It is also worth noting, however, that since the sixties, the RSC has never performed one without the other in the same season, probably because staging Part One provides the occasion for producing its sequel. Similarly, in over fifty seasons, the popular Shakespeare Festival in Stratford, Ontario has never produced the first part without the second, although it has twice put on *1 Henry IV* without Part Two. The RSC and Stratford are both repertory theatres with a network to support multiple plays at once. Given that most theatre companies produce only one play at a time, we can only marvel at the boldness of those who would produce Part Two on its own.

Adding to the problem of contingency is the genuine difficulty modern audiences have understanding Part Two, even those who have read Part One. If, as I suspect, college instructors pass over this play in favor of the others in the tetralogy, its difficulty is partly to blame. The play abounds in long prose passages rife with unfamiliar local allusions and colloquialism, often coupled with layers of metaphor and other figuration. These passages can challenge even more advanced readers. It takes significant effort to work through the combination of malapropism and colloquial language to appreciate Mistress Quickly’s accidental (or is it?) eroticism in her instructions to the officers who are to arrest Falstaff for failure to pay her back the money he owes her:

Good Master Fang, hold him sure. Good Master Snare, let him not scape. 'A comes continually to Pie Corner (saving your manhoods) to buy a saddle, and he is indited to dinner to the Lubber’s Head in Lumbert Street, to Master Smooth’s the silkman. I pray you, since my exion is ent’red, and my case so openly known to the world, let him be brought in to his answer. (2.1.18-24).

In a similar way, Pistol’s blusters sample the richest cuts of the plays from Shakespeare’s early contemporaries such as Christopher Marlowe and George Peele, recognizable, in general, to an audience of regular theatre-goers then, but not to audiences today. Yet, the reason the play is often passed over is the very reason the play needs to be taught. For while it is true, as the cliché goes, that Shakespeare’s plays are meant to be watched, most modern audiences would be quite lost no matter how well the actors inflect meaning with their voices or how largely they gesticulate in attempt to

show it. While the audience has paused to unravel the web of prose in which they have been snagged, the play in all its richness has moved on without them.

But even for those who do understand it, the play can be hard to stomach, namely because it operates on what we might call a principle of disaffection. In *1 Henry IV*, the general feeling for characters from all sides of political struggles is one of affection. Falstaff may be the coward that Hal and Poins try to prove him to be, but he compensates for his cowardice with his plucky wit and his real anxiety of his future under Henry V. Hotspur may be a traitor to Henry IV, but his commitment to chivalry is so absolute that we are more willing to overlook his foibles as well as his capital crimes. Prince Hal may be a schemer who uses thieves to advance himself, but his defeat of Hotspur and Douglas at Shrewsbury shows real heroism.

Part Two, however, deflates the buoyant mood that predominates the first part from the outset. The play begins with a personified Rumor indicting the audience for their eager participation in his noxious distortions of truth. Thus Part Two cynically reduces the potentially noble project of representing history, “the acts commenced upon this ball of earth,” to mere pandering (Induction 5). In fact, Rumor not only begins the play, he permeates it by having a hand in all four major plotlines. The beginning of the play dramatizes Northumberland’s prolonged and painful struggle to learn the truth of Hotspur’s fate, a struggle from which learning the truth provides no relief. Reports of his son’s misdeeds still afflict Henry IV. After he becomes King, Hal has to take pains to reassure his new court that the reports of his animosity toward them are not true. Rumor affects no other character in the play more than Falstaff who captures the “famous rebel,” Coleville of the Dale, without breaking a sweat because of the false report of his good deeds at Shrewsbury. Expectations of Falstaff’s rise in the court of the new king lead Robert Shallow to lend him money he otherwise would not have done and to disappoint Mistress Quickly and Doll Tearsheet, who are left depending on his influence for their release from prison. Appropriately, the play ends with Prince John relating a rumor that he heard of war with France, one which forms the plot of the next play in the sequence.

The pall Rumor casts over the play gets reinforced by the prevalence of sickness in the play. The major players—Falstaff, Northumberland, King Henry—are all introduced as sick, or worse (if we can trust Rumor’s charge that Northumberland, “lies crafty-sick” (Prologue 37).) Falstaff, who is so full of life in Part One, begins by inquiring into the health of his urine and complaining of gout. The King languishes physically, emotionally, and morally in all the scenes that feature him and finally dies under the weight of his cares. Falstaff’s talk with Justice Shallow focuses on death, age, and decay. This general sense of decay spreads to Mistress Quickly’s inn, which is no longer the jolly place it was in Part One but a full-blown brothel where she and Doll Tearsheet allegedly join with the swaggering Pistol in murdering one of their clients.

The play’s movements from vitality to sickness and from lightness to dark are indicative of how the balance of character has been tipped ever so slightly so that antipathy replaces sympathy. Falstaff’s wit is still present the same volume in Part

Two, and the old soldier is no more of a coward than in Part One. But as the play progresses, Falstaff grows more delusional in his self-assurance of a high place in Henry V's court. Upon hearing of Henry IV's death, he instructs Justice Shallow to commandeer horses in the name of the King because "the laws of England are at [his] commandment" (5.3.117-18). Our sense of Falstaff's growing delusion emerges from the increasing alienation between Falstaff and Hal. Although Falstaff is on stage as often and gets as many lines as he did in Part One, he and Hal are together in this play only once before the rejection scene. Plus Falstaff's soliloquies, while showing all the wit of those in Part One, fall short in effect. His exaltation of sack's ennobling qualities lacks the same moral force as his attack on honor as useful only as a tool of manipulation, especially when his own addiction to sack contradicts the claims he makes (not to mention that the ever-thirsty Bardolph enters at the end and presents himself as a living, breathing instance of the counter-argument). In addition, where in the first part Falstaff merely narrates his misuse of his power to levy soldiers, this play dramatizes his abuse. The effect is much more damning and adds to the general sense that the audience might have seen too much of Falstaff.

The rebels in this play suffer a similar demotion. Along with Hotspur, honor has largely disappeared from this play. Even its pretense is gone. While in the first play, the rebels grounded their resistance on the restoration of God's order by placing the rightful heir on the throne, in the sequel, the reason for fighting might reside as much in Hotspur's father Northumberland's wish to "Let order die!" and in the apocalyptic vision that follows in which all life ends in one "rude scene" as it does in honor (1.1.159-60). In cooler moments of deliberation, questions of rectitude have given way to those of expediency.

On the King's side, Shrewsbury's heroics have been replaced by chicanery and equivocation. Prince John prevails without striking a blow in the decisive encounter at Gaultree because he tricks the rebels into dismissing their troops. After giving his "princely word" (4.2.66) that the rebels' grievances will be addressed, the Prince arrests them for treason, claiming that he never promised liberty, only to address their wrongs. Mowbray reasonably demands, "Is this proceeding just and honorable?" To which Westmoreland replies, "Is your assembly so?" (4.2.110-11). Prince John has sunk to a level not even the rebels have reached. And although it is not known whether Hal or Henry IV approve of such tactics, the King certainly does not appear beyond strategy. In his dying "counsel" to Hal, the penitent King instructs his son "to busy giddy minds / With foreign quarrels" as a way to divert his subjects from the memory of his father's usurpation (4.5.214-15).

The only character in the play whose honor seems beyond reproach is the Lord Chief Justice, who consistently poises Law against Falstaff's Riot. Falstaff has only his witty resourcefulness to keep him from the reach of the Justice, and its effectiveness at doing so wanes as the play unfolds. But the play limits the redemptive function of his honor in this way. The main disappointment that the audience experiences in the play is Falstaff's decline in its estimation. The Chief Justice suffers from the unfortunate circumstance of being the cause behind that disappointment. At the end of the play, he is the one who hauls Falstaff to the Fleet prison and silences the

THE SECOND PART OF KING HENRY THE FOURTH

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Rumor, the Presenter.

King Henry the Fourth.

Prince Henry, afterwards crowned

King Henry the Fifth.

Sons to *Henry IV* and brethren to *Henry V*

Prince John of Lancaster,

Humphrey of Gloucester

Thomas of Clarence,

Opposites against *King Henry the Fourth.*

[*Earl of Northumberland*

[*Richard Scroop.*]

The Archbishop of York

[*Lord Mowbray*

[*Lord Hastings*

Lord Bardolph,

Retainers of Northumberland

Travers

Morton

[*Sir John Colevile*

Of the *King's* party

[*Earl of Warwick*

[*Earl of Westmoreland*

[*Earl of Surrey*

Gower, Harcourt

[*Blunt*]

Lord Chief Justice,

[A servant of the *Chief Justice.*]

Irregular humorists

[*Sir John Falstaff*

Poins

Bardolph

Pistol

Peto

Page [to *Falstaff*]

Country Justices.

[*Robert Shallow*

Silence,

Davy, servant to *Shallow.*

Fang and Snare, two Sergeants.

Country soldiers [or recruits].

[*Ralph*

Mouldy

[*Simon Shadow*

[*Thomas Wart*

[*Francis Feeble*

[*Peter Bullcalf,*

Northumberland's Wife.

[*Lady Percy.*] *Percy's* widow.

Hostess Quickly, [of the Boar's Head
tavern, Eastcheap].

Doll Tearsheet.

[Lords and Attendants; a Porter;]

Drawers, Beadles, Grooms, [Servants;
a Dancer as] *Epilogue.*

SCENE. — *England*

INDUCTION. [*Warkworth. Before Northumberland's Castle.*]

Enter Rumor, painted full of tongues.

Open your ears, for which of you will stop
 The vent of hearing when loud Rumor speaks?
 I from the Orient to the drooping West,
 Making the wind my posthorse, still unfold
 The acts commenced on this ball of earth. 5
 Upon my tongues continual slanders ride,
 The which in every language I pronounce,
 Stuffing the ears of men with false reports.
 I speak of peace while covert enmity,
 Under the smile of safety, wounds the world. 10
 And who but Rumor, who but only I,
 Make fearful musters and prepar'd defence,
 Whiles the big year, swol'n with some other grief,
 Is thought with child by the stern tyrant War,
 And no such matter? Rumor is a pipe 15
 Blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures;
 And of so easy and so plain a stop
 That the blunt monster with uncounted heads,
 The still-discordant wav'ring multitude,
 Can play upon it. But what need I thus 20
 My well-known body to anatomize
 Among my household? Why is Rumor here?
 I run before King Harry's victory,

Induction: technically, an introductory scene. Some editors amend to "Prologue," which more accurately designates Rumor's role. **Stage Direction.** *Painted full of tongues:* Although the source of Rumor's personification here may be Virgil's *Aeneid*, a number of similar contemporary instances also exist. 2. **vent:** opening. 3. **Orient:** the East, specifically where the sun rises, as opposed to the West where the sun or flowers are "drooping." 4. **posthorse:** a horse for delivering messages. The imagine of the wind as "posthorse" suggests Rumor's speed, his function as messenger, and, along with other airy images in this passage, the evanescence of the message he brings. —**still unfold:** continuously reveal. 8. **the which:** which. 9. **whiles:** while. 13. **big year:** pregnant and, perhaps, prodigious. 14. **swol'n...grief:** made pregnant with a worrisome cause other than War. 15. **And...matter:** But that turns out not to be the case. —**pipe:** The transition here is from Rumor as something that entertains the audience to something the audience plays; thus, Rumor doubles the audience's complicity in the gossiping spectacle it beholds. 16. **jealousies:** "suspicion" or sense of evil (Kittredge). 17. **so easy...stop:** with so simple and so unsophisticated vents. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a "stop" is "the closing of a fingerhole or ventage in the tube of a wind instrument so as to alter the pitch... Also, the hole or aperture thus closed" ("stop" 15.a). 18. **blunt monster with uncounted heads:** a familiar Elizabethan representation of the populace, used disdainfully elsewhere in Shakespeare (cf. *Coriolanus*). 19. **still-discordant wavering:** Two qualities which would make the multitude unlikely to produce music on a wind instrument unless it were very easy to play. 21. **anatomize:** To lay open in a revealing way. 22. **household:** immediately, Rumor's cohabitants with whom he is claiming affiliation and, metonymically, the theatre in which they dwell.

Who, in a bloody field by Shrewsbury,
 Hath beaten down young Hotspur and his troops, 25
 Quenching the flame of bold rebellion
 Even with the rebels' blood. But what mean I
 To speak so true at first? My office is
 To noise abroad that Harry Monmouth fell
 Under the wrath of noble Hotspur's sword, 30
 And that the King before the Douglas' rage
 Stoop'd his anointed head as low as death.
 This have I rumour'd through the peasant towns
 Between that royal field of Shrewsbury
 And this worm-eaten hold of ragged stone, 35
 Where Hotspur's father, old Northumberland,
 Lies crafty-sick. The posts come tiring on,
 And not a man of them brings other news
 Than they have learnt of me. From Rumor's tongues
 They bring smooth comforts false, worse than true wrongs. 40
Exit.

24. **Shrewsbury**: the site of the decisive battle in *1 Henry IV* in which Prince Henry slew Hotspur in single combat. 25. **Hotspur**: Henry Percy, a principal conspirator in *1 Henry IV*. 29. **noise**: According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* ("noise" 2) "noise" is to spread a report or rumor, but it also means to create a discordant, unpleasant sound. —**Harry Monmouth**: one of the many titles of Prince Henry (aka Hal), in this case commemorating his birthplace. 31. **the Douglas**: The powerful Scottish Earl who conspires with the Percys and Owen Glendower of Wales to overthrow Henry IV in the previous play. 37. **Lies crafty-sick**: In *1 Henry IV* Northumberland sent word to Hotspur that illness prevented his coming to battle or sending a proxy with his troops, but he urged his son to try his fortunes in the field. In that play, there is no suggestion that Northumberland is malingering. Holinshed's *Chronicles* offers no reason for Northumberland's absence. —**tiring on**: riding to exhaustion. 40. **smooth**: "seemingly amiable or friendly" (*O.E.D.* "smooth" 7.a) but, here, falsely so (7.b). —**wrongs**: harms or injuries.



A reformed Scott (Hal) immediately before he turns to the Falstaffian Bob (kneeling right) to say a wooden: "I don't know you old man. Please leave me alone." The end of Gus Van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho* (1991) seems to promote the Falstaffian figure to the central role when Bob dies on the street of a broken heart.

Reply not to me with a fool-born jest.
 Presume not that I am the thing I was;
 For God doth know (so shall the world perceive) 55
 That I have turn'd away my former self;
 So will I those that kept me company.
 When thou dost hear I am as I have been,
 Approach me, and thou shalt be as thou wast,
 The tutor and the feeder of my riots. 60
 Till then I banish thee, on pain of death,
 As I have done the rest of my misleaders,
 Not to come near our person by ten mile.
 For competence of life I will allow you,
 That lack of means enforce you not to evil; 65
 And, as we hear you do reform yourselves,
 We will, according to your strengths and qualities,
 Give you advancement. Be it your charge, my lord,
 To see perform'd the tenure of our word.
 Set on. *Exit King [with his Train].* 70

FALSTAFF

Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pound.

HOW TO READ *THE SECOND PART OF KING HENRY THE FOURTH* AS PERFORMANCE

In the Introduction, I stressed the importance of reading *The Second Part of Henry IV* before seeing it as a way of enhancing understanding or, in many cases, making it possible at all. The play presents as many challenges to modern readers as any play by Shakespeare. It is filled with long prose sequences, which themselves are filled with difficult metaphors, references to specific locals, literary allusions, colloquialisms, and even malapropisms, or instances in which a character uses a word other than the one intended. To understand these features in performance, today's audience often has to know that they are there. What better way than to read the play? However, by stressing the importance of reading for performance, I risk neglecting the importance of performance for reading. Any fiction requires the active use of the imagination in order for us to understand it. We imagine a different voice and personality for Pip than we do for Joe, for Elizabeth Bennett than we do her foolish sister Lydia, for Frodo than we do for Gandalf. This aspect of reading is obvious, but it takes on a special immediacy when we read plays, which are meant for a more literal theatre than the one of our imagination. Keeping the principle in mind that the characters are to be fleshed out on stage and delivering lines to the audience will help the imaginative process.

But there are as many challenges for imagining and performing this play as there are for reading it. And they start with the presentation of Rumor at the very beginning of the play. Although Shakespeare did not typically use allegorical figures in his plays (Time in *The Winter's Tale* is another), he does make reference to them frequently in his plays, and the tradition of Renaissance theatre in England is rich in allegory. The Quarto version of this play includes the stage direction, "Enter Rumor painted full of tongue." In 1553, the Revels Office recorded having paid for a coat and hat painted full of tongues and meant to represent "Fame," a synonym for rumor at the time. The tongues represent the multitude of voices, the "tongues" on which "continual slanders ride" (1.1.6). Having an actor point to the tongues on such a robe at the appropriate moment might help reinforce both Rumor's function and the function of a costume whose meaning might not be evident to the audience at first sight. However, recognizing Rumor's identity is not the same as getting the

point of his existence. Rumor says his function is a prologue-like preparation for the deeds that we will see, but that point comes in only at the end of his speech. One way that imagining performance enriches our understanding of Rumor is to remember that he is speaking to us as the audience. So when he asks, "Which of you will stop / The vent of hearing when loud Rumor speaks?", we are the "you" he condemns (1.1.1-2). We are also the "still-discordant wavering multitude" that plays upon Rumor's easy pipe (1.1.19). In other words, only when we bring actor, venue, and audience into our imagination do we understand that we as the audience are no better than the characters Shakespeare is presenting.

When it comes to reading a play as a performance Falstaff presents perhaps the biggest challenge in all of Shakespeare. First there is the purely visual question of how large to make Falstaff. Such a question might seem superficial, but in the end size does matter. Although Justice Silence can think of only one man who is "greater" in girth than Falstaff, we have to ask ourselves the serious question of Falstaff's size, because that size might have a great deal to do with whether the audience takes him seriously. If Falstaff is unnaturally large does he risk becoming merely a clown and a buffoon? Clearly Falstaff is a clown. He thinks the stories of his encounters with justices Shadow and Silence will keep the prince in "continual laughter for the wearing-out of six fashions" (5.1.66). Poins is also aware of this clownish nature when he warns Hal of Falstaff's ability to turn contempt into laughter after they have heard him slandering them: "My lord, he will drive you out of your revenge, and turn all to a merriment, if you take not the heat" (2.4.253-54). The newly crowned king uses this narrowly construed understanding to reprimand Falstaff: "How ill white hairs become a fool and jester" (5.5.46).

But most scholars, readers, and viewers are not satisfied with this narrow understanding of Falstaff. Sir John apparently would agree there is much more to him than merely being a butt of jokes, especially when he claims, "I am not only witty in myself, but they cause that wit is in other men." And here is the more pointed question: how do we imagine Falstaff in such a way that makes him the very type of what high school teachers tell students is a "round" character—that is, one who is anything but static? It would be unthinkable to say that Falstaff has a complexity about him that does not translate in performance. Falstaff has at times a self-knowledge that, in the Restoration era that followed the Renaissance, became the definition of wit. This self-knowledge is coupled with an incisive understanding of other people, from Shallow to Poins to Prince John, each of whom he skewers in his writings and soliloquies. To a certain extent, his acuity even extends to Hal. When he sends Hal the letter in which he exaggerates his reputation in claiming that he is "Sir John to all Europe," he is enticing Hal into a visit by playing the insubordinate that appears to keep the Prince so entertained.

Yet, despite his insights, Falstaff has huge blind spots; despite acute hearing, the "disease of not list'ning" (1.2.103-04). He is unable to grasp his increasing alienation from the Prince or to predict the reception that he will receive at the coronation. So, the performance of Falstaff needs to encompass opposite qualities:

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~ Tanya Pollard
Brooklyn College, CUNY

James Wells is Associate Professor of English at Belmont University and has published essays on *Coriolanus* and *Macbeth* as well as on *Henry V*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (forthcoming). He is also editing *The Merry Wives of Windsor* for The New Kittredge Shakespeare series.

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