New Directions:

Olivier, Branagh, and Shakespeare's Henry V

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Shakespeare Versus Film

Shakespeare's ongoing popularity, durability, and quality make his plays popular source material for movies. Countless films, from Kurosawa's Ran to the recent teen comedy 10 Things I Hate About You, are adaptations of Shakespeare plays. For the most part, though, these films tend to be as far away from Shakespeare as Shakespeare was from his source material—they are not Shakespeare films as academics define them. True Shakespeare films are adaptations that strive to retain as much of the language and carry the same intent of the original plays. Inevitably, they must also carry the vision of their directors, and the source material must be altered, sometimes drastically, to suit the screen.

Putting Shakespeare on film is not easy. As adaptations go, they face a unique set of problems that are compounded by both the audience's familiarity with the plays, which raises expectations for the movie, and with the audience's unfamiliarity with Shakespeare's Elizabethan language in film settings. The plays themselves also run far longer than the traditional movie length of two hours, which puts added strain on a typical movie audience. The language is far more dense, voluminous, and descriptive than normal movie dialogue, which makes the words seem redundant and the movie overly "talky." Finally, the texts themselves are so entrenched in our culture that they approach sacred works, which renders the necessary cutting and continuity editing sacrilege. Because of these unique hurdles to successful adaptation, Shakespeare films exist in a separate category than most other films.

Two of the most successful Shakespeare films are Laurence Olivier's and Kenneth Branagh's adaptations of Henry V. Oliver's version, ostensibly a propaganda film for the British war effort during World War II, was the first artistically and commercially successful Shakespeare film ever. Branagh's film, coming almost fifty years later, was both a homage and a response to Olivier's. It stands as an argument that Shakespeare relevance is timeless, and that Olivier's monumental achievement can be bested.

The directors also star in their films, playing Henry, an actor-director of sorts in his own right, as we shall explore. If any directors work according to the auteur theory, Olivier and Branagh do. Since both directors were also heavily involved with adapting the script, picking the cast and crew, both maintain a great deal of creative control. Henry V was also the first film each directed, though each had prior experience playing Henry in stage productions. Despite their professionalism and polished products, both describe the filming process as if it were a dream; Olivier ruminations make his wartime shooting like an adventure, and Branagh's film diary makes him sound like a ten-year-old allowed to pitch the opening game of the World Series.

Olivier and Branagh are remembered as two of the greatest populizers of Shakespeare in the 20th century. They not only breathed new life into Shakespeare's material, they brought Shakespeare to a wide and ever-growing audience. Both had ulterior motives for creating their films. Olivier wanted to prove himself as the greatest actor of the twentieth century, and his Henry was a superb vehicle to reach huge audiences with top-grade material. Besides wanting to prove Shakespeare was still relevant to modern audiences, Branagh wanted to prove himself Olivier's successor, at

age 28 no less. All in all, both wanted to prove that Shakespeare was popular, and possible, on film.

In this chapter, we will explore the differences between Shakespeare and film, and highlight the problems moviemakers like Branagh and Olivier must overcome to make a successful adaptation. In the succeeding chapters, we will explore in detail the Olivier's and Branagh's adaptations of Henry V.

During the silent era, four hundred Shakespeare films were made. They started with filmed-theater shorts, usually the miming of a play's key scenes starring famous stage actor. Since the essence of Shakespeare is nearly impossible to capture without the benefit of language, save for a few intertitles, most of these films ineffectively represent the plays and tend to approach the burlesque. Consequently, a tiny few are feature-length adaptations, and all but a handful are inconsequential.

In the early sound era of the 1930s, a small number of Shakespeare films were produced, with mixed results. These include Sam Tayor's The Taming of the Shrew, Max Reinhardt and William Dieterle's A Midsummer Night's Dream, Irving Thalberg's Romeo and Juliet, and Paul Czinner's As You Like It. Manvell summarizes the era by commenting,

> The common characteristic of these four adaptations from Shakespeare during the 1930s is that none of them displayed any realization that an imaginative adaptation of normal film technique would be necessary to allow

> Shakespeare's greatness as a dramatist to reach its proper fulfillment through the screen. (Manvell 34)

As a theater critic of the time, J.C. Trewin further notes:

> Personally we still don't see why they have to film Shakespeare, except that he was the first man to write scenarios—good scenarios, too—cuts, continuity, comp shots and all. But if they must, it is something that his successful translation into active cinematic terms should have started—at last—with a certain dawning realization that it's the dialogue that counts, however difficult verse may be to film, and that, though it is rich in metaphor and so is the screen, because its pictures dance, allude and illustrate, yet the camera is not always obliged to skip as quick as thought; so that not invariably when the poet mentions, say, a bear, need we have one lumbering into view. (Manvell 31-32)

These two critics highlight two crucial points about Shakespeare films: (1) Shakespeare's writing style and stage techniques lend comparisons to screenwriting; and (2) to be effective, Shakespeare films demand a separate set of artistic techniques than normal films.

Some film critics and most Shakespeare film directors argue that Shakespeare was, in essence, the very first screenwriter, and would definitely be writing for film or

television if he were alive today. In some ways, Shakespeare's writing does approach the filmic, mostly due to the freedom offered by the Elizabethan stage. Shakespeare's bare stage "led him to construct his plays in a manner which closely resembles the structure of a screenplay. His action unfolds through a series of locations which were unlimited by any binding stage convention. Using no sets whatsoever, he could move as freely as he liked from place to place, indoors or outdoors—from house to street, from street to fields, from fields to cliffs, and from cliffs to the open sea itself" (Manvell 8-9).

At every turn he violates the classical unities of action, place, and time that dominate the theater to this day; it helped, of course, that the neoclassical critical theory did not exist in his time. Shakespeare's action frequently moves from locale to locale, whether the settings are as far away as Rome and Egypt or England and France, or as close together as different groves in the same dark woods. The bare stage accommodates any setting, however fantastic. The scene is shifted with a few words, in which Shakespeare conjures up the new setting, and the action continues, pretty much uninterrupted. This resembles the cut in film.

Like a camera, which can speed up or slow down time at will to show us something heretofore unexplored, Shakespeare compresses or dilates time—notably in the history plays—to produce a plot with maximum narrative appeal. "Shakespeare was free in time and space," Manvell argues, "a form of freedom impossible in any kind of modern realistic, or even semi-realistic picture stage, using scenery which is even remotely representational" (Manvell 11). Complicated stage properties subvert Shakespeare's "cuts" because moving them takes too long, and breaks the flow of action.

Not only do Shakespeare's plays structurally resemble screenplays, they were created for similar reasons. Like screenwriters and moviemakers of any kind, Shakespeare was an economically motivated artist. Filmmakers are constantly under attack because Hollywood films often compromise creativity because of the need to sell a product, promote a star, calculate an image, or out-gross the competition. Furthermore, films are so expensive to produce that they are rarely made for art's sake alone. We imagine the theater, on the other hand, as somehow pure and artistically motivated. While it is true that numerous theaters nowadays seem to depend on charitable contributions to meet their bottom lines, we must not forget that Shakespeare earned his bread as an actor, playwright, and eventually as a theater owner; his plays were products meant to be sold.

Shakespeare, like the film producer, had to keep the public interested to keep his business alive in an age in which the theater's very existence was constantly imperiled. As a result, Shakespeare's plays, like the best and most profitable movies, appeal to a wide audience, from the rabble to the Queen, and reach people on different levels depending on their age, education, and social status. Shakespeare also gave contemporary significance to his themes, especially themes of the past, so that he could offer audiences something both historical and refreshing simultaneously. As a bonus, the plays are both rich and loose enough to apply to the events of almost any day; thus, they are constantly updated and restaged, much like classic films are often re-released.

Shakespeare films were long thought to be economically infeasible. After all, since Shakespeare's time, his plays have attained high culture status, and are deemed incomprehensible and, even worse, boring to anyone of average intelligence. "The

economic priorities and standards of the cinema industry as a medium of mass entertainment," Shaugnessy contends, "are necessarily at odds with the integrity of Shakespeare's art" (Shaugnessy 3). Theater too is driven by ticket sales, of course, but given its smaller scope, it does not aspire to reach millions of people thousands of miles apart. Furthermore, the theater is not about product placement, merchandizing, tie-ins, or even image building for a handful of stars. But, in the 1990s to the present, numerous Shakespeare films have been produced, by about one major studio picture per year, and many have achieved respectable profits without poisoning Shakespeare. Despite all the difficulties of adapting the Bard, Shakespeare *is* profitable on screen.

Clearly, then, Shakespeare's plays are, at least in some ways, well suited for the screen; but is the screen well suited for his plays? The camera's mobility creates the possibility of far more naturalistic and nuanced performances. Stage actors rely on booming voices and bold gestures to present an effective performance even to the worst seats in the house. They must project to the last row of an intimate theater, perhaps twenty feet away, or to the last row of the second balcony in an opera house, perhaps two hundred feet from the stage. Consequently, theater performances are stylized; no matter how effective or lifelike, they are always unnatural.

Film actors, on the other hand, do not have to project dramatically; they can afford to be more natural. The camera comes to them, zooms in on their faces, hands, and bodies in close-up, and captures minute changes in expression in excruciating detail. The close-up replaces the intimacy of the lucky theatergoer with an orchestra seat with an intimacy impossible in the theater. Film can even eliminate the actor, and just give us

words and images without a speaker. "The visual image," Jack Jorgens argues, "may exclude the speaker and even more directly work to embody the lines, making the character a voice-over commentator" (quoted in Shaugnessy 27). Film can give us Shakespeare without actors, as well as silent soliloquies, read as inner thoughts.

Film is the height of artifice; its effect, somewhat paradoxically, is to hide its means of production. The main—and unique—effect of film is to create an uncomplicated view of reality. Film, unlike theater, can depict reality, dramatic reenactments of reality, realistic fiction, fantasy, and far-out science fiction with equal effectiveness. Furthermore, film offers artists the chance to cut up and rearrange reality to create, effectively, an unlimited number of different realities. Although shots are framed, and sometimes carefully composed and balanced like paintings or drawings, the frame of the screen does not suggest a totality of reality. Instead, the camera shows us a distinct part of reality; it must convince the viewer that that the reality it shows extends in all directions beyond the screen. Therefore, the camera is less a window into another, equally real world than an invisible eyeball gliding effortlessly through it.

By nature, film and theater—especially universally revered theater such as Shakespeare—are at odds. The main thrust of Shakespeare, and theater in general, is its language. Films, on the other hand, are all about pictures. "It's true that Shakespeare's structural rhythms, the counterpoint between scenes, often work in the same way as good film editing," director Peter Hall suggests.

> But, in a more important respect, Shakespeare is no screenwriter. He is a verbal dramatist, relying on the associative and metaphorical power of words. Action is

> secondary. What is meant, is said. Even his stage action is verbalized before or after the event. This is bad screen writing. A good film script relies on contrasting visual images. What is spoken is of secondary importance. And so potent is the camera in convincing us that we are peering at reality, that dialogue is best underwritten or elliptical…The verbal essence of Shakespeare is inescapably non-cinematic. (Manvell 125-126)

Hall taps into the basic problem with Shakespeare on screen: it is too talky and its scenes are too long for the screenplay's—and audience's—short attention span.

Since most of us rarely see silent movies anymore, it is easy to forget that films rely mainly on images—and not on words—to convey their stories and themes. Even though nearly every film is based on a screenplay, screenplays are not scripts in the conventional sense. Because they are primarily concerned with setting up what shots and images will be shown on screen, they are almost unreadable. To read a play without stage directions can be confusing at times, but in general the reader's understanding of the story will not suffer that much. Shakespeare tends to hint at stage directions in the dialogue, so almost no narrative detail is lost. To skip over slug lines and shot headers in a screenplay misses the entire point of reading it. The visuals form the screenplay's essence. Characters do not speak pages, or even paragraphs of dialogue. Scenes are extremely short, usually a page or less in length, can be complexly intercut, and can

number one hundred or more in a normal movie. Lastly, point of view constantly changes in film, and is very important as to how an audience reads a scene.

While a play is written around the dialogue, a screenplay is formatted around the visuals, which are meant to carry the meaning that playwrights convey in dialogue. A wealth of information in film can be conveyed without words. For example, in David Mamet's The Verdict, the main character, a washed-up attorney for a comatose medical malpractice victim, initially views his case as a quick settlement and the comatose patient as a guaranteed cash cow. But when he visits the hospital to photograph the patient, he begins to see her as a human being. His Polaroid photos of her develop before his (and our) eyes, visually depicting a real person coming into view. No play could use this image effectively—the transformation would probably have to be drawn with words. Shakespeare's Henry V does just this, demonstrating Henry's trepidations before the Battle of Agincourt in a long soliloquy. Henry's words supply the images of king and slave to demonstrate that nothing, save ceremony, separates the two. The verbiage takes considerable time—Henry soliloquizes for over a page (fifty-four lines)—unlike the moments the photo in The Verdict takes to develop. Including literal images of slaves, kings, and ceremony as Henry speaks, however, would have proved too ludicrous to be effective.

Beyond formatting, the narrative structure of screenplays is far more a fixed form than that of stage plays. Most screenplays run about one hundred twenty pages, which corresponds to two hours of screen time. Within these pages, two major plot points—events that spin the movie into a new direction—divide the text into three acts. The first act runs about thirty pages, sets up the protagonist, defines the other main characters and

situations, and culminates in a major plot twist of some sort that sets up the second act. In Chinatown, screenwriter Robert Towne's first act introduces his protagonist, Jake Gittes, and shows his sleazy, private detective work and lifestyle in action, through his work for Evelyn Mulray. When the real Evelyn Mulray enters Gittes' office, he realizes he has been duped, and the action turns in a new direction—a textbook plot point has occurred. The next sixty pages compose the second act, which presents rising action, typically a series of setbacks for the protagonist and minor plot points which inevitably lead to the second major plot point. Chinatown's detective gets closer and closer to the truth about who Evelyn Mulray is and how her husband died. The plot point occurs when Gittes discovers Noah Cross's incest with Evelyn and figures out that he killed Mr. Mulray. Typically, by this point, all important plot details have been revealed, and the protagonist's course of action is pretty much defined—only the final outcome is a mystery. The final thirty pages are the third and final act, which incorporates the climax and denouement of the story. Gittes sets up a scheme to save Evelyn and her daughter, confronts Noah Cross and tries to get him arrested, and miserably fails to win any justice at all in Chinatown's final act. Not all screenplays follow this format, but such a staggering number do that it becomes what we expect, consciously or unconsciously, in a movie.

Shakespeare's plays, notably Henry V, follow similar narrative strategies. Shakespeare uses the first act of Henry V to set up the action and almost all the important characters. Acts two through four hold rising action, which climaxes at the Battle of Agincourt. After the Battle, act five clears up the loose ends and wraps up the story. This closely resembles the three-act structure of screenplays, with the exception that the

middle "act" is proportionally longer than that of a screenplay. Henry V does not, however, offer major plot points as clear-cut as those in most screenplays. This is because Shakespeare offers parallel story lines, that of Henry and his nobles, and that of Pistol and the common soldiers, so the first plot point is split between Henry's tennis ball's speech, and the death of Falstaff, which corresponds to the commoners' departure for war. The two points are connected thematically, of course, but occur in different scenes. The second major plot point is also troubling, because after Henry wins the Battle of Agincourt, his course of action in the fifth act is to secure Katherine's hand in marriage. Since Henry never meets or discusses his designs on Katherine, only from a political perspective does Henry's victory connect with his desire for Katherine. For the most part, though, the structure of Henry V lends itself fairly well to film, even though the amount of dialogue and its status in image- and theme-making does not.

An audience experiences Shakespeare quite differently on screen than on stage. Theater audiences are always tacitly asked to conspire with the performers to make the performance work. We must take an active role in the experience, because without our imaginations working on the show before us, all we will see are costumes, sets, and actors. In essence, in the theater we create the performance as much as the performers do. We can become engrossed in a play, care deeply for the characters, and sympathize with their conditions, but we never really lose the sense that before us are actors acting out a play. At any point, we can look away or leave the theater to escape the play world. The theater actually draws its power through this tension of artifice and verisimilitude.

Another crucial factor of the theatergoing experience is that we get the sense that we are witnessing a unique performance, which, though rehearsed, is created on the spot for our enjoyment. Not only is a performance a unique event, prone to any sort of error or deviation from the script, the audience members themselves, through interaction with the performers and with each other, exert some sort of power over the performance. This is most evident in comedy, because the laughter of the audience drastically alters the flow and timing of the players. Theatergoing has a history of being an opportunity for the rich to see and be seen. Even today, many theaters are set up in such a way that audience members can see each other, face to face as it were, even across the stage. Since during a play we can direct our attention anywhere we want, onstage or off, we may find ourselves looking at the audience itself. The paintings, chandeliers, and rococo architecture of the older, opera-house-style playhouses gives even more reason for the eye to wander. Seeing other people's reactions during a play helps shape our own.

While audience interaction is also a factor in how one enjoys a movie, it does not affect the movie in nearly the same way. A film by its very nature as an art object is not unique; it is reproduced thousands of times and distributed to theaters all over the world. Likewise, a performance of a movie—its projection—is not unique. A film-going experience, however, *is*. The quality of picture and sound clearly affect one's enjoyment of a film, but the filmmakers have no power over that aspect of performance. Audience interaction can also have a great impact on our movie-going experience. If a hundred people around you laugh wildly through a comedy or sob through a melodrama, you are more likely to get caught up in their enthusiasm, and drawn further into the film. If, on the other hand, you saw the same film in a nearly empty theater, the film would probably

make less of an impression. Unlike in a playhouse, however, you have less of a chance to actually see anyone else in the audience when all are seated facing the same way in the dark. Besides, the hugeness of the screen, as compared to the human-sized actors on stage, dominates our visual field. While one chooses to look away from the screen to break out of the action, modern movie theaters provide nothing else to look at, save for the glowing red exit signs. For film purists, the quality of the print, screen, and speakers usually has more to do with one's enjoyment of a film than the audience surrounding them. For mainstream audiences, audience interaction is more likely to have a greater effect.

The film itself takes no cues from the audience, and plays start to finish the same way whether the theater is empty or packed, yet we experience it differently each time. The key difference from theater, however, is that, aside from covering our ears or eyes, we have no control over what we see or hear in the film. The camera directs our attention to what are deemed the most important elements of a scene. The theater grants our eyes the freedom to wander about the stage, to pick out what we find interesting as opposed to what the director deems important.

Film tends to favor shot-reaction shot compositions for conversations between characters. Except for the occasional reaction shot, our attention is pointed to the speaker at all times. Without the ability to switch our attention at will, we lose up to half the conversation. If a film actor is speaking for any length of time while turned away from the camera, the effect is rare enough to be interesting in and of itself. Plus, we rarely see uncut conversations taking place on film. We really see two or three different conversations, different takes from different points of view, cut up and spliced together.

The actors might not even be reacting to each other. An actor on film might seem to be reacting to a door's slam in another shot, while during filming he might be reacting to a gunshot. How we read shots, then, has to do with the order in which they come.

Film, as a medium that brings to us a vision of uncomplicated reality, tends not to be nearly as self-reflexive as theater. Most plays tend to be, directly or indirectly, about play-acting, theatricality, or art in general, at least in some marginal way. Shakespeare's plays, rife with cross-dressing, mistaken identity, and plays-within-plays, are prime examples of theater reflecting upon its own devices. The nature of art is a difficult theme to avoid in such an artificial medium. Only a handful of films, on the other hand, intentionally reflect on their own making, or on the artifice behind films in general. Whereas theater patrons never forget they are watching a play, only very astute moviegoers never let go of the idea that they are watching a film. The rest of us, whether for a few minutes of a few hours, can get lost in the image world movies create. Film has the power to cut up, rearrange, and probe into reality, to show us both things that we never could see before due to limitations of normal vision, and things that never existed in the first place. Even though the world it creates is as false, constructed, and contrived as can be, it is also the most convincingly realistic and complete one art can create. Therein lies its greatest strength.

All in all, film excels at slicing up and reconstructing reality, or a meticulously set-up "reality," to form visual narratives. The resulting reconstructions have become, through advances in skill and our own adaptations to the new narrative forms, an effective substitute for or escape from reality as we know it. Theater, on the other hand,

does not attempt to reconstruct reality. Instead, it excels at providing charismatic view of reality, more effective because the performance originates outside reality.

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King Henry as Character, as King

Since Henry V is not Shakespeare's most well read or well-respected play—many critics dismiss it as an insubstantial sequel to the more significant Falstaff plays—it is somewhat of a surprise that Henry V films signify the beginning and the rebirth of important and popular Shakespeare films. The play's pro-British stance and military aspect certainly helped Olivier get funding for his project during World War II. Olivier's famous result certainly paved the way for Branagh's competing interpretation. But why would two respected actors choose Henry V for their directorial debut? Quite possibly because the character of King Henry himself is essentially an actor directing.

Shakespeare's King Henry is so complex that the only critical consensus about his nature is that the play presents a myriad of Henrys. This is especially aggravating because one's interpretation of Henry's character determines the tone of the entire play. "For some," critic Karl P. Wentersdorf writes, "the play presents the story of an ideal monarch and glorifies his achievements; for them, the tone approaches that of an epic lauding the military virtues. For others, the protagonist is a Machiavellian militarist who professes Christianity but whose deeds reveal both hypocrisy and ruthlessness; for them, the tone is predominantly one of mordant satire" (Wentersdorf, 264). The purpose of this section is not to pin down the nature of Shakespeare's Henry, but to explore the many different, and often conflicting of views the complex and multi-faceted character provides.

When taken as the sequel to the Henry IV plays, Henry V clearly unravels the Machiavellian machine that lies behind the popular king. One can easily see King Henry the image-maker as the fully matured Prince Hal. By manipulating the world around him, Hal writes himself into an updated version of the Prodigal Son parable. Prince Hal spends his youth creating an image of himself as a profligate waste, only to discard that impression in favor of another, equally constructed image, of a pious, just, and responsible leader. As soon as he dons the crown, King Henry banishes Falstaff the first time he sees him, saying, "I know thee not, old man" (2 Henry IV, 5.5.45). King Henry continues: "Presume not that I am the thing I was, / For God doth know, so shall the world perceive, / That I have turned away my former self; / So I will those that kept me company" (2 Henry IV, 5.5.54-57). Even here, Henry literally directs the movements and thoughts of his subjects to construct his image and his place inside myth. While certain performances have Henry wince tears that this remark, the words themselves are cold and calculated, and represent the logical extension of Hal's first soliloquy in 1 Henry IV, where he says,

> I know you all, and will a while uphold
> The unyoked humour 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 to be himself,
> Being wanted he may be more wondered at
> By breaking through the foul and ugly mists

Of vapours that did seem to strangle him. (1.2.173-181)

These lines indicate that Henry planned from the start to cast off his friends and the character of his misspent youth as soon as he assumed the throne. The entire time Hal spends as he laughs and drinks with Falstaff and his cronies in Eastcheap, he was really biding his time until he could throw them off and assume the throne. Not only is the new king "more wondered at" by his subjects thanks to embodying the Prodigal Son who returns to the fold, Hal's drinking days endow him with wit and personality his more righteous brothers lack. It takes no great stretch of the imagination to perceive King Henry as the same sort of image-making machine.

There is debate, however, as to whether King Henry V is the same character as Prince Hal in the Henry IV plays. Some critics consider the Henry in Henry V to be an entirely different character than Prince Hal in the preceding plays. "It has been argued," critic Wentersdorf writes, "that in developing the character of Henry V, Shakespeare jettisoned his earlier concept of Prince Hal—an independent person who goes his own way and thinks for himself—and introduced into the final Lancastrian play a pious young man given to action rather than thought, who seeks advice from others and acts upon it." (267). Wentersdorf heartily and rightly disagrees, maintaining "to accept this view is to fall into the dramatic fallacy"—that is, to see Henry this way is to see the image he projects, to see him exactly how he wants to be seen, not as Henry the human being or character, but as Henry the performance (267).

It is easy, however, to imagine that Henry only seems to seek and act upon others' advice, to prevent his subjects viewing him as a tyrant. "The young king," Wentersdorf argues, "is obviously concerned, partly if not primarily, with building up his public image

as a righteous monarch, earnestly devoted to justice and prudently willing to accept advice form his competent and more experienced elders" (Wentersdorf 267). Henry the image-builder could coerce his subjects, even his elders such as Canterbury and Exeter, to provide him with just the right advice to fully put his plans into action. Shakespeare's play depicts Henry in neither backroom dealings nor arguments with his so-called advisors, which causes some to form an uncomplicated impression of him as a just and pious king. But if we hold onto the image of Prince Hal, the great performer and manipulator, when we view King Henry in front of his nobles in the play's second scene, we may infer the calculation behind every action and every word.

Others argue that the play represents the struggle, or at least the disparity, between the public and private life of the King. "The character of Henry," critic Shaw points out, "is frequently described in terms of his split of dual 'presence'—not in the quasi-mystical sense of 'The King's Two Bodies,' but as two, separate, unrelated beings, one public, one private; one present, one absent; one speaking, one silent; one good, one evil." (117). These two presences might correspond with the tension within King Henry of private cause versus public good. Critic Brownell Salomen contends that this struggle unifies the structure of the entire play (Salomen 344). "An essential tenet of sixteenth-century political morality" Salomen argues, is "that the needs of the commonwealth take precedence over the welfare of private citizens. So often did that sentiment find expression in Tudor literature that is attained proverbial status" (344-45). In this dichotomy, "'private' is equated with negative, solipsistic values, and 'public' with the positive societal values' (344-45).

Although Henry is at all times a public figure, his motivations are often private. For instance, Henry has no political motive for renewing Edward the Black Prince's claim other than to turn his subject's minds away from internal quarrels, and thus ease his domestic pressures. Furthermore, Henry cannot provide the soldier Williams with anything more than an inconclusive, confusing argument that the war is just, which underlines our suspicions that the campaign is Henry's war, not England's. At some points, the play seems to present the trappings of power, the suffering of Henry, who must turn his back on his old life and old friends to lead his country effectively.

Henry's hanging of his onetime boyhood cronies Bardolph and Nym can be read as a sign of a ruthless lack of human compassion, or a selfless act, Henry's sacrifice of his private feelings for the public cause of the war effort. The latter interpretation undiluted by the former is difficult to support. After all, Prince Hal already cast off his private life in favor of his public one, so it is difficult to believe he really feels for these people he calls, from his first soliloquy, "base contagious clouds." Furthermore, the army fights a war of conquest—the army is not defending its homeland or its national interest, but the King's claim—so the so-called public cause of the war seems more like a private cause of King Henry, a desire to create and star in his own myth.

"Our difficulties in understanding the King," Hernan writes, "are intensified by the almost total absence from the play of speeches in which Henry speaks as a private man, directly revealing his own feelings." (Hernan 272, as quoted on Shaw 118). "Some critics," Shaw reports, "believe the private Henry has disappeared behind his public responsibility. 'Harry the man is now kept private, suppressed in favor of Harry the king, who is nearly always on public display…The private man is subsumed by the public

office' (Calderwood 141)" (117-18). But the public side of Henry may very well be a construction Henry designed to mask his true intentions, legitimate his vision, and reshape his personal goals in terms of the nation. To view Henry this way, however, is to deny that the character that lies beneath this façade is in any way accessible to our understanding.

Perhaps nothing exists behind that vision. The critic Una Ellis-Fermor believes just that, arguing that Henry "is never off the platform; even when alone in a moment of weariness and of intense anxiety…his brain automatically delivers a public speech where another man utter a cry of despair, or weariness or of prayer. It is in vain that we look for the personality of Henry behind the king: there is nothing else there" (Ellis-Fermor 107, as quoted on Shaw 118). The critic Norman Rabkin concludes that in Henry V, "Shakespeare reveals the conflicts between the private selves with which we are born and the public selves we must become, between our longing that authority figures be like us and our suspicion that they must have traded away their inwardness for the sake of power. The play contrasts our hope that society can solve our problems with our knowledge that society has never done so" (as quoted in Shaw 118).

Some maintain that the play paradoxically presents both Henrys—the Machiavellian machine solely bent on achievement, and the tortured human being caught between conflicting public and private lives. "Some critics believe that Shakespeare's characterization of Henry simultaneously points the king in two different directions, one glorifying Henry, the other denigrating him." (Shaw 118). This would explain why so many opposing interpretations of Henry exist: the effect is intentional. Structurally, too,

the play supports this argument, with the Chorus presenting the popular view of Henry as England's greatest and most successful king, while Henry presents a less idealized portrait of himself, leading the audience to question what the Chorus tells us.

Other critics try to find a middle ground amidst all these arguments and find in Henry a more complex, more human figure, self-serving but also sacrificing for the good of the commonweal, a good king who struggles against his personal demons to become a great one. "Most twentieth-century critics," critic William P. Shaw writes, "have abandoned the prevailing view of earlier critics that Shakespeare's characterization of Henry V is unequivocally favorable; they believe instead that Henry V is riddled with ironies and ambiguities that undermine the traditional image of Henry as the 'Mirror of Christian Kings.'" (117). "Henry is by no means the monster he has seemed to some critics," Wentersdorf argues, "witness his appeal to the French king to spare his subjects the horrors of war (II.iv.102-9); given the exigencies of the military situation, the threats made to the Governor or Harfleur are not the expression of a blood-thirsty delight in death and destruction for their own sake, but rather an effective piece of psychological warfare. On the other hand, however, Henry is not the saintly leader of a crusade. He is a soldier-adventurer engaged in war for shrewd political motives that have as much to do with potential troubles at home as with territorial gains abroad" (Wentersdorf, 286). Shaw remarks that "a number of these critics [who perceive the ambiguities in Henry's character], however, are perplexed as to why these ambiguities seem incapable of performance" (117). Although Wentersdorf refers to stage performances, much of the ambiguity in Henry's character is indeed lost in both the Olivier and Branagh films.

Films' short running times and even shorter attention spans typically do not accommodate such an enigmatic figure very well. Film excels at image making—at presenting a character in such ways that the audience immediately knows how to judge him. Both Olivier and Branagh exploit this by casting their respective Henrys in movie terms. Olivier's grace and pluck render Henry a matinee idol, an Errol Flynn. From his stunning entrance in silhouette to his victorious but war-torn march as blond-mopped king, Branagh quotes both Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker from Star Wars, to visualize Henry's divided nature. Of course, the films omissions and revisions to the script necessarily simplify Henry's character.

Simplification is not the crime some critics would have us believe. After all, no Shakespeare film should expect its audience to know everything about Henry's evolution through the Henry IV plays and his shaky claim to the throne engendered in Richard II. After all, theatrical performances, too, must account for an unknowledgeable audience. Theater directors also omit Henry's most grievous acts when it suits their visions.

It is true, however, that the essence of Shakespeare's creation, his ambiguity, is largely lost. "Though both films present very different Henrys, different types of heroes," the critic Shaw points out, "they are similar in that both remove any taint of ambiguity from the king and provide portrayals of Henry as an uncompromised, heroic figure." (Shaw 120).

> Clearly, since an 'ambiguous' Henry is at odds with the preconceptions and purposes of Olivier and Branagh, neither of their Henrys is seen to conspire with the scheming archbishop to accept his war money and a claim

> to France in exchange for his defeating the Church land confiscation bill in Commons. Since neither Olivier nor Branagh implicates the king, here, Henry is perceived to be acting on what he believes to be a legitimate claim to France, and his war is less venal aggression than noble crusade. His cause being just, the film can establish a heroic, rather than ironic tone. (Shaw 122)

Shaw clearly believes that both films miss the point of the play: the irony of nationalistic fervor, of belief in an essentially unjust cause. Shaw's statement is not entirely correct. Truly, Henry comes out heroically at the end of both films, but not precisely because we believe his cause to be legitimate or just. After all, both films throw out practically all concern about Henry's cause as soon as the fighting begins. Furthermore, Shaw does not mention the ironic commentary on war and politics the visuals in both films make.

In Olivier's version, the claim Henry makes on France is provided, albeit sketchily, by the dunderhead Archbishop and his doltish assistant. The claim itself is ridiculous and practically cannot be heard under all the laughter. Omitting it from the play is a disservice to the audience that clearly boosts Henry's heroic standing. Anyone who has seen or read the play, however, could see that glossing over Henry's convoluted and essentially unjust claim implicates both Henry, the mastermind of the ceremony, and the officials. The tableau essentially tells the audience members in the know that causes and justice have no place in politics, and shows us that fools lead us into war.

Branagh suggests injustice and intrigue by subtly suggesting an alliance between Exeter and the Archbishop. This intrigue, not present in Shakespeare's text itself, is

accomplished entirely visually, through exchanges of looks and physical proximity of the characters to each other. Branagh's Henry enters as Darth Vader; a moving shadow that projects a menacing, inhuman force. Not until far later in the film, when he weeps for Bardolph, or carries the dead boy across the field, can we trust in his humanity. Henry's cause is more clearly laid out in Branagh's film, but the Archbishop's speech still is difficult to decipher. As his ironic closing—"So that, as clear as is the summer's son"—suggests, the true point of the speech is that it is practically impossible to understand. It does not matter that we cannot understand it; in both film versions, and indeed the play itself, the lords are not listening either. Branagh's film achieves a heroic tone not because Henry's cause is just, but because the young king overcomes his past and vanquishes his inner demons. Like Arjuna in the Bhagavad-Gita, Henry's battlefield literalizes his inner struggle, and his military victory mirrors his victory within.

Olivier best captures the Machiavellian qualities of Henry's character, whose surface is the true "mirror to all Christian kings." "Olivier's Henry," Shaw contends, "is a chivalrous hero-king who experiences no personal or domestic turmoil" (Shaw 121). He is practically not a real person at all. The Globe scenes, in which we first meet and finally part with Henry, show Henry to be foremost a performance, the spontaneous yet well-rehearsed creation of an actor. In this way, Olivier smartly capitalizes on Shakespeare's themes of ceremony and theatricality.

We first glimpse Olivier's Henry backstage, as actor Richard Burbage, as he pauses in front of the stage door, clears his throat, then assumes the stage to rousing applause. He is dressed for obvious theatrical effect: a weighty crown sits atop his head;

his costume and his lips are the bright red of horror movie blood. We see that *Olivier* the actor portrays *Burbage* the actor, who in turn portrays *Henry* the actor, who in turn performs the role of *king* for his court. From the first entrance, the act of performing is foregrounded in Henry's character. Furthermore, with all the indirection as to who Henry is (Burbage? Olivier? the actor? the director?) the inner depths of his character are, at least for now, unknowable. This is entirely appropriate, actually, since Prince Hal/King Henry is a particularly beguiling Shakespearean figure.

Olivier's Henry always addresses an audience, which is exemplified, in his first speech, his response to the gift of tennis balls. Olivier is careful to show that Henry is presented the tennis balls not only in front of his court, but also in front of the play-going audience in the theater. A long shot centered on Henry with his nobles and the theater patrons circled around him sets this up. When the tennis balls are revealed, the playgoers laugh wildly at the boldness of the jest. Henry, fully aware that his every move is being scrutinized, pauses with air of casualness. He knows that the audience demands a comeback, and he must consider carefully how to calculate an effect. Before he speaks, he grins his red lips wickedly then drops his smile to look even more menacing. When Olivier's mouth opens, we are terrified not only by his words or even their effect, but also by the calculation that lies behind them.

Olivier fills the stage with his definitive movements and gestures, as well as his booming voice, to present a powerful image of the king. Olivier begins his speech sitting down in a relaxed posture, but soon (at the word "rackets") uncrosses his legs and hunches forward, arms on the armrests of the throne. As his voice crescendos, he slowly rises out of his seat. At the work "crown"—the loudest, most important word yet—

Oliver stands with a start. Like "crown," he punctuates the most important words—those central to his threat—"hazard" and "France" with great volume. His voice and actions are united in a front against the Dauphin's threat.

Olivier's voice stands out from the rest because he positively roars, yet still forms his words with almost inhuman precision. In fact, Olivier's Henry speaks so loud you sometimes cannot understand what he says—he practically overloads the microphone—but it is unmistakable what he means. The theatrical style of his voice befits his role as an actor on stage. Added to the fact that all else are silent, and practically motionless when he speaks, the sheer volume of his voice suggests that he is speaking to everyone—his court, the playgoers, the French court, and the film-goers as well.

Henry's movements are also emblematic of his role as play-king. As he speaks, Henry points menacingly at the messenger, gets off the throne, and then walks threateningly toward him. But, unexpectedly, he walks right past the messenger, who disappears into the crowd, and addresses the audience. This shows that Henry does not see the messenger—or, by extension, the Dauphin—as a legitimate threat. He is more concerned about presenting an image. Therefore, he moves about the four corners of the stage like a home run hitter rounding bases. He brandishes his arms as freely and easily as he will the arms of war. His acting is as stylized as his costume, his red lips, and his stage-throne room. More importantly, he sets himself onstage and onscreen against the play-going audience, notably the privileged men sitting on stage, who sit right next to him as he enounces and waves. This underlines, once again, that this speech is a performance, and Henry, Burbage, and Olivier all know it and manipulate it to their benefit.

After his diatribe is over, Henry the King reverts to Burbage the actor, who exchanges an elaborate series of bows with the other actors and the cheering audience. Henry then takes off his crown and nonchalantly ring-tosses it onto the back of his throne in a delightful bit of *sprezzatura*. This effortless yet highly choreographed action foregrounds that the crown—what Henry fights for and with—is a mere prop for a performance and that Olivier/Burbage/Henry is a consummate actor. To toss a crown demonstrates it, as a symbol or an object, has no aura for him; it is no magic feather; Henry knows his power exists without it. In fact, Henry proves himself the perfect actor, because he transcends the magic of the theater, and is not caught up in the power of his performance.

We see exactly the same sort of Henry throughout the film, even in his only private moment, watching the sunrise before the Battle of Agincourt. Henry waxes on about kingship, saying, "what have kings that privates have not too, / Save ceremony, save general ceremony" (4.1.221-22). He assures us that he is a common man, merely wrapped in the trappings and accoutrements of a king. His speech is delivered in a voice-over as the camera zooms further and further into Henry's face, indicating that we are hearing his thoughts. And what tautly constructed, well-ordered thoughts they are, perfectly rendered in soft tones to portray, and even console, the troubled and weary king. These words are not the thoughts of a troubled and common soul, but a performance, practically a public speech on the topic of performance. Because the weariness and doubt are never otherwise expressed in Olivier's zestfully overconfident portrayal, however, the voice-over seems to derive not from Henry's inner depths, but from outside him, as if Olivier himself were assuaging the play-king's fears.

All in all, Olivier's Henry is nearly impenetrable, as unknowable as the Prince Hal of the Henry IV plays. As a great white shark will die if it stops swimming, Olivier's king will die if he stops acting. Henry's lack of emotional depth and constant drive for conquest renders this king frightening and inhuman despite his dashing and boyish demeanor; he is, as one critic regards Shakespeare's Henry, "an amiable monster." By showing us a true play king who essentially goes out into the real world and convinces everyone around him that his power is real and his word should be followed, Olivier effectively dramatizes the theatricality of politics. In that, Olivier film succeeds at conveying one of the plays most important themes.

Unlike Olivier, and as sort of a commentary on Olivier's performance, Branagh represents Henry as both the Machiavel and the trapped man. Branagh portrays Henry as a real king in a real-life story, not a play-king in a play. Nevertheless, his Henry is concerned with ceremony, both acting and appearances. Branagh's Henry enters in silhouette, a black shadow pacing from the intense light of an immense, even heavenly space, to a dimly lit throne room full of expectant lords. He projects the presence of Darth Vader or Batman—resemblances familiar to any modern filmgoer—but notably, we cannot see him. Not until he is fully seated on his throne and all eyes are on him do we see his face and get a good indication of his age and the size of his body.

After so austere and grand an entrance, Henry shucks his great cloak, cutting his body mass two thirds, and barely fills the throne. He teeters and sits limply, his hair disheveled, the crown swimming round his head, appearing boyish and pimply, never trying to mask his profound boredom. Compared to the Darth Vader that entered the

room, Henry on the throne seems a puny spoiled brat. This diminishment of power suggests that Branagh's Henry can act—that is, he knows how to construct an image—but he chooses not to when he deems acting inappropriate. More likely, this Henry is the same consummate actor that Olivier portrays, but adopts the guise of not acting, of really listening to his advisors and getting emotionally involved in the Dauphin's insult.

By appearing never to be acting, however, it becomes difficult to separate Branagh's acting from Henry's, and vice-versa. Branagh clearly *wants* us to believe his Henry is a real human being, presented in the most natural manner. Nevertheless, we can only believe we are seeing the genuine Henry at all times if we ignore the fact that he is acting sometimes—his vivid threats at Harfleur, a tactical bluff for his weakened army, come to mind. When we realize that this Henry sometimes acts and frequently acts natural, his appearance as a genuine human in any given moment becomes suspect. Overall then, Branagh's Henry must be seen as an actor, though distinctly different than Olivier's interpretation. While Olivier's Henry is little more than a series of images—the bombastic speaker, the knight-at-arms, the victorious and graceful general—Branagh's Henry centers on one performance: Henry the real-life man who overcomes the demons of his past, conquers those of his present, and authors his own future.

The success story of Henry the King is also the success story of Henry/Olivier/Branagh the director. They play to the audience, performing their roles not to affect the nature of a real person, but to affect our natures. In essence, their actions direct us.

-3-

King and Chorus

Not only does the King play director in Henry V; the Chorus does too. While Henry directs all those around him, the Chorus specifically directs us, the audience. As we shall see, his role in the play is quite similar to the directors' roles in their respective films.

The Chorus opens Henry V by calling to question an assumed given of the theater-going experience: the ability of a story to be told. "Can this cock-pit hold / The vasty fields of France?" he asks in the middle of his Prologue. "Or may we cram / Within this wooden O the very casques / That did affright the air at Agincourt?" (11-14). With its broad scope of noble characters, fantastic events, far-off settings, and time span of years, the story itself threatens to overflow the humble theater. "O for a muse of fire," the Chorus pines,

> that would ascend
> The brightest heaven of invention:
> A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,
> And monarchs to behold the swelling scene. (1-4)

Compared to this imaginary muse, the theater is a sham, it cannot produce reality or even recreate a believable facsimile thereof, and the Chorus apologizes accordingly for its failings.

If anything could be referred to as a "muse of fire," it would be the camera, specifically the movie camera. Photography offers a medium where the Shakespeare's quill pen gives way to pure light as the story-telling instrument. The effect, of course, is a feeling of reality and immediacy that writing can only hope to capture. The Chorus here seems to anticipate the advent of film, a medium ostensibly more suitable to the sweep of Shakespeare's play than the theater itself. To think that alone, however, is only to scratch the surface of the Chorus's meaning.

On the surface, the Chorus warns us that the story of Henry V, and his persona by extension, are so vast, unwieldy, and complex that the stage cannot contain them. Obviously, the theater cannot present the entire Battle of Agincourt, nor can it transport us to the French court, or even to Southampton. The Chorus need not bemoan this, however: the audience knows theater has its limitations; the stage is not the real world, and no one expects it to be. Furthermore, there is nothing special about the staging of Henry V. As scholar Lawrence Danson puts it, "it is no harder to bring forth an Agincourt than a Bosworth Field; and moonlight in the Athenian woods tests the theatrical muscle as much as do flickering campfires in France" (27). In other words, if Shakespeare felt it necessary to apologize every time he broke the unity of time or setting, all his plays would open with a similar Prologue—but they do not. Evidently, then, the Chorus has a deeper agenda for pointing out the technological inadequacies of the stage. On one level—the less interesting level—the Chorus cleverly extols Henry's character and achievements as too grand in sweep and scope for staging; the revered king's greatness overreaches and overruns all the company can accomplish. Beyond

that,—on the more interesting level—the Chorus means to engage the audience in a myth-making ritual, to form the story and the character of King Henry in our imaginations, the only space large enough to contain them.

Far from directing our attention away from play-actors and theatrical devices—and their failure to represent reality—as the Chorus entreats us, his apology directs our attention to these devices, and lets us see them for the devices they are. While everyone consciously understands that a play is not real life, in the best cases, we get caught up in the sweep of the story and in the charms of the characters. The devices of the theater, though always clearly devices in front of our eyes, become invisible. Shakespeare's Chorus serves as a check against that, and consequently against blindly falling into nationalistic fervor—an important check in what many critics consider a bluntly jingoistic play. The Chorus reminds us periodically that we cannot view the play as anything but a performance, conjured up by the imagination and ingenuity of, and the technology available to, both cast and crew. In short, foregrounding theatrical artifice is intended to make the audience to reflect on theatricality itself. Shakespeare wants the audience to enjoy the play and to get caught up in its action, of course, but he also hopes that some in his audience will step back from the action and reflect on its nature, and, by extension, the nature of their enjoyment of it. An attentive and sophisticated audience member might connect the theatricality of the play with its real-life, present-day subject matter—politics, religion, and war—where theatricality abounds but is rarely called as such.

By framing his film with a performance in an Elizabethan theater, Olivier centralizes the play's theme of theatricality. We the movie audience first encounter Henry, his enemies, and his entourage, nearly the same way a theater audience would: as actors playing parts. We also encounter a theater audience, who shout at the actors, applaud madly, sit on the stage, and otherwise participate in the performance. Since film does not offer the same intimate interaction between audience and actors as does the theater, the Globe audience acts as our surrogate. They shape our experience of Henry V as much as the curtains, props, costumes, and actors do. These levels of mediation are "digested," however, when the camera zooms in on the backstage curtain, the theater and all its trappings dissolve, and we enter the more realistic world of Southampton. The Chorus moves us through progressive stages of realism—from the sound-stagy Southampton and French court to the location shooting of the Battle of Agincourt—and awaits us after we step out from Agincourt to the sound-stagy courting scene, and then return to the theater.

Olivier dramatizes the movement of the play out of the artificial theater, and into the more realistic world film produces. The Chorus moves us beyond the playhouse, ironically enough, by drawing us deeper into the stage. He narrates a shot that zooms so deep into the backstage curtain that the curtain and the Globe itself dissolve completely. As the film progresses further into the naturalistic setting and location shooting, the Chorus again appears, swirling in mid-air. The camera zooms out from him as he speaks, and he essentially dissolves into the film world itself. His narrative presence becomes a voice-over that accompanies images of the ocean, the ships, and the English camp. Shakespeare's deftly written speeches celebrating the power of language and imagination

are transfigured: the Chorus now celebrates the power of images to spark the imagination and to bring Shakespeare's words to life. Essentially, Olivier's Chorus boldly announces that Shakespeare's "muse of fire" has finally arrived.

The technological advances that occurred since Olivier's film enable and require Branagh to produce a richer, more realistic account than Olivier could, but they force the director to redefine the role of the Chorus. While Shakespeare's Chorus claims that he cannot conjure up the courts of France and England or a real battle of Agincourt on stage, for all intents and purposes, Branagh can. The "muse of fire" for which the Chorus pines now exists in a more fully realized state: the modern movie camera—smaller, cheaper, lighter, and more maneuverable than Olivier's—and all its trappings. Since Branagh's conception of a modern-looking Henry V does not require its audience to stretch its imagination quite that far to "behold the swelling scene," many of the Chorus's lines are rendered obsolete. To maintain textual accuracy, Branagh cannot cut the Chorus completely; instead he changes the nature of the role.

At first blush, Branagh's Chorus serves as an effective comment on the artfulness of the moviemaking trade. Though well acted and well spoken, Branagh's Chorus sticks out as conspicuously as a black eye on a beauty queen, mostly because his presence completely violates the linear timeline of the movie. The effect is completely intentional; his presence periodically reminds us that we are watching a modern film. His modern dress, a black trench coat and long white scarf, lifts him, and the film, out of the fourteenth century and into the twentieth. Breaking the timeline reminds us that the realism we experience is a deception. Intruding into the story world demonstrates its

falsity; on the cliffs of Southampton, for instance, he demonstrates that a movie is being shot there—and on location, too. The grandeur of the seaside cliffs he strolls along cries out that the actual shores of England and France are brought on one stage, just as the Shakespeare's Chorus would like. Branagh essentially winks at us with complicity in this shot; the height of artifice has been achieved.

Opening in the film studio displays the technology behind the camera, in much the same way as Olivier's Globe scenes pointed out the technological devices of the theater. Branagh also hints at the great lengths that he and his design team went to hide the technology of film and provide a feeling of authenticity. Branagh's elaborate and earthy sets, with their dramatic lighting and claustrophobic atmosphere, seem so authentic that one can barely imagine them confined to a studio. Yet they were; he, like Olivier, shot many scenes on a soundstage. The vintage equipment seen in the film studio shot suggests not what Branagh was using, but what Olivier may have used. While Olivier's style dramatizes the movement from the play's stage origins to the new medium of the film, Branagh's chooses Olivier's film as the departure point, and brings us from Olivier's stylistic and technological palettes to the present state of film art.

Beyond exposing the artifice of the theatrical medium, Shakespeare's Chorus also catalyzes audience participation, urging us to see beyond that artifice, to hyperextend our eyes' literal sight; in essence, he operates on the medium itself to surmount its technological shortcomings. Standing on the stage yet outside the play—situated essentially between the play and the audience—the Chorus can speak directly to the audience, and in a sense *directs* the audience, with unique authority. Because the Chorus

is ostensibly there to present the play, his words can catalyze audience participation without actually coming from within the play itself. While Shakespeare's Chorus directs audience attention toward theatrical devices, he neither celebrates their merits nor glorifies the representational possibilities they present. After all, he tells us that the stage presents nothing: the performers are mere "ciphers," the theater, a "wooden O" (13-16). By themselves, their sum is zero, but paradoxically, as a placeholder, the "crooked figure [zero] may attest in little place a million" (13-16). The audience, however, as long as it employs its imaginative faculties in cooperation with the efforts of cast and crew, can add the vital digit to those ciphers to make them valuable.

He asks the audience not only to use its imagination, but also to make imagination powerful: "Pierce out our imperfections with your thoughts," the Chorus instructs us.

> Into a thousand pieces divide one man,
> and make imaginary puissance.
> Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them,
> Printing their proud hoofs I'th' receiving earth;
> For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
> Carry them here and there
> jumping o'er times,
> turning th'accomplishment of many years
> Into an hourglass. (23-31)

Imagination is no mere plaything and no mere playmaker; in the words of the Chorus, imagination outreaches all forms of technology and artifice as the most powerful creative force.

Interestingly, the Chorus says virtually nothing about the language of the play. But just as the Chorus directs the audience, Shakespeare's words shape their imagination's performance. The Chorus, after all, stands on a blank Elizabethan stage, yet conjures up the "muse of fire" and the horses "Printing their proud hoofs I'th' receiving earth" with words alone (Prologue 1, 27). Language here manages the imagination and holds it within certain bounds; without this direction, there would be no play. Because of this power, in the Chorus's formulation, text—whether spoken ("when we talk") or written (in "printing")—is superior to imagery (Prologue 26-27). In a sense, the Prologue tacitly implies that Shakespeare's text is so good that no one will miss the absence of real kings and real battles. As long as we act as co-conspirator's with the performers, our imaginations, shaped by the playwright's powerful words, will flesh out a tale even better than the real thing.

Olivier's Chorus fits well into his intended role, an intermediary between the players, the theater crew (from the stagehands to the playwright), and the audience. He acts as Danson says the Chorus should, "to give a sense of perspective, to establish the figure against the ground. The Chorus is simultaneously an actor in the play and a privileged voice outside it" (29). Within the Globe Theater, Olivier plants the Chorus onstage in front of an audience. He speaks to the Globe audience, but at one point the camera closes in on him and he speaks directly to us, the film audience. We realize that we are an extension of the theater audience, and at the same time somehow privileged—the Chorus is aware of our presence; his words carry special meaning to us. By making

us see ourselves as part of an on-screen audience, the Chorus makes us all the more aware of being pulled from our seats into the fantasy world of the film.

Olivier preserves the privileged character of the Chorus by making him a sort of stage manager, in that he not only acts within the play, he acts upon it. In fact, he apparently controls the visual presentation of the film. He pulls the backdrop curtain between scenes, guides us to Southampton as the curtain dissolves, and returns us to the theater once more at the end for the final soliloquy. Because he opens and closes the show and seems in charge of the larger structure of the play, the Chorus stands above the play as a privileged figure. Yet the Chorus is something more than a stage manager or majordomo; he is a magician whose evocative speeches (the most poetic in the play) and simple gestures make the show appear and disappear, and cause the theater to vanish altogether, only to bring it back in the end. Olivier's Chorus literally makes the theater disappear, and presents the audience something Shakespeare couldn't: the imagination of the director.

Branagh's Chorus, in contrast to Olivier's, bears more of a sense of being inside the performance, but less of a sense of being in total control of it. As already noted, following a recent stage tradition, the Chorus's modern dress clashes with the period costumes. The main effect in the film is similar to that onstage: by virtue of his costume, the Chorus most closely resembles us, the modern film audience. This grants him special status: even more than Olivier's Chorus, Branagh's Chorus seems to know us, and to understand what we expect and long for in a story. His trench coat and breathless narration, however, separate the Chorus from the modern audience. Instead, they suggest

a character, a war correspondent running along the front lines, caught up in the heat of battle. While Olivier's Chorus drives the film forward by announcing and transporting us through stylistic shifts, Branagh's Chorus propels the narrative by being very much a part of it.

Olivier's Chorus comes off like a showman/magician as he tromps out on stage and performs the ultimate theatrical illusion, dissolving the theatrical curtain, and indeed the theater, altogether. Branagh's Chorus performs similar feats with style and panache, yet fails to achieve the same dramatic effect. For the most part, he does not appear to act upon the play or its presentation to any considerable degree. He appears on camera, but does not seem to *control* the camera. While his verbal and visual introduction of the conspirators before the Southampton scene attests to his foreknowledge of the film's events, such acts little for his abilities to bring them to us, or to make them real.

His only acts with broad dramatic and cinematic repercussions are the lighting of the match, and the opening and closing of the film studio doors. Igniting a match in the middle of a black screen literally invokes the "muse of fire," reminds the audience that the camera captures *light* with its mechanical eye, and what we see as unmediated reality is merely reflected light, flickering on a screen.

Opening and closing the studio doors, however, prove even more interesting. The acts mimic the pulling of the backstage curtain by Olivier's Chorus, with two important distinctions. First, in Branagh's version, these acts exist in time completely outside the performance, whose filmic style remains unaltered until the doors are closed upon it. Olivier's Chorus actually interrupts the film's narrative flow at certain points to alter our perception of the action. Branagh's Chorus enables the audience to see the play, but he

does not alter the way it sees the film, like Olivier's does. The underlying action in Branagh's film, sharply opposed to Olivier's, seems perpetual, never-ending, and inevitably historical as opposed to theatrical. Second, opening and shutting the doors mimics the opening and shutting of the camera shutter, the interminably blinking eyelid of the true author of the story: the camera.

That is the extent of the Chorus's special relationship with the camera, however. The camera follows the Chorus with great attentiveness, but it tracks him as he walks along the Southampton cliffs no more doggedly than it tracks Henry as he carries the dead boy across the battlefield at Agincourt. Perhaps when we do not see the Chorus, we might imagine him behind the camera, controlling our gaze. Nothing on screen suggests this, however. Film conceals its own mechanics—without a mirror, a camera cannot film itself filming; the camera and those behind it are always essentially anonymous. In effect, then, the Chorus represents the camera outside the proper story, but does not command it inside the story.

Shakespeare's Chorus not only remarks upon the means of production: like Henry himself, he is there to introduce the King. For the most part, the Chorus presents us with the popular, positive view of King Henry, the popular figure who sets "all the youth of England on fire" (2.0.1). Henry, on the other hand, offers challenges and insights into that view. In the same way "the Chorus," Danson argues, "can call attention to the play's inherent theatrical limitations at the same time that it invites us to revel in theatricality; and the play can show the human weakness of its hero at the same time that it celebrates his greatness" (Danson, 29). In Shakespeare's text, Chorus and the King have similar

roles, inhabit similar positions on stage, and even share a similar flair for poetic, figurative language. After all, as Danson points out, like the Chorus "the King too is only a man trying with limited resources to turn intractable reality into something resembling imaginative success" (Danson 1983, 30). Neither speaks on a sterile, intellectual plane, or spout convoluted intellectual arguments like Canterbury does; instead, they urge others to dismiss banal reality and approach their glorious visions.

The Chorus acts as Shakespeare's image-maker, a vital tool whose narrative fills out the drama, and fills in what cannot be dramatized. For instance, he brings us through both armies' camps before the battle of Agincourt:

> Now entertain conjecture of a time
> When murmur and the poring dark
> Fills the wide vessel of the universe.
> From camp to camp through the foul womb of night
> The hum of either army stilly sounds,
> That the fixed sentinels almost receive
> The secret whispers of each other's watch.
> Fire answers fire, and through their paly flames
> Each battle sees the other's umbered face.
> Steed threatens steed, in high and boastful neighs
> Piercing the night's dull ear, and from the tents
> The armourers, accomplishing the knights,
> With busy hammers closing rivets up,
> Give dreadful note of preparation. (4.0.1-14)

No staged scene could accommodate this much detail; even if it were attempted, with all the modern stage mechanics, lighting, and sound techniques, the effect would be silly and disastrous. Even on film, image and sound alone cannot evoke the mood nearly as well as the Chorus's synesthesia, which makes "murmurs" "creep" and the "dark" "pour." "The Chorus in Henry V," Danson argues,

> even while it professes the canons of naïve realism, shows how verbal art can overgo reality. The conjectured scene [the Chorus to Act 4] is so sensuously rich, its words at once so specific and suggestive, that (as the Olivier version shows) it becomes an embarrassment to the cinematographer's camera, which can only tag along and palely imitate what the instructed mind's eye can see. (Danson, 31)

As we hear it, we immediately throw away our concerns with reality and revel instead in the Chorus's literary language and its unique effect.

Henry, by his very nature as King, is an image-maker in his own right. He must convince his subjects that he is powerful, that his cause is just, that they can win despite incredible odds, and that they need him to do it. Henry's speeches concern themselves not so much with literal images, but with images of the future. Before the battle of Agincourt, Henry's Saint Crispian's day speech turns war into art, and the misery of his men into myth. "This day is called the Feast of Crispian," he announces. "He that outlives this day and comes safe home / Will stand a-tiptoe when this day is named / And rouse him at the name of Crispian" (4.5.40-44). Henry ostensibly predicts success,

survival, pride, good health, good spirits, and so on for his troops—but actually *promises* them nothing. Instead, Henry unites the grimy, beaten-down English foot soldiers by allowing them to participate in something larger than themselves: his vision, and by extension, himself. As Danson puts it, "The Crispin Day speech is Chorus-like, not only because it makes more of less, but because it is specifically an aesthetic or imaginative sort of triumph that Harry aims for. It is his own legend, and his men's, that Harry is creating—writing, in effect, his own play" (Danson, 34). Henry cannot write his myth or his play alone, however; he directs his subjects'—and his audience's—imagination and participation to the end of all art: the creation of something out of nothing.

Both King and Chorus operate the machine of presentation and political propaganda—not so much by supplying readily-digestible images as by acting as directors. Henry directs his subjects, while the Chorus directs the audience. Both evoke authority by speaking orders in the imperative. The Chorus, for the most part, instructs us to be still, yet to put our minds in motion. "There is the playhouse now," he reminds us,

> there must you sit,
>
> And thence to France shall we convey you safe,
>
> And bring you back, charming the narrow seas
>
> To give you gentle pass. (2.0.36-39)

In a sense, the Chorus's "Still be kind / And eke out our performance with your mind" does not differ much from Henry's "when the blast of war blows in our ears, / Then imitate the action of the tiger. / Stiffen the sinews, conjure up the blood, / Disguise fair nature with hard-favored rage…lend the eye a terrible aspect…Now set the teeth and

stretch the nostril wide…" and so on (3.0.34-35, 3.1.5-15). Henry at Harfleur, on the other hand, urges his men to action. He tries to shape the bodies of his men—to form a physiological battle response—before he uses psychology—"Dishonour not your mothers; now attest / That those whom you called fathers did beget you"—to shape their minds (3.1.22-3). Unlike the Chorus, Henry encourages action, simply because his men must be the agents that bring his vision to life. The realization of Henry's dream depends on his subjects' participation. In a similar way, the success of the performance as a whole depends on the Chorus's subjects, the audience.

In Olivier's film, the on-stage presence of both the Chorus and the King in the film's first act Olivier suggests similarities between the two. We first see the Chorus as we first see Henry, as an actor on a stage. During the Chorus's first monologue, the camera follows him as he strides around the stage. Minutes later, as Henry delivers his "Tennis Balls" speech, the King and the camera move about the stage in exactly the same way. Not only are their stage movements united, both address the same audience members, lined up on stage left, in similarly constructed shots. Through similar body language, they express the wide expanse of their respective visions by spreading and extending their arms as they speak. Olivier, who gracefully ring-tosses the crown onto the throne's spire after viciously declaring war on France and bounds onto a wagon amidst the battle to deliver his "Crispian's Day" speech, exudes youthfulness and insouciance. There is energy behind his every movement: he circles the stage like a regal shark. Banks, while much older and not nearly as sprightly as Olivier, still moves about the stage forcefully as he goes about the business of setting each scene. Essentially the

theater scenes suggest that Henry, the Chorus, and the play do not exist without an audience. This indicates that, even though both Chorus and King are written as privileged figures—they have more knowledge, more presence, more power than any other characters, and the ability to author themselves—their privilege depends on their particular audiences listening to them, believing in them, and buying into their respective images.

While Shakespeare's speeches for the Chorus and for Henry are sometimes stylistically alike, Banks and Olivier have different styles of delivery. Since both portray stage actors, they both speak loudly and authoritatively as they would on stage. Banks speaks loudly enough to be heard clearly, but his voice sounds gentle, especially before the Southampton and Agincourt camps scenes. He wants to coax the audience into the performance, and at times, he delivers his lines soothingly, almost like a parent reading a bed-time story. Olivier, on the other hand, typically barks and roars, raising his voice so loud sometimes that the microphones cannot do it justice. In his quietest moment, the soliloquy before Agincourt, Olivier's tone softens, most nearly matching Bank's.

As the film's style changes from theater stage to soundstage to location shoot, Olivier's Chorus himself dissolves into voice-over narration, leaving King Henry to dominate the screen. The Chorus returns in the end, however, closes the curtain over Henry and the other players, and has the final word. The Chorus's final speech is considerably shortened from the original. The Chorus eliminates details about Henry's son, who "made England bleed," and leaves with an overly positive ending full of happy actors shaking hands, choirboys singing, and Elizabethan musicians playing a lively tune. This understandably puts the history in its sunniest tone, and completes Henry's myth-

making work. As it stands, the Chorus lets us leave happy in the knowledge that both King and Country indefatigable underdogs who pull together to become omnipotent conquerors.

Branagh's Chorus and King could be no more different in outward respects, but they both do introduce the king. By being set off as an entirely modern entity amidst the historical drama, Branagh discards any visual connections between Chorus and King. Furthermore, Jacobi and Branagh engage in entirely different types of vocal delivery. Jacobi speaks loudly and excitedly; although his voice doesn't rattle the rafters like Olivier's stentorian King, he can barely contain his enthusiasm for the words he speaks. Branagh, on the other hand, speaks mainly in murmurs and whispers, yet can scream in rage when the occasion arises. His softness represents a swelling rage held back, or an inner turmoil suppressed in public. Such suppression obviously would not work in the Chorus, simply because his language is so powerful and evocative. For the most part, Jacobi's and Branagh's deliveries contrast in the opposite way that Banks' and Olivier's do. In a sense, however, the two actors' diverging styles make suggest that the Chorus represents a popular opinion of the King—the resourceful and able-bodied leader—while Henry presents King's private side—a divided, troubled human being.

-4-

Katherine and the Politics of Language and Gender

As one of only a handful of female figures in the play, as well as the only noble in the play to exist in a private sphere, Princess Katherine stands apart from everything else in the play. The wooing scene she figures in at the end of Henry V presents a structural flaw in the play. It leaves the viewer to ponder: why would a play about war end with a tacked-on love scene? Since Henry's victory at Agincourt is the climax of the play, and nothing that follows could top it, the scene is anti-climatic to say the least. Furthermore, her special status Henry's supreme demand seems disproportionate with her marginal role in the story, and her lack of contact with any of the important characters. Katherine's marriage to Henry has been essentially pre-arranged since Henry's victory at Harfleur, so the scene's outcome comes as no surprise. For these reasons, the play slides into denouement immediately after the battle, and to modern audiences at least the wooing scene can seem disturbingly long and unnecessary. To Shakespeare's Elizabethan audience, on the other hand, a war could not be won—and the play could not be over—unless an alliance, in the form of a marriage, was made. After all, Henry's claim on France (and on England) is shaky at best and will die with him: a male heir legitimates the claim and seals it for the foreseeable future. Consequently, the out-of-place Katherine indeed has a supreme place in the plays plot and politics. The problem for the director, however, is to convince modern audiences of that.

Olivier solves the problem of staging what could be a superfluous scene by staging a cat-and-mouse game between the King and the Princess. Olivier capitalizes on the fact that everyone knows the two are going to end up together by making the scene into light romantic comedy. Long before the end of the film, the audience realizes that Olivier's Henry wins all his battles without difficulty. But the wooing scene offers the director a chance to show Henry at his most bumbling, his most vulnerable, and—most importantly—his most charming. Henry professes profound difficulty at playing suitor, his desire to speak "plain soldier" to the made-up lady presents a clash of opposites, which is integral to light romantic comedy, and he completely misunderstands what a woman wants, needs, or even looks for in a man. This cluelessness makes the heretofore-invincible Henry look more human: the ways of women are his daffy Achilles heel. That the docile Katherine plays hard to get with the boyish King, and turns back his avalanche of words with a few in broken English/broken French—yet never takes her eyes off him as he circles the room—becomes adorable.

Although he glosses over Katherine's victimization in the wooing scene, Olivier does not completely throw out her importance to the theme of language barriers. Olivier, whose omission of the conspirators emphasizes Britain's united front against France, actually highlights internal tensions among Henry's men through their language. Their extremely stylized and virtually indecipherable accents show that the English are actually speaking four different languages. That they win the war, however, demonstrates that it does not matter that they do not completely understand one another. Nevertheless, Henry's tongue is the dominant one: the most understandable and therefore the best.

Katherine's French/English language barrier is not much different than those present among Henry's men. All are somewhat bastardized tongues.

Branagh, making his film long after feminist theory became popular, faces the challenge of making Katherine, Henry's war prize, accessible to modern audiences. The Katherine in Olivier's film improbably loves Henry, her country's enemy and conqueror, before she even meets him. Also, she seems never to have concerned herself with the fact that she is her father's first concession, and her father's enemy's first demand, in the war settlement. Clearly this woman has no grasp of politics, and while sexuality excites her, she apparently has no idea she needs to birth Henry's heir for his conquest to be complete. A similar portrayal would be sorely dated and out of place in a film made in the late 1980s.

So Branagh creates a feminist Katherine—not overtly feminist or politically aggressive in any way, but one more in tune with the times. Furthermore, he makes it a point to infer that Henry's wooing of Katherine is a sham: the princess has no choice but to marry Henry, whether she loves him or not. At the war settlement table, when Henry bids Katherine stay behind with him, she looks at her father sadly, communicating the knowledge that they have lost the war, their freedom, and each other. Like Olivier's Katherine, she has no choice but stay behind, but unlike the other Kate, she knows it, hates it, and tries to fight—just a little—against it. She maintains a blank expression through most of Henry's wooing, as if she is putting up with Henry's attention, though not enjoying it. More importantly, unlike Olivier's Katherine, who watches Henry like a hawk, Branagh's Katherine barely looks at him at all. She does not love this boyish

King; she views him as an invader, someone who can tear from her what precious freedom her youth and privilege afford her.

Strangely enough, we first see Katherine in a relatively quiet domestic scene, an English lesson, right after Henry captures Harfleur. Amidst the war preparations of both armies and the siege at Harfleur, a domestic scene involving two ladies seems sorely out of place. The fact that any non-Francophone audience members will be entirely lost during their predominately French scene adds to the confusion. Katherine's limitation to French not only distances her from the English-speaking audience, it also marginalizes her from the play's Anglophone political world. All the French nobles, including the queen, speak perfect English at all times. This is a typical narrative convention, of course, and we assume that, in their universe, the characters hear each other speaking French. Katherine and Alice defy that convention, which highlights the power of language to bridge cultural divides and to grant political enfranchisement. The Princess tries to learn English from Alice, who barely speaks it herself, ostensibly out of a childlike excitement about the English invasion. Mastering the language would also enable her to make some headway into the male, adult world of war and international affairs. From the start, then, both Katherine and the audience know that her lot in the play is to be Englished. In the wooing scene, she must drop her French tongue in favor of her conqueror's; in effect, she must translate herself into an Englishwoman. She will also be Englished in the pool hall sense, in that she will be expertly maneuvered into her proper place.

In Olivier's film, the language lesson scene begins playfully, if not somewhat suggestively, as Katherine points to different parts of her body, and asks Alice for their English names. The beginning of the episode evokes childhood innocence. The Katherine in Olivier's film, wrapped in a blue mantle and bonnet, is extremely demure and childlike. Katherine cautiously repeats Alice's words, trying deliberately to memorize them, as if she were a schoolgirl learning by rote. The lesson disintegrates with the discovery that the English "foot" and "gown" have vulgar, sexual French puns that the innocent and insolated princess probably should not know. Asherson's Princess reacts with astonishment and embarrassment when she realizes this, revealing some knowledge about her sexuality and a budding curiosity about it. That she is so blown away that she actually has to sit down helps to underscore the disturbing connection between English and vulgarity; the crude, earthy baseness of English, and of the English, threatens to overpower the proper and effete French. Moreover, in Katherine's attempt to Anglicize her body, she finds herself besmirched in the process.

Branagh depicts the scene much differently. Emma Thompson plays a much quicker and smarter Katherine than Renée Asherson does in this scene, despite having identical lines. More importantly, she is more of a free spirit. We first see her in a white nightgown—a symbol of her chastity, yes, but also one of her independence. Unlike Asherson's ornate ensemble, a simple nightgown is a garment Katherine can put on herself—notably without Alice's assistance. Thompson's Katherine bubbles with energy in this scene, bounces around the room, jumps on her bed, and performs an impromptu puppet show. She laughs hysterically at the lewd puns, not even indicating that a protected princess should now know of such things.

Both films also use the English lesson scene to demonstrate how far removed Katherine is from the male dominated world of kings and court. Before Olivier's language lesson scene begins, Katherine silently and dreamily gazes out at her father and the nobles as they leave the castle gates to prepare for battle. A long shot from her point of view cements the viewer in her position, looking from afar with detached awe. The world of men passes by her like a parade, and seems to have no direct contact with her.

Branagh uses this scene to show Katherine's liveliness, free spirit, and *joie de vivre* nipped in the bud by the male-dominated world that controls her. The bedtime garment and the bedroom itself cement Katherine in a private world. At her most ebullient and girlish moment, tromping around her room, Katherine bursts through her chamber door only to see her father and his men walking by. Katherine and her father exchange pained expressions and Katherine slowly withdraws, closing the door once again, closing herself and Alice within her chambers once more. The sunny, white, protected world of childhood is destroyed by the cool grays of the male-dominated court. Henry's invasion is the real cause of this abrupt shift: there is no room for innocence in times of war, or in the world of men.

The wooing scene, with its attention to the power of language and sex in politics, acts very much like a continuation of the English lesson scene. Henry addresses her almost entirely in English, which she barely understands, and Katherine struggles to respond. Though both films cut the line "Shall not thou and I, between Saint Denis and Saint George, compound a boy, half French half-English…?" the topic of the scene is still

essentially sex, only the stakes are much higher (5.2.193-195). One would think that, since neither presumes to be skillful with the other's tongue, both King and Princess would be at a verbal disadvantage. A charming scene of bumbling, pantomime, and much translation should naturally follow. These expectations, however, are only partially rewarded. For a scene ostensibly about two people who can barely speak each other's tongues, Henry and Katherine understand each other surprisingly well.

Throughout the scene, Henry's use of English, and feigned difficulty with understanding French, effectively prevent Katherine from speaking. Indeed, her character in this scene is characterized by silence, spent either blushing, as Asherson does, or in looking away in stern defiance, as Thompson does. Ironically, though, Henry urges her to "speak, my fair—and fairly, I pray thee" (5.2.161-62). He also asks her a number of questions—such as, "Canst thou love me?"—but never receives a satisfactory answer (5.2.183). Because Katherine can barely respond, Henry effectively never talks with her, to let her fall in love with him, but talks at her, putting forth an argument about why she should love him.

Henry clearly maintains his verbal advantage by foregrounding his disadvantages and conceding his weakness in courting, dancing, and speaking. He speaks almost entirely in English, which is strange, considering Katherine barely speaks English and we presume she can barely understand it either. When Katherine responds in French, however, Henry understands perfectly. In one exchange, Katherine says, "Les langues des homes sont pleines de trumperies." "What says she, fair one?" Henry asks Alice, their translator. "That the tongues of men are full of deceits?" Alice answers in broken English: "Oui, dat de tongues of de mans is be full of deceits—dat is de Princess"

(5.2.115-120). Obviously, Henry understands French just as well as Alice, and can in fact translate to English far better than she can. Other exchanges such as this indicate that asking for Alice's assistance merely masks his ability with the French tongue. Henry exaggerates his disadvantage to appear more attractive and more human to Katherine. His insistence on the similarities between their respective lack of language actually reinforces their differences, and by extension, the inequities in power between them.

In another approach to appear human, charming, and casual, Henry addresses Katherine with the familiar, "thee," and nicknames her "Kate." Most modern audiences misunderstand the use of the familiar pronoun "thee," and would therefore assume Henry's use of it is merely quaint, and that nicknaming her "Kate" makes him sound like an old friend. Indeed, Olivier's Henry, brimming with affable, boyish charm, sounds natural as ever calling the princess "Kate." His Henry, at least, has already won the Princess's hand, whether she knows it or not, but he woos her in good sport, with infectious good humor. Branagh's Henry, on the other hand, has far less a grasp on Katherine's heart, and unlike Olivier, he refers to her as his "capital demand." Accordingly, his assumption of the familiar stands out more for what it is: an attempt to appear comfortable, to maintain superiority, and to connect somehow with the woman he must marry.

Far from serving as a sign of friendship and equality, the *assumption* of the familiar and the *power to assume* the familiar, highlight Henry's superiority over the young maiden. After all, Katherine does not, and cannot, call her suitor "Hal" or "Harry," let alone "Henry." Furthermore, she sticks to the formal "vous"—used when speaking to strangers or persons of higher rank—when she addresses him in French. This

shows that, while Henry can decide how to address Katherine, the Princess has no such choice. In this way, Henry demonstrates a power over language that he has and Katherine does not.

Katherine, put in no position to reject Henry's wooing, can only decide what sort of husband has won her. Consequently, she rebuffs Henry's sugar-tongued compliments and clichéd advances, partly out of flirting, partly to figure out if he is sincere, and partly to challenge him to come up with something original. When Henry, right off the bat, compares her to an angel, Katherine deflects his compliment and ultimately says: "*Les langues des homes sont pleines de trumperies*" (5.2.115-16). The translation, the tongues of men are full of deceits, applies not only to suitor's tongues, but to languages (tongues) in general as well: both tend to falsely represent reality. Language is an ideological playground: words have multiple, shifting definitions, connotations, and shades of meaning. A speaker must be aware of all the weight that lies behind his or her words in order for the message to come across correctly. Most importantly, the interpretation of language is not up to the speaker at all, but up to the audience. Clearly, then, the party with the greater skill with language can direct a conversation or an argument to support his point, no matter if his position is just.

Katherine does, at one point, offer a real challenge to Henry's advances. When asked "What sayst thou then to my love?" the Princess responds with a question of her own: "Is it possible dat I should love de ennemi of France?" (5.2.161, 5.2.163). Despite her broken French, this is Katherine's most mature, powerful, and piercing line. While Henry may be her suitor, he is also the enemy of her father and her country, and the princess dares to call him what he is. Asherson's Katherine utters this line while staring

out a window, presumably looking at the wasted battlefield at Agincourt. Since this is the one time Katherine's eyes are not locked on Henry, her body language makes her question come across as "I love this man. But he is the enemy of France. How can I do such a thing?" Thompson's Katherine dares to speak her line directly to Henry's face—a far more defiant gesture accentuated by her general detachment to Henry throughout the scene. Thompson's reading comes across more as "Why should I love you? You are my enemy, a threat to me."

Because Henry controls the conversation, however, he also controls what Katherine few words and actions mean. Katherine never tells Henry she loves him, which provides Asherson and Thompson the leeway to react so differently toward his advances. In a sense, Katherine's silence offers the actresses the only avenue to empower her character.

In response to her silence on the issue of her love, Henry forces the point a bit. To do so, Henry actually speaks for her in at least two places. First, after Katherine "cannot tell" if she can love him, Henry answers for her. "Come, I know thou lovest me," he tells her, "and at night when you come into your closet you'll question this gentlewoman about me, and I know, Kate, you will to her dispraise those parts in me that you love with your heart" (5.2.186-89). Here, Henry has deftly, almost imperceptibly, stripped all control of language from her; he dictates what her words *mean*, even when she speaks in private. Therefore he puts her in a bind: even if she protests his advances, rails against him, and says she hates him, her words are a sign of her love, not her disgust.

The second instance in which Henry effectively speaks for her occurs after she protests his attempt to kiss her on the lips. *"Les dames et demoiselles pour être baisées*

devant leurs noces, il n'est pas la coutume de France" [which Henry translates to: "It is not the fashion for the maids in France to kiss before they are married"] (5.2.240-41, 5.2.247-48). Henry responds gloriously by saying "O Kate, nice customs curtsy to great kings…We are the makers of manners, Kate…Therefore, patiently and yielding. [He kisses her]" (5.2.250-255). Henry's words serve two purposes before his kiss. First, he assures her that they—using the plural "we"—are above the established customs of the day. At the same time, he seems to be telling the audience that he, King Henry—using the royal "we"—makes customs to suit his whims. Second, he tells her how she should receive his kiss. As follows, both Asherson and Thompson are patient and yielding—though Thompson acts more surprised than Asherson—toward Henry during the kiss. In essence, Henry directs Katherine into and through the kiss.

Shakespeare's play is complex because it allows us to question whether or not her lot is fair, but does not press explicit judgment on any of it. Ultimately, it is anti-feminist because it sets up an unfair situation and lets Henry get away with it unscathed. By showing Katherine hopelessly in love with Henry and eager, despite her protestations, to be with him, Olivier's film glosses over Katherine's predicament almost entirely. He uses the predicament to create dramatic, not thematic, tension. Nowhere is Henry questioned, and nowhere does Katherine seem to sense she has no choice. Branagh's film is feminist in comparison to Olivier's, but little changes in the end. Despite Katherine's boldness in the language lesson and coldness in the wooing scene, she relents to Henry's will. Her straight face during the final wedding shot marks her displeasure,

and also the uncertainty of her happiness. Still, Henry comes out as charming, nowhere near the monster he proves himself to be.

All in all, Henry wins or conquers Katherine in the same way he wins us the audience: by directing. Henry's actions, like telling Katherine what to say and what her words mean, resemble those of a director speaking to his actress. Interestingly, Olivier's first choice for Katherine was his wife, Vivian Leigh, and Branagh was married to his Katherine, Emma Thompson, at the time of filming. It seems, however, from the political implications Shakespeare's scene explores—which Olivier glosses over but Branagh hits—that directing a woman into one's arms is no way to win her love, even for a King.

-5-

Stylistic Choices

As our final look into Olivier's and Branagh's adaptations, we shall examine the first and most basic problem they faced as Shakespeare filmmakers: how to show this play on screen. Even though Henry V, a self-reflective play about the art of direction, performance, and appearances, is more cinematic than a more introspective work like Hamlet, the basic problem of matching images to words remains.

Olivier's audience was most likely skeptical about Shakespeare on screen. Olivier himself did not believe, prior to making Henry V, that film could capture Shakespeare's essence. His challenge, therefore, was to perfect the filmic representation of Shakespeare. Other Shakespeare films preceded Henry V, but none were very successful commercially or artistically. Consequently, most of his target audience had never seen a Shakespeare film, or had seen rather poor or somehow flawed versions, such as Reinhardt and Deterle's Mendelssohn-heavy but Shakespeare-light version of A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Olivier, therefore, in his effort to popularize the Shakespeare film, had to convince the skeptical viewer that Shakespeare works on film. He also had to avoid all the representational problems that plagued his predecessors. For instance, Olivier decided that realistic backgrounds—something previous Shakespeare films provided—would, in large part, distract from the power of Shakespeare's poetry. Olivier also disliked the typical method of shooting a Shakespeare speech, which consisted of

zooming in on the speaker until the climax of the speech, which would be delivered in close-up. Instead, Olivier reverses the process; thus in Henry V, the camera zooms out as Henry speaks, drawing more and more onlookers into his fold (Geguld 18).

It is vital to note that Henry V was not simply an artistic pursuit: Olivier was commissioned to create a propaganda film to support the British war effort. The propaganda factor automatically cripples the credibility of his film because it suggests blunt calculation and bland didacticism. Olivier worked hard to avoid these tendencies in his film. The tight war budget and his company's restricted movement (he could not shoot in France, of course) were further thorns in Olivier's side. Olivier made many stylistic choices in concession to these fundamental obstacles, and as a result, his film might seem like a quaint pageant to modern viewers. Most alarming to mainstream modern audiences is that Olivier does not try to hide his skimpy production values in the non-battlefield scenes.

We must realize, however, that Olivier's film was a technological marvel for its day. In the early 1940s, after all, color itself was a special effect—a call out to the popular audiences, but not an artistic necessity (witness the black and white Olivier's 1948 Hamlet). In fact, Olivier toted around the only Technicolor camera in Britain at the time. He was also extremely conservative about footage. While Hollywood-style productions shoot and re-shoot every setup, and utilize ten to twenty-five percent of the resulting film for the final cut, Olivier used an incredible seventy-five percent of his original film—an extremely conservative value that indicates a great deal of preparation time before each shot (Geguld 23).

Olivier's film also makes use of a cast of hundreds, the countless extras that populate his Agincourt scenes. Furthermore, Olivier shot the Agincourt sequence on location (in Ireland), which was expensive and unprecedented during wartime. Lastly, his Agincourt sequence included elements such as the incredibly long tracking shot of the French charge, a shot of rare magnitude. Even though Olivier could not provide verisimilitude in all his scenes—and even the location battlefield shots are intercut with studio shots of the two camps—the Technicolor and Cinescope provided far more spectacle than what was called for in his time. In short, Olivier made the best film he could within his limited means. The result, in the opinion of numerous film critics, is the most (or only) satisfying Shakespeare film ever.

What makes Olivier's film visually fascinating is the director's choice of three different styles: pure theater, soundstage, and location shooting. The film starts with theater, evolves to soundstage and then to location shoot, then regresses back to the theater in the end. In effect, the styles serve like a Chinese box—each level of reality/artifice nesting or enveloping the others. This progression/regression from pure theater to pure cinema and back dramatizes Olivier's feat: putting Shakespeare on film and thus bringing his play to life—as close to actual life as possible. The Battle of Agincourt, the most realistic and most technologically demanding scene, gains in power by being at the center of this stylistic progression. Conversely, the ordering also grants special status to the theater, the start and end point of all the action, and therefore the essence of the film. Olivier both proclaims the infinite power of the cinema, while celebrating the theater's own glory as the predecessor to and source of the cinema's

riches. In short, Olivier offers everyone with strong opinions about Shakespeare's stylistic rendering something to be happy about.

Olivier's opening style resembles pure theatrical reenactment. It is entirely different from filmed theater, however, where the camera sits fixed, as our substitute in the theater. Instead, the camera plays an active role in the production; it dollies in and out, tracks the main characters as they move, zooms in close on the Chorus, and so forth. In a further departure from the theater experience, the camera opens the stage, backstage, and main seating area to the film audience. Even though we see backstage sometimes during a real production, we never completely leave our seats to see the play as Olivier shows us: behind the scenes, from the perspective of an actor about to make an entrance. In essence, Olivier uses film to show us a play more completely and more effectively than any theater can. Olivier uses the Globe to set Shakespeare's stylized language and unrealistic acting from the verisimilitude possible on film. Clearly, the Globe offers a point of departure, the humble beginnings of technical presentation that Olivier will abandon and transcend in the middle of the film.

But Olivier delivers something entirely different: a fairly convincing, documentary-like presentation of an actual Elizabethan performance. We not only see a play in performance, we also get behind the scenes to see its inner-workings, the machinery behind it. By showing so much in this scene, showing a play better than it can be shown in a theater, Olivier demonstrates film's superiority over theater. Paradoxically, despite the attention to stylization—of the acting, costumes, setting—the Globe Theater scenes are the most natural in the movie, even more natural than the actual on-location shooting because one gets the most sense that what is seen on screen is

actually going on. Critic Harry Geguld calls this style "anti-illusionistic theatrical" because, "in general, the opening and closing scenes of Henry V lack stylization and are closer to the naturalistic than the remainder of the film" (Geguld 58-59). In essence, then, Olivier delivers both verisimilitude and stylized film art in one package.

The Globe setting allows Olivier to plant his story in the theater, to demonstrate the necessary exaggerations, stylizations, and limitations of the theater. By showing the most stylization in the theater and then switching to a more realistic acting and visual style for the rest of the film, Olivier confines Shakespeare's most stiff and unrealistic qualities to an anachronistic theater setting. The move from the falseness of Shakespeare in theatrical performance to the naturalness possible on film dramatizes the technical achievement of Olivier's own production, and of art in general. But Olivier theater also has the opposite effect: it celebrates the theater, and allows the film audience to connect Shakespeare's themes of theatricality to the performance, even though it is a film. The theater setting also allows the audience to connect the theme of theatricality with the plays most important characters: the directing figures of King Henry and the Chorus.

Henry's court, the seat of British power, is only represented on the stage. By framing the narrative in the Globe, and by making it the seat of Henry's power, Olivier foregrounds the theater's importance. The theater, in more ways than one, issues Henry forth, and remains his home. But Henry is not the only one issued from the theater and into the world of this play, the audience is too. In some way, then, we get to experience life through art, as if life is trying to live up to the image art holds up, instead of the other way around. This expression of the play's theme of theatricality seems to go along with Olivier's love of the theater, but against his artistic motives for this film: to show the

superiority of film over theater, or, to bring Shakespeare to the world's most effective medium.

From the "anti-illusionist theatrical" style, Olivier transitions to what Geguld calls the "illusionistic-stylized" world of Southampton, Harfleur, and the French Court (61). The Southampton scene is the first to be shot on an obvious movie soundstage. The transition to Southampton is dramatized in an extraordinary way, but within the scene, not much really changes: the acting, costumes, and settings are still highly stylized. The Chorus guides us through this transition—and the transition is more striking than the "illusionistic-stylized" style itself. The Chorus changes the scene himself by pulling a curtain, one that depicts a seashore, across the backdrop of the stage. The sliding of a curtain, of course, is a uniquely theatrical mode of transition. While Olivier uses the curtain to indicate setting, the main purpose of a curtain is to conceal the machinery behind the performance—namely to hide both the emptiness and activity of the backstage area. Olivier demonstrates this by having stagehands sweep the straw on stage behind the curtain. Further underscoring the theatrical properties of the curtain, the seashore and city depicted on the curtain are highly stylized, and there is even a great seal painted in the sky. No one is trying to fool us, to recreate reality: the curtain functions merely as a theatrical one: to obscure reality.

While the outdoors setting of a Southampton shipyard does not lend itself to realistic presentation onstage, Olivier's theater performance incorporates an intrusive rain. The Globe Theater, thanks to its open roof, accommodates nature, namely in the form of rain, which invades the Boar's Head Tavern scene. The rain disrupts the audience; many theatergoers stream to the roofed-in areas. The performance, however,

barrels on flawlessly; the actors do not miss a beat, even as they are being soaked. The invasion of nature into the artistic space represents the most naturalistic part of the movie. As the Chorus speaks before the curtain, promising an entrance to the natural world, rain still patters in the background, reminding us of the crisp, realistic nature experienced in Olivier's "anti-illusionist theatrical" world.

The raindrops peter out as the curtain itself dissolves and we enter the seashore painting itself. The dissolution of the curtain is what film is all about: the unmediated experience of reality, unbound by the confines of a stage or a theater. Notably, however, we move from the stage not onto the real seashore, but into a painting. The performance actually regresses away from the reality of actors, props, and weather, to a world of flat, static, stylized images.

The French Court scenes are especially striking in their painterliness. Strangely enough, though, the French Court seems more unreal than the English Court, which is merely a stage. The French Court is represented more as a dollhouse than a seat of power. Although slightly more realistic because of the elimination of the audience, the set itself looks even more theatrical, thanks to its own painted backdrops, bright colors, and general flatness. Geguld comments that throughout the French Court scene,

> Olivier endeavors to reduce incongruities between the stylized two-dimensional set and his three-dimensional actors…His main method is to keep the scene relatively static so that the actors always seem to belong to the pictorial composition. Camera movement is negligible and characters tend to move from one formal pictorial

> arrangement into another. The result is closer to a succession of separate, beautifully composed pictures than a single coherent dramatic scene. (Geguld 35)

Olivier based the look of the French scenes on medieval painting and tapestry, notably *Les Très Riches Heures* (The Book of Hours). True to form, then, Olivier frames the shot of the French nobles' dinner table to resemble a painting of the Last Supper; the table even tilts toward the camera, intentionally invoking faulty pre-Renaissance perspective.

This picture-painting style has two effects. First, if the French life in a Candyland world, they appear as Candyland people. This not only emasculates their army—they are obviously no threat to the virile sportsman Henry's England—but also removes most of the audience's compassion for the French nobles and citizens who must die for Henry's cause. The French are represented as effete cowards in general, and the French King, uncrowned and seated on the floor, mumbling to himself, represents a weak ruler. As seen in their battle preparations, where the nobles meticulously drink in unison astride colorful, costumed horses, the French are more concerned with putting on a pageant than engaging in warfare. Consequently, the French in this film are neither a strong opposing force for Henry to battle, nor a civilization that deserves respect for their own humanity. The second effect of this painterliness is that it reduces film to its predecessor, panel painting sequences, in which a succession of static images creates narrative form. These sequences were typically as devotional and didactic as Olivier's film itself strives to be. Strangely enough for a film that celebrates itself for being film, Olivier's Henry V celebrates its narrative predecessors so boldly and colorfully.

The French setting in general represents Candyland more than a real place. Everything is bright and colorful, from the spires and rooftops above Harfleur, to the multi-colored castle stones, to the war tents in the French camp. Furthermore, the castles are out of scale with the people, as they are in late-medieval paintings. While the same dual-scale is employed in Southampton, Henry does not try to knock down those castles. The fantasy-world atmosphere of France's castles and strongholds makes Henry's war campaign seem silly and even benign; after all, he is not conquering real cities, only cutouts. Capturing mere cutouts, like Olivier's omission of Henry's threats of rape and disaster at Harfleur, helps erase the horrors war has on innocent civilians, which Olivier's WWII-weary countrymen knew too well.

From the "illusionist-stylized" French Court, Olivier moves into location shooting for his film's two centerpieces, the Battle of Agincourt and the St. Crispian's Day Speech, which are filmed in a style that Harry Geguld refers to as "quasi-naturalistic" (59). Olivier's Battle of Agincourt is an immensely entertaining, interesting, and engrossing scene. Olivier's location shooting shows us, at long last, the natural world. Set against all the obvious fakery of the other two styles, the broad expanses of land and sky look all the more incredible. But Olivier does not show us the real world; he shows us a spruced-up, clean, orderly, well lit, and immaculately set-up version of the real world. The battle sequence itself has some incredible moments, such as the long charge and the battle preparation montage that precedes it. But some high camera angles obliterate the impressiveness of the charge, showing "a curiously orderly mêlée that looks more like medieval paintings of a battle than the actual aftermath of the dynamic English counter-attack" (Geguld 45). Furthermore, the shots of English soldiers leaping down

from trees to attack the French seem out of place, seem choreographed like Errol Flynn's Adventures of Robin Hood than an medieval battle.

The battle's beauty is completely false to the historical events upon which the play was based. The impressive volleys of arrows, for instance, are never shown hitting anything. While swords clash against swords, no one is skewered or dies on screen; the most striking blow is Henry's backhand to the Constable's helmet. In fact, the only blood on screen comes from the slaughtered boys in camp. All in all, war here resembles a remarkable pageant, a jousting tournament, a sport. It seems irresponsible, given what can be done with the medium to depict war more realistically, that war be treated like a soccer game. Olivier purposely omits blood and gore because he aims to de-emphasize combat in Henry V—after all, no real combat is present in the play—and to emphasize instead the character of King Henry. It is also true that because Olivier was making a war propaganda picture, he glorifies the achievements of war and eliminates its horrors to stir up his countrymen.

Some critics find the stylistic transitions to be abrupt, jarring, and distracting. It does seem striking that the three different styles are interchanged and intercut, and stand in opposition to each other. For instance, the quasi-naturalistic battle scenes are intercut with the illusionistic-stylized camp scenes. But the English camp is filmed outside, with a blue sky overhead, while the French camp is seen before a blank backdrop. As aforementioned, France itself is depicted with no pretense to realism. "Those settings in Henry V that [film critic] Lindon dismisses as 'phony' are in fact used by Olivier to express or shape attitudes to character and situation" (Geguld 61). Much has already

been said about the candy-colored French castles standing for a false world Henry can knock down without really offending anyone or exploring the horrors of warfare. Geguld goes on to say

> Linden has specifically objected to an even later contrast between what he calls the 'realistic' battle scenes and Henry's wooing of Katherine in a 'phony castle.' But this contrast is perfectly appropriate. The realistic battlefield is Henry's world where he confronts the French with their hour of truth; the unreal palace is Katherine's world, and to woo and win her on her own ground Henry attempts what is unreal to him: the gallantries and flatteries of the courtly lover. (Geguld 62)

Furthermore, the windows and arches that frame her, as if trapping her in a painting, illustrate Katherine's status in the wooing scene as a trapped woman and as a prize. That the setting looks painterly and false, even after Olivier shows us a naturalistic battlefield, is not a retreat from realism, but a commentary upon it.

That said, however, Olivier's most stunning achievement in Henry V was his Agincourt, which represented the pinnacle of represented reality, the crowning achievement of cinema itself for the day.

Forty-five years later, Kenneth Branagh's consistent realistic style represents, perhaps, what Olivier would have done if he had been given sufficient means. Branagh's every scene is an Agincourt, a vivid slice of realistic splendor. Branagh's Henry

conquers a full-scale world that fully complements his full-scale threats at Harfleur of fathers' and daughters' "most reverend heads dashed to the walls [and] naked infants spitted on pikes, whiles the mad mothers with their howls confused do break the clouds" (Branagh, 43). The sets are impressive and scenes, such as Henry's throne room scene, take place in private locations, which implies intrigue. Branagh's film is earthy and dark where Olivier's is colorful and overlit. Branagh eschews Olivier's primary colors, bold red and bright blue, in favor of black shadows, gray skies, and earthy browns, from Henry's wooden ship to the mud and grime of Agincourt. In every way, Branagh achieves his goal: his Henry V looks in every way like a modern mainstream movie, far removed from the pretension, stuffiness, and low-budget style of the art house. Stylistically, the dark interiors in the first few scenes, for example, are reminiscent of The Empire Strikes Back and even Batman, 1989's top grossing film.

What is most significant about Branagh's realistic style is that it removes the sense of pageantry that Olivier's every scene evinces and celebrates. This has the unfortunate effect of eliminating many of the connections Shakespeare's play explores between the character study of a political leader and theater and art in general. Henry himself, in his soliloquy before Agincourt—his only private moment—sighs, "What have kings that privates have not too, / Save ceremony, save general ceremony?" (4.1.220-221). As we have explored, Olivier touches upon some of these themes, and creates his own connections between theater, painting, tapestry, and film. Branagh, on the other hand, concentrates on the story, namely on showing Henry as a real man in a fantastic predicament. Furthermore, his Chorus, Branagh's only nod to the artistry of the work, becomes a part of the action more than a commentator on it. His film as a whole seems

to say very little about art, artifice, or theater, but in fact, Branagh's contribution to Shakespeare's and Olivier's ruminations on art is that reality as we see it is art, and art reality. After all, what we see as realistic in Branagh's film is itself another form of stylization.

Branagh's realism is in fact an artistic effect; his sets and shots are precisely like Olivier's in that they all shed light on the characters and their motivations. Since Henry and the justness of his cause are the central problems to figure out in the play, the Southampton scene, where Henry either confronts or does not have to confront his conspirators, is a telling example of the meaning hidden behind Branagh's realism.

Much of this is revealed in the subtlest symbolism, the difference between a diamond and a cross. Olivier's Southampton scene is sunny, pageant-like, and completely straightforward. In Olivier's film, as the camera moves toward Henry, Canterbury, and their audience, a mast with a hoisted sail, which obviously represents a large cross, dominates the right half of the frame. Red and white crosses also line the sides of the ships, forming a motif. These crosses suggest the impending conflict is no mere war, but a crusade, backed by a just and omnipotent God firmly planted on the English side. The crosses suggest that not only Henry, but his entire army too, serve as God's envoys, carrying out His mission on earth. All his men stand beneath one sail, the sail emblazoned with Henry's seal. That no conspirators are present to be punished further unites the English in their king's cause.

Though stylistically different in every way, Branagh's scene contains just as much art, depth, and symbolism as Olivier's, and comments on Olivier's in various ways.

Branagh shows a more complicated, embattled, and ruthless king by including the conspirators. While the dockside blessing in Olivier's film was filled with a sense of ceremony and ostentation, Branagh's scene carries an air of secrecy, danger, and claustrophobia. Consequently, Branagh's Southampton scene is a not a celebration, but a mousetrap, set inside the belly of a ship, far from public eyes.

Branagh also comments upon Olivier's symbolism in the setting and *mise-en-scène*. Breaking with Olivier, there are no crosses on Branagh's ships, and the only seals we see are those on the armor. This indicates an individualized patriotism and a dividedly loyalty to God, to country, and to king. Diamonds are a recurring motif, which one could see as a commentary on Olivier's crosses. Note that the numerous little crosses on Olivier's ships have four arms of equal length, which correspond to the four equal sides of Branagh's diamonds. Diamonds suggest money and bribes, but also something more abstract: the perfection, equanimity, and balance of squares totally upended, turned into instability. The first diamond in the scene is the peephole through which we, as well as and Henry, view the conspirators. That the diamonds between the slats are actually formed from two separate planks—that is, they are split in two—suggests the divided nature and divided loyalty of the English army; there are chinks in their armor. It is also important to note that there are no true crosses in Branagh's cabin, even among the posts and planks that make up the ceiling—it appears that he deliberately avoided them.

Branagh's *mise-en-scene* makes this scene into a mousetrap. We see the conspirators stewing together, surrounded by dark, wooden, vertical slats standing like prison bars. The camera then pulls back to reveal Henry, his brothers, and Exeter—four faces pressed together into the frame—acting much the same. The men are much closer

together than the united English seen in Olivier's Southampton, but all are uncomfortable and disjointed; all wear different seals; they seem thrown together. Before Henry traps the conspirators with their own purported appeal to set an example by administering swift and harsh judgment, his men close and lock the ship's great wooden doors. No one can get out, no one can get in, and even the audience is even the audience is trapped in this ship's cabin with the King. This setting nicely reinforces Branagh's reading of the text to make Henry seem crafty and ruthless, since he toys with his enemies like a housecat with its prey.

Branagh's Agincourt, which seems to proclaim itself, in comparison to Olivier's, a realistic account of medieval warfare, is indeed more convincing, but is still far from realistic. Olivier's film can be criticized for presenting a battle that appears more like a jousting tournament. Branagh tries as best he can to present a grunt's-eye-view of the battle, capitalizing on low camera angles and capturing the brutality, mud, and miasma of the common foot soldiers. What he ends up with resembles a recreation of the trench warfare of World War I. The English arrows whiz like bullets, while the Chorus, in his trench coat and scarf, seems like a war commentator running along the front. While exciting, these details seem out of place, and raise the most pressing question Branagh's film presents about this scene: can war be depicted believably on film?

Branagh's battle, like Olivier's consists of a succession of images: Henry on his horse, arrows whizzing by, piles of bodies stomped on in the mud. These images show us the horrors of war far more effectively than Olivier's charging horses or tournament joust with the Constable. After all, no one would suspect Branagh's film to be evincing a

strong pro-war sentiment, even though Henry's victory comes across as a stunning and admirable military and personal achievement. The long tracking shot of Henry carrying the Boy's limp body across the battlefield reverses Olivier's famous tracking shot of the French charge in both direction and theme. Similarly, in Branagh's Henry V, we the audience do not wish to be in the actual war, but the shots' artistry, the technical merits of the lighting, the fog and the rain, and the seemingly unchoreographed muddle of the warriors render the scene beautiful in its own way: it is intensely visually interesting, and therefore a great spectacle. His quick cutting and rapid shifts of perspective cut up the battle and repackage it as engrossing entertainment.

By the same token, however, they do not show us war realistically, as if we the audience were there. Film, and television by extension, tends to package war, not record it. What most people today know about World War II, to name only the first widely-filmed war, comes from stock footage of isolated elements of the war, such as falling bombs, burning cities, piles of bodies, and the like. The sheer repetition of such images, taken out of context, essentially removed from their own real-life narratives, deadens their impact. As a result, the general public sees war as an image process. When those images are picked out by our leaders, our own Henrys, who direct and star in their real life political careers, we end up with narrative, not history, fiction, not reality. Branagh's and Olivier's films, taken together, show two equally fictional yet unequally inaccurate spins on the same war.

At bottom, both films raise the question: Can Shakespeare survive on film? The answer is yes and no. By dramatizing the stylistic advances from the theatrical to the

filmic medium, Olivier carries a number of Shakespeare's themes of theatricality in new and original ways. By creating a naturalistic and modern Shakespearean world, Branagh raises questions about what filmed Shakespeare means to modern audiences, and fights for its relevance in modern culture. In the end, however, the movie theater cannot adequately substitute for the playhouse entirely. The excitement of live actors, spontaneity, and many different productions and interpretations is too great for audiences to let die completely. That said, however, the accessibility of film through video, DVD, and downloadable media bring more and more people into contact with Shakespeare through a filmic medium. But Olivier's and Branagh's original visions and deft use of the cinematic medium's specific strengths make a statement: Shakespeare films are not merely archives, teaching aides, or effective advertisements for the plays—nor are they substitutes for the plays. Instead, Shakespeare films stand on their own as meaningful works of art, the directors' tribute to the plays, and to film itself.

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