

Memory Traces in *The Reign of King Edward III*

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Abstract: Indirectly addressing the authorship question in the anonymous *The Reign of King Edward III*, this paper focuses on a signature of Shakespeare's treatment of English history, a concern with the political implications of remembering and forgetting. Multiple ironies attend the unstable relation of remembering and forgetting in the play. The opening of *Edward III* gives the impression that England's forgetful enemies, Scotland and France, require schooling by a nation that appears to own memory. However, initial appearances prove to be deceiving, as three early Shakespearean scenes prominently feature lapses of English memory, causing the early alignment of England with faithful memory to slip away. There are traces of a distinctly Shakespearean approach to history—one that interrogates the mixed effects of historical memory itself and the values commonly assigned to remembering and forgetting—in *The Reign of King Edward III*. A consideration of the scenes that share the practice of Shakespeare's histories—of not simply reviving the past but also reflecting on the motivations and conflicts associated with recollection—accords well with previous attributions of those scenes to Shakespeare on stylistic grounds.

Keywords: nationhood; remembering; forgetting; history; Shakespeare

Although Edward Capell first claimed *The Reign of King Edward III* as Shakespeare's in 1760, its place in the canon has proved elusive. Omitted from the First Folio and likely the result of collaborative authorship, the play took over four centuries to make "its first appearance in a multi-volume edition of Shakespeare's works," Giorgio Melchiori's New Cambridge Shakespeare edition.¹ In 1996, marking the quatercentenary of the play's first publication in an anonymous quarto edition, Eric Sams published a carefully edited version of the play with Yale University Press, presenting a detailed argument for his claim of Shakespeare's authorship of the whole (Sams 1996).² In that same year, the play was first included in a major edition of the collected works, *The Riverside Shakespeare*. In the quarter-century since then, the play has gradually been widely though not universally accepted as having been written at least in part by Shakespeare. The Royal Shakespeare Company attributed it to their author when they performed it at the Swan Theatre in 2002

(Warren 2003) and the play appeared in the second edition of *The Oxford Complete Works of Shakespeare* (Wells and Taylor 2005).³ Nearly two decades after Melchiori's New Cambridge Shakespeare edition (1998), *The Reign of King Edward III* earned a place in the Third Series of the Arden Shakespeare (Proudfoot and Bennett 2017) Although the play depicts Edward rushing headlong into France, publishers and editors have shown caution in claiming Shakespearean authorship for all or part of the play.

The question of authorship "remains the principal concern of scholarship on the play," the play's Arden editors observe (Proudfoot and Bennett 2017, p. 4). This paper also addresses the authorship question, but indirectly: by focusing on what I consider a signature of Shakespeare's treatment of English history, a concern with the political implications of remembering and forgetting. Shakespeare's history plays show a marked interest in exploring questions regarding the utility of history itself. In other words, they are not merely dramatizations of late medieval English dynastic and territorial disputes. They are, in addition, histories that pose questions about their own nature:

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Why history now? Who owns history?⁴ Is historical memory an aid or an impediment to national unity? Is the monarch a keeper and guardian of the nation's past or a heavy-handed revisionist of the historical record? Is the monarch heedless of any aspects of the past that do not directly or indirectly support his or her sovereignty? What is the relation of historical memory to nationhood? Do Shakespeare's histories in any way anticipate Ernest Renan's famous assertion in his speech "What is a nation?" delivered at the Sorbonne in 1882: "Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation, which is why progress in historical studies often constitutes a danger for [the principle of] nationality" (Renan 1990, p. 11). Elsewhere I have argued that the four plays of the second tetralogy are marked by an ambivalence about the value of historical memory, and, furthermore, that such an ambivalence issued primarily from two related sources: the English Reformation and the growing sense of nationalism in the 1590s, especially in the wake of England's victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588. Echoing an emergent nationalism, the plays also interrogate the roles played by remembering and forgetting in the formation of a national identity. Ultimately, they challenge a straightforward alignment of remembrance and steady attention to the historical record with English national identity.⁵

In a startling anticipation of Renan's pronouncement about the formative role of forgetting in producing a sense of nationhood, King James I argued in his first address to an English parliament in March, 1604 that it is not so much the strengthening of collective memories as their attenuation that would help to affect the political union he so desired between the two nations he governed:

For euen as little brookes lose their names by their running and fall into great Riuers, and the very name and memorie of the great Riuers swallowed vp in the Ocean: so by the coniunction of diuers little Kingdomes in one, are all these priuate differences and questions swallowed vp. (Sommerville 1994, p. 137)

As if anticipating his future monarch and patron's address by a few years, Shakespeare explores the rather surprising value of historical error and of a diminished historical memory in his second sequence of history plays. History is not an unassailable city or town in Shakespeare's plays on England's late medieval past. The plays of the second tetralogy in particular, from *Richard II* to *Henry V*, show that no matter how well-fortified and defended, history always has breaches, and these are especially wide in theatrical accounts of the past, which are of necessity highly abbreviated. Often the plays themselves make these gaps visible in such a way as to implicitly urge audiences once more unto the breaches in the historical record. Furthermore, the profound and widespread effects of the Reformation on both narrative history and historical drama, explored by David Womersley and others, indicate how dynamic and malleable the past had become for early modern England (Womersley 2010).

Thought to have been written and staged in the early 1590s, *Edward III* belongs to the group of plays that followed the English victory over the Spanish Armada, the invasionary force that was intent on overthrowing Protestant rule in England and restoring Catholic rule.⁶ The play has been widely regarded as an expression of the wave of national pride issuing from that victory. A dissenting voice, J. P. Conlan's, argues that the play secretly defends the recusancy of those Catholics who might have been profoundly disappointed by the Spanish defeat. Conlan reads the play as a cohesive "critique of the official propaganda sustaining the persecution of English recusants after the Invincible Armada's defeat" (Conlan 2001, p. 178) While I remain something of an agnostic on the question of Shakespeare's own religious conviction and possible recusancy, I would agree that *Edward III* is far from a straightforward expression of national pride issuing from Protestant England's victory over Catholic Spain. Too many ironies attend the unstable relation of remembering and forgetting in the play. The opening of *Edward III* gives the impression that England's forgetful enemies, Scotland and France, require schooling by a nation that appears to own memory, to be in league with that all-powerful ally, history itself. However, initial

appearances prove to be deceiving, as three early Shakespearean scenes prominently feature lapses of English memory. The Countess scenes in particular cause the early alignment of England with faithful memory to slip away.

Current opinion differs widely on the identity of Shakespeare's putative collaborator on *Edward III* and on the question of which parts Shakespeare himself might have written. Speculation that Shakespeare contributed certain scenes has traditionally focused on four in particular: notably the so-called Countess scenes (1.2, 2.1, and 2.2) and a later scene featuring the taunting of Edward the Black Prince (4.4), hero of the Battles of Crécy and Poitiers. The latter scene is parallel in many respects to Act 1, scene 2 of *Henry V* where Henry is mocked by the Dauphin via the French ambassadors.⁷ In what follows I want to test my hypothesis that reflection on the relative advantages and disadvantages of remembering and forgetting and on their consequences is virtually a fingerprint of Shakespeare's approach to history. Are there traces of what I have come to believe is a distinctly Shakespearean approach to history—one that interrogates the mixed effects of historical memory itself and the values commonly assigned to remembering and forgetting—in *The Reign of King Edward III*?

I: "High treason" against memory

When characters in a history play speak earnestly of the need to keep memory alive, complain of the treachery of an enemy who has apparently forgotten an oath or an agreement, recall the heroic deeds of an ancestor, urge forgiving and forgetting, or otherwise debate the ethics of remembering and forgetting, they reflect the purposes of the larger frame, that contract between past and present that is the history play. Two forms of historical memory, from the perspectives of the victors and the vanquished, respectively, are succinctly evoked in succession in the first two scenes of the play, as if to reinforce the point that the English, Scots, and French are playing for the right to control the historical narrative. The opening scene of *Edward III* suggests that the eventual prize of the battles it reenacts will be the very play we are witnessing. After rehearsing the grounds for his claim to the French throne, Edward counsels his son Ned (the Black Prince), "Be wary therefore, since we do commence/A famous war, and with so mighty a nation" (1.1.145–6). "Famous" in this context means both "memorable" and "that will bring fame" (Melchiori 1998, p. 66). Edward resolves to embark on a war whose proleptic function is to be remembered. In this it resembles the Battle of Agincourt in King Henry's Crispin's Day speech in *Henry V*: "This story shall the good man teach his son,/And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by/From this day to the ending of the world/But we in it shall be remembered" (4.3.56–9). By declaring the battles memorable before they take place, Edward and Henry establish an intimate partnership with their audiences. The Kings forecast a memorable battle that, as if in a perfectly symmetrical mirror reflection, their audiences are collectively engaged in recalling. Both plays remind us that the battles' theatrical reenactments have been one of the spoils of war: living monuments to the victors.

The first character in *The Reign of King Edward III* to reflect the mnemonic purposes of the whole is Robert of Artois, a Frenchman loyal to King Edward. In the second speech of the play, Artois presents his monarch's ancestral line in a history lesson designed to support Edward's claim to the French throne by right of inheritance. Virtuous guardians of the nation's memory must have their forgetful rivals, and the first of these appears when Salisbury's nephew, Sir William Montague, reports that King David of Scotland, "forgetting of his former oath" (1.1.126), has invaded the border towns of Berwick and Newcastle. The charge of forgetfulness is one that often attends Shakespeare's depiction of history. In the first sequence of history plays, Phyllis Rackin has shown, the French, and in particular French women, are depicted as "anti-historians" who threaten to disrupt the achievements of the English historical record. In the *Henry VI* plays, the English wage a battle against anti-historical forces—inevitably French and largely female—that would erase historical memory of English achievement (Rackin 1990; Rackin 1985). Similarly, the beginning of *Edward III* draws a sharp contrast between the historically minded Edward III, who is discussing with the Frenchman Robert the grounds for his claim to the throne of France, and a foreign enemy whose actions issue from what appears to be a lapse of memory.

However, the alliance between England and memory will prove as tenuous and impermanent as the Scottish King David's oath. It begins to dissolve in the first scene, and the process accelerates

in subsequent scenes widely regarded as having been written by Shakespeare (1.2., 2.1, and 2.2). At least three ironies attend the play's representation of the English nation as allied with historical memory. First, Edward urges his son to prepare for the memorable battle by means of a concentrated campaign of forgetting. Second, Edward himself will play the role assigned to his Scottish enemy when he attempts to seduce the Countess in 2.1, momentarily forgetting his marriage vows. Third is an irony that often accompanies the transition from print sources to performance in Shakespeare: the very charge against England's enemy of forgetting a sworn oath is embedded in a scene that repeatedly confuses historical characters and telescopes events, ostensibly for the sake of theatrical condensation and dramatic contrast and counterpoint. I will address each of these in turn.

At the very end of the opening scene, the King counsels his son, "[T]hou must begin/Now to forget thy study and thy books,/And ure thy shoulders to an armour's weight" (1.1.157–9). Edward's admonishment is jarring, coming as it does after the history lesson that begins the play, Robert of Artois' rehearsal of Edward's pedigree and claim to the French throne. To become a warrior requires not only a deliberate act of forgetting—an action that is perhaps a contradiction in terms—but a forgetting of the principal repository of historical memory: namely, books. The King commands his son to "forget" the very act of filling the storehouse of his memory. Translated into different terms, such a command might seem utterly conventional and not worthy of comment. Edward commands his son to put down his books and take up arms. However, the language of remembering and forgetting that he uses to call his son to arms curiously echoes Edward's twin complaints, moments earlier, against two forgetful enemies: the Scottish monarch and the French, with their disregard of Edward's pedigree.

In the next scene, the Countess will represent King Edward himself as forgetful, like the Scottish enemy that fled at the King's approach, but also divided in memory, like his studious son. The Countess outdoes Robert of Artois' invoking of ancestry by recalling the original progenitor:

. . . and will your sacred self
Commit high treason against the king of heaven,
To stamp his image in forbidden metal,
Forgetting your allegiance and your oath? In
violating marriage' sacred law
You break a greater honour than yourself.
To be a king is of a younger house
Than to be married: your progenitor,
Sole reigning Adam on the universe,
By God was honoured for a married man, But not
by him anointed for a king.

(2.1.257–67)

As in *Hamlet's* Graveyard Scene, where the Gravedigger doubles as a homely keeper of the nation's memory, the reference to Adam functions as a mnemonic trump card, so to speak. Before there were kings there were husbands. Adam was a husband though no king. The heritage of the former title has precedence and therefore, the Countess implies, bears more honor. Early in the reign of Richard II, the priest John Ball's famous rhyme that added fuel to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, "When Adam delved and Eve span/Who was then a gentleman?" challenged the very idea of social rank. It is unlikely that the Countess intends her Adamic reference to be socially subversive, but it does have the inadvertent effect of shifting honor and authority to the commoner in such a way as to grant him a longer pedigree than a king. The breaking of a marriage vow appears to be a sin against memory itself: against the memory not only of a specific vow but also of its deep pre-history. To forget one's marriage vows is to forget "your progenitor,/Sole reigning Adam." Like Edward's injunction to his son the Black Prince, the

Countess' language—"forgetting your allegiance and your oath"—recalls both the charge against the Scottish King, his "forgetting of his former oath," and that against the French for rewriting or "obscur[ing]" of Edward's mother Isabel's "privilege" (1.1.19). The Countess defends her honor in such a way as to mark Edward, who has just been shown to be using history to justify a war of conquest, as one of the forgetful. He stands in need of a second history lesson, one that will remind him of his vows by returning him to the very beginnings of human history.

When King Edward instructs his son to forget his study and his books, we surmise that memory is not simply a battle against a forgetful external enemy, but rather an internal and divided struggle. That impression is reinforced when the Countess of Salisbury's father, the Earl of Warwick, describes in mnemonic terms his dilemma of having sworn an oath to entreat his daughter to break an oath. After swearing an oath to the king to do his bidding, Warwick vows, like one of the many riddling speakers in *Macbeth*,

I'll keep mine oath,
And to my daughter make a recantation Of all the
virtue I have preached to her. I'll say she must
forget her husband Salisbury, If she remember to
embrace the king

(2.1.355–9)

The clash of two competing and mutually exclusive oaths is figured as a dispute between remembering and forgetting. When at the end of the second act Edward eventually recovers from his obsession with the Countess, he simultaneously recovers an awareness of the value of remembrance. He remembers the obligation to remember, and in doing so he becomes simultaneously a fit king and a fitting object of the audience's collective remembrance, at the head of what seems to be a nation no longer internally divided between an obligation to remember and a desire to forget.

The impression of a nation with its mnemonic house in order is merely apparent, however, for a third irony underlies England's self-representation at the very beginning of the play as a nation with history on its side, one whose ambitions are legitimized by historical memory. Not only the king but also the play itself is apparently beset by countermemories that challenge the integrity of the whole. As Melchiori writes of the opening scene in which Montague stresses King David's treacherous "forgetting of his former oath," "The chronology of historical events here is deliberately confused. Not a league but a truce with the Scots was concluded some ten years before the siege mentioned . . . , but was broken by King David in 1332 when he took the border town of Berwick . . . , causing the English reaction. It was during this campaign that Sir William Montague (not his younger homonymous nephew mentioned at 121) was created Earl of Salisbury and 'married nobly' for his bravery" (Melchiori 1998, p. 65). Elsewhere in the scene, the French succession is

"deliberately confused" as it is expounded for King Edward by Robert of Artois. Philip VI, cousin to the dead king Philip the Fair, and not King John, Edward's principal antagonist in the play, succeeded in 1328. Philip VI's son, King John II, in turn, succeeded him. As Melchiori explains, "The existence of Philip VI is deliberately ignored in order to present a single royal French counterpart to Edward in the campaign that lasted from 1337 to 1356" (Melchiori 1998, p. 60). Of course, theatrical alterations to historical sources such as these are all too common in history plays of the period, and perhaps only a handful of spectators in the play's Elizabethan audiences could have identified them as well as a modern editor. In a play that devotes explicit attention to the ethics of remembering and forgetting, however, such errors and recasting of past events may be part of the play's very design. There are numerous alterations to chronicle history in this play that opens with an apparent concern with getting the past right so as to legitimize the English King's claim to the French crown. In composing the play, Shakespeare and his collaborator doubtless were reminded that a theatrical rendering of English history would amount to a complex negotiation between remembering and forgetting, resembling those experienced by Edward and his son, and

not simply a battle against the inevitable erosions of memory and the all too human tendency to forget.

II: Plays as aides-memoire—and aides à oublier?

Among the four scenes most often attributed to Shakespeare, three bear witness to ways in which plays themselves may have a potent influence on historical memory. The Countess of Salisbury reflects the darker side of this theme when she expresses the wish that her nephew Montague was more forcefully persuasive with the king. Anticipating Shakespeare's Cleopatra's fear that at some future time "quick comedians/Extemporally will stage us, and present/Our Alexandrian revels," and especially that "Some squeaking Cleopatra" will present a diminished or even mocking image of her, the Countess, who like Cleopatra is played by an apprentice who "boy[s] [her] greatness"—imagines the consequences if the Scots were to prevail in the north:

Thou dost not tell him, if he here prevail,
How much they will deride us in the North,
And, in their vile uncivil skipping jigs, Bray forth
their conquest and our overthrow, Even in the
barren, bleak, and fruitless air.

(1.2.10–14)

Under siege by the Scots and soon to be besieged sexually by her imagined savior King Edward, the Countess imaginatively evokes yet another form of siege, the encircling of a stage by an audience. Like Cleopatra in Shakespeare's Jacobean tragedy, she summons the very theatrical conditions with which she is surrounded, the often rambunctious playing conditions of the public theatres, which regularly included "vile uncivil skipping jigs." She does so in a manner that implicitly figures the playhouse as a place of siege.

Just as the Countess worries about the power of theaters to perpetuate in the popular memory a humiliating defeat, so does the play as a whole remind us that they bear a formidable power to focus, concentrate, and reinforce a people's memory, as two speeches on what Lord Audley refers to as "parcelling"—that is, dividing up, itemizing, or listing" the parts of a whole—confirm. The fourth scene commonly seen as Shakespearean, Act 4, scene 4, features a characteristically Shakespearean meditation on memory and representation. As his father earlier asserted the legitimacy of his claim to France, so does Edward the Black Prince tacitly advance a parallel claim: that of the legitimacy of the history play as a means of representing and thereby laying claim to England's past. The scene is the Battle of Poitiers in 1356, at which the Black Prince defeated and captured King John of France. Like Shakespeare's Henry V at the Battle of Agincourt, the Prince prior to the battle tallies the uneven numbers of French and English combatants. Following Audley's Nestor-like piecemeal description of an English army hemmed in on all sides, the Prince performs a recount of sorts that evens or equalizes the odds: "one to one," one nation rivaling one nation, one king against one king.

Thy parcelling this power hath made it more.
As many sands as these my hands can hold Are
but my handful of so many sands: Then, all the
world— and call it but a power— Easily ta'en up,
and quickly thrown away.
But if I stand to count them sand by sand
The number would confound my memory And
make a thousand millions of a task
Which briefly is no more indeed than one.
These quarters, squadrons, and these regiments, Before,
behind us, and on either hand,
Are but a power. When we name a man,

His hand, his foot, his head, hath several strengths, And,
 being all but one self instant strength,
 Why, all this many, Audley, is but one,
 And we can call it all but one man's strength.
 He that hath far to go, tells it by miles:
 If he should tell by steps, it kills his heart; The
 drops are infinite that make a flood, And yet
 thou knowest we call it but a rain.
 There is but one France, one King of France:
 That France hath no more kings, and that same king
 Hath but the puissant legion of one king; And we have
 one. Then apprehend no odds, For one to one is fair
 equality.

(4.4.41–65)

Anticipating Henry's St. Crispin's Day speech ("We few, we happy few"), Ned's wrestling with the superior numbers of the French is designed to quell English fears before the battle. "Parcelling" the enemy as Audley does would overwhelm ("confound") the memory, now tasked with itemizing all the parts of a whole: a hopeless endeavor akin to counting "a thousand millions" grains of sand. Dividing the French power into "quarters, squadrons, and these regiments" serves to obscure the fact that the French are "but a power." No matter how often one divides that power, the foe is "no more indeed than one." As the Arden editors R assert, "Prince Edward devises an argument to dispel his own fear of superior enemy numbers, with transparent sophistry and false logic." (Proudfoot and Bennett 2017, p. 304).

However transparent and flimsy as an argument as to why the English ought not to fear the French, the Prince's speech bears a kind of truth in reflecting the representational economy of the theater, implicitly justifying not only the comparatively few English soldiers in France but also the few actors on stage at any given moment. Each army would, of course, necessarily be represented by a few. The very stage on which the actor playing Edward stood bore witness to the truth of the character's "sophistical" claim, "Why, all this many, Audley, is but one" (l. 55). "Parcelling" is precisely what the audience is tasked with by the Chorus in *Henry V*, who charges the audience, "Into a thousand parts divide one man" (I Chorus. 25), in a speech that nods to the cognitive economy of the theater. The Prince suggests that this economy is akin to that of language itself: "The drops are infinite that make a flood,/And yet thou knowest we call it but a rain." To represent "briefly" (1.49) is to represent truly, and consistent with the monarchical assumption that a nation is represented by its monarch (or its monarch and Parliament), the nation of France by the King of France: "For one to one is fair equality." The acting company's representation of whole armies by means of a few players, as well as the play's truncated account of the past, of the reign of King Edward III by means of a few events, gains authority through the Prince's speech. He inadvertently justifies what might be called the forgetful memory of the theatre, the theatrical shorthand that necessarily makes history on stage a conflicted play or a partnership, a collision or a collusion, of remembering and forgetting.

The Prince's speech on the parcelling of a nation parallels his father's speech on the parcelling of a woman, namely the Countess. As the play compares an oath between kings and nations to one between marriage partners, so does it draw an implicit parallel between the division of a woman and the division of an army. Just praise of the Countess would exceed the attempt to "tell the sea by drops,/Nay, more than drop, the massy earth by sands,/And sand by sand print them in memory" (2.1.136–8). The French army is an object of enmity and fear; the Countess, of obsessive desire. In both cases, Shakespeare connects the cognitive act of "parcelling" to memory. The "parcelling" of a whole represents a severe challenge to memory, one that the theater by its very nature, its use of a representational shorthand of the kind alluded to by *Henry V*'s Chorus, serves to mitigate. Ironically, it is that very shorthand that ensures that the spirit of forgetting,

whose fleshly embodiment is Falstaff, will play such a massive role in the staging of history, particularly in Shakespeare's second tetralogy.

III: Remembering *Edward III* in *Henry V*

Inna Koskenniemi observes, "Shakespeare was keenly interested in the characters of Edward III and his son, whose period of reign forms a prologue, as it were, to his own history plays" (Koskenniemi 1964, p. 480). A similar point is made by Melchiori, who characterizes *Edward III* as "the natural prelude to the second Shakespearean historical cycle, from *Richard II* to *Henry V*" (Melchiori 1998, p. 3).⁸ The opening scene of *Edward III* and the Shakespearean scene of Act 4, scene 4, in particular, anticipate much business of the later and more accomplished play *Henry V*.⁹ Other critics have inverted the perspective, noting that *Henry V* recalls not only the reign of Edward III but also *The Reign of Edward III*. As Henry is urged by counselors to emulate his great ancestor Edward, so Shakespeare models large sections of his later play on *Edward III*. For Shakespeare, the play about Edward might have been a less imposing and intimidating model than the historical ancestor Edward was for Henry, but the relation of the two plays mimics that of the two monarchs. Just as Henry will outdo his ancestor's exploits at Agincourt, so does *Henry V* wholly surpass the earlier play even as it recalls many of its details.

What I want to emphasize is the way in which the later play appropriates and deepens *Edward III*'s language of remembering and forgetting. Because *Henry V* is concerned with the political dimensions of memory and its manipulation, the echoes of *Edward III* give the play's references to memory further resonance, especially for audience members who had attended both plays. *Henry V* recalls parts of *Edward III*'s concern with recollection itself. Furthermore, echoes of the earlier play by the latter allowed audiences to participate in the same exercises of memory urged on the king by his counselors and on the soldiers by their king. For many who watched *Henry V* at the Globe in 1599, Edward III's reign did not belong exclusively to what Thomas Nashe referred to as "our English chronicles, wherein our forefathers' valiant acts (that have lain long buried in rusty brass and worm-eaten books)" lie buried. According to Nashe, those acts are "revived, and they themselves raised from the grave of oblivion" through the action of English stages (Nashe 1972, pp. 112–13) There were doubtless those in the audiences of *Henry V* who could have experienced the reign of Edward III not as buried chronicle history but as a living (theatrical) memory. *Henry V* makes continual reference to Edward, often directly comparing the two monarchs,¹⁰ and in doing so, would likely have summoned memories of *Edward III*. According to Koskenniemi, "There are in all fifteen references to Edward III in Shakespeare's histories," more than any other English king who does not appear as a character in those plays, and most such references look back on "the time of Edward III and the Black Prince as a period of political greatness, a heroic age as yet unmarred by civil dissension" (Koskenniemi 1964, p. 477). In this respect it echoes more than a century of Edwardian nostalgia, stretching back to Edward IV's parliament of 1472-5 (Morgan 1997, p. 874; Griffiths 2015, p. 748).

Among the many details of *Henry V* likely to trigger memories of the earlier play for those who had witnessed it are remembrances of Edward and his son the Black Prince. They dot Henry's preparations for war at the beginning of the play. Edward ranks first among the "mighty ancestors" that Henry is exhorted to remember; his father Henry IV, by contrast, is the precursor whom he quietly seeks to forget but cannot, we learn in his soliloquy the night before the great battle. The Archbishop of Canterbury urges Henry,

Go, my dread lord, to your great-grandsire's tomb,
From whom you claim. Invoke his warlike spirit,
And your great-uncle's, Edward the Black Prince,
Who on the French ground played a tragedy, Making
defeat of the full power of France,
Whiles his most mighty father on a hill Stood
smiling to behold his lion's whelp Forage in
blood of French nobility.

Canterbury's representation of the Battle of Crécy (1346) in theatrical terms, likening it to a "tragedy" with his father and his power looking on like a playhouse audience, helps bind the bishops' rhetoric of remembrance to the audience viewing *Henry V* in 1599. E. Pearlman observes, "The words 'play'd,' 'Tragedie,' and 'ground' ... conjoin to construct a vision not of the real geographical Crécy (a plain in France), but of Crécy, the stage setting in *Edward III* where fictional battles had been recently and 'sundry times' enacted" (Pearlman 1995, p. 527; Kerrigan 2011). Huw Griffiths writes of Canterbury's speech that what he "describes is not really the monument at all but something like a staged scene from a play based on Edward's reign" (Griffiths 2015, p. 478). At least some members of that audience would have recalled the "tragedy" referred to by the Archbishop, having witnessed it six or seven years earlier¹¹ in the play *Edward III*. Figuring the original battle as play-like establishes an intimacy between the history evoked by the bishops and the living memories of theater audiences. Both plays induce a further intimacy between their monarchs and their audiences. The Chorus of *Henry V* refers to kings in the plural as members of an audience: "monarchs to behold the swelling scene" (1 Chorus.4), a reference that recalls the King's beholding the swelling scene of the earlier play's Battle of Crécy, at which the King tested his son's mettle by passively watching the scene unfold.

Other aspects of *Edward III*'s opening scene that look ahead to *Henry V* include a character, the Frenchman Robert of Artois, who rehearses the grounds for the English king's claim to the throne of France, as the Archbishop of Canterbury does in *Henry V*. In both plays, a messenger arrives from France: Lorraine in *Edward III*, in *Henry V* an Ambassador from the Dauphin. Lorraine offers the King the "petty dukedom" of Guienne in *Edward III*, 1.1.82; the Chorus in *Henry V* will later report that the French King Charles has offered "Some petty and unprofitable dukedoms" as dowry to his daughter Katherine (3.0.31). Both English monarchs regard the offers of dukedoms as transparent attempts to deflect their greater claim to all of France and therefore reject the offers. The beginnings of both plays review the grounds for the English monarch's claim to the French throne, and in both cases, the controversial claim involves the question of inheritance through maternal ancestry. The major battles in both plays are preceded by proleptic references that already mark the events as worthy of remembrance: in *Edward III*, as I have already mentioned, Edward's enjoining his son, "Be wary, therefore, since we do commence/A famous war" (1.2.145-6); in *Henry V*, the memorable Crispin's Day speech, which ironically, even while telling audiences that the battle to follow and the "happy few" who fought it will always be "freshly remembered," is always in performance far more memorable than the reenactment of the battle itself (4.3.40f.).

Both plays nod to the perennial idea that the Scots—England's "giddy neighbor" in King Henry's phrase, or "the weasel Scot" to "the eagle England," in Westmorland's (*Henry V*, 1.2.145, 169–70)—are likely to take advantage of England's distraction by the French wars by making incursions in the north.¹² Henry himself refers to Edward's linked preoccupations with the French and the Scots: "For you shall read that my great-grandfather/Never went with his forces into France/But that the Scot on his unfurnished kingdom/Came pouring like the tide into a breach/With ample and brim fullness of his force" (1.2.146–50).¹³ In *Edward III*, without providing context,¹⁴ Montague reports the capture of the Scots King David II (1.1.123f.), and late in the play, David appears in the King's camp (5.1.63); in *Henry V*, Canterbury refers to this same capture of David II, "taken and impounded as a stray," subsequently sent "to France/To fill King Edward's fame with prisoner kings" (1.2.161–2). The historical Henry also brought a Scottish king to accompany him to his French wars: a youthful King James I. Although James does not appear in *Henry V*, Shakespeare names the Scottish captain "Jamy." As Andrew Gurr observes, "Captain Jamy is a long way from being a Scottish prince. But the name itself keeps jumping out from Holinshed's story of Henry's reign" (Gurr 1992, p. 231; Gurr 1989).¹⁵ The Scots, "pilfering borderers," in Canterbury's uncharitable phrase (1.2.142), are textual as well as geographical borderers, as the specter of the Auld Alliance between Scotland and France continues to hover at the margins of both plays.¹⁶

After the Battle of Agincourt, Captain Llewellyn reminds the King, “Your grandfather of famous memory, an’t please your majesty, and your great-uncle Edward the Plack Prince of Wales, as I have read in the chronicles, fought a most prave pattle here in France” (4.7.82–5). Even the French, who are dishonored by the memory of Crécy and Poitiers, cannot resist the powerful tide of memory of Edward’s reign. The French King Charles reminds his son the Dauphin that Henry “is bred out of that bloody strain/That haunted us in our familiar paths./Witness our too-much memorable shame/When Crécy battle fatally was struck” (2.4.51–4). The English inheritance is a full-bodied and biological “bloody strain”; the French, a ghostly and disembodied shameful memory passed from one generation to the next, haunting each in turn. Charles goes on to describe the scene that audiences would have remembered from Act 3, scene 5 of *Edward III*, when Edward III retired to a hill to watch his son in battle. “Our too-much memorable shame” could indeed have been a vivid memory for those who witnessed its enactment a few years earlier on another stage: the French inability to forget confirmed by English audiences who perhaps were all too eager to remember. In *Henry V*, the English remember the past with pride; the French remember with shame, and seek to forget: at least, that is the contrast that appears on the surface of the play. Over the course of the whole, however, the play indicates the degree to which English memory is carefully orchestrated and full of a dangerous network of underground “mines,” to use the play’s own military metaphor. English memory in *Henry V*, as I have suggested elsewhere, is as precarious an assemblage as the English army itself, with its quarreling Irish, English, Welsh, and Scottish captains.¹⁷

Attention to the political and social costs and benefits of remembering and forgetting, I have claimed, serves almost as a Shakespearean signature: not one that can be trusted with absolute certainty in the absence of other kinds of evidence, but one that may buttress claims to limited, collaborative authorship on stylistic and other grounds. In the case of *Edward III*, a consideration of the scenes that share the practice of Shakespeare’s histories—of not simply reviving the past but also reflecting on the motivations and conflicts associated with recollection—accords well with previous attributions of those scenes to Shakespeare on stylistic grounds. All four of the scenes widely attributed to Shakespeare, as well as portions of the opening scene, share an interest in the dynamics of remembering and forgetting as key factors in staging the nation: an interest that does not extend to *Edward III* as a whole. The many echoes of the opening scene of *Edward III* in *Henry V*, 1.2. and elsewhere do not necessarily confirm that they were written by the same hand. In fact, they may be taken as evidence that Shakespeare, while recalling the earlier play just as his character Henry V was enjoined to remember its monarch Edward III, was striving to outdo, in the spirit of rivalry that informs both plays, the work of an erstwhile collaborator, whether Marlowe, Kyd, Peele, or another of the many playwrights that have been proposed as the principal author of the play.¹⁸ But what is striking to me is the presence of characteristically Shakespearean ironies pertaining to the value of recalling the past in a play devoted to that very task: ironies that do not inform the play as a whole, but only its few isolated skirmishes against oblivion, largely concentrated in the four scenes commonly attributed to Shakespeare.

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¹ Melchiori (1998, p. 3). All citations from the play refer to this edition. Citations of *Henry V* are from Gurr (1992).

² Sams (1996). For a critical response to Sams, see Kirwan (2015). Current critical opinion trends toward the idea of collaborative authorship. According to editor Melchiori, “probably Shakespeare is not its sole author” (p. 3). The editors of the recent Arden edition, Richard Proudfoot and Nicola Bennett, also make a case for collaborative authorship: (Proudfoot and Bennett 2017, p. 49f). Among the many scholars who contend that Shakespeare had a hand in the play are (Hope 1994; Smith 1991; Harold 1989; Slater 1988; Proudfoot 1985;

Lapides 1980). Kirwan provocatively argues for the need “to sever the productive use of authorship studies from the single focus on the author for authorship’s sake” (p. 163).

3 Wells and Taylor (2005). The editors note that “intensive application of stylometric and other tests of authorship . . . has strengthened the case for including it among the collected works” (p. 257). The most recent Oxford edition of the complete works has an excellent and newly edited text of the play by Rory Loughnane, who prefaces the play with three pages of excerpted comments about the play over four centuries (Loughnane 2015).

4 I borrow the phrase from the title of Eric Foner’s book (Foner 2002).

5 For an extended version of this argument, see (Baldo 2012). See also Isabel Karremann’s marvelous study (2015).

6 James Shapiro has argued that even *Henry V* (1599), first staged eleven years after the attempted invasion, qualifies as a “late Armada play.” (Shapiro 1989).

7 Melchiori writes, “It is well known that the most indubitable Shakespearean scenes of the play are those connected with the episode of Edward’s infatuation with the Countess of Salisbury.” (Melchiori 1994).

8 Kirwan observes that “the play sits neatly alongside the Shakespearean history cycles: it dramatises the beginnings of the Hundred Years’ War that Shakespeare concluded in *I Henry VI*, and it provides an obvious reference point for the frequent mentions of the Black Prince and earlier French wars in Shakespeare’s second tetralogy” (p. 157).

9 Although Act 1, scene 2 of *Henry V* bears many echoes of Act 1, scene 1 of *Edward III*, the latter belongs to the group of “more firmly attested non-Shakespeare parts of *Edward III*.” is not among those thought to have been written by Shakespeare (Merriam 2009).

10 This resemblance of the two scenes has long been observed by scholars. See, for example, Koskenniemi (1964, pp. 478–80).

11 The play was entered in the Stationer’s Register on 1 December 1595. Its quarto edition, printed “for Cuthbert Burby” in 1596, gives no indication as to when and where it was performed, but only that it was “sundrie times plaied about the Citie of London.” It is thought to have been performed c. 1592–3. See Melchiori (1998, pp. 3–9), for an extended discussion of the date of the play.

12 For a discussion of William Hazlitt’s biting response to Westmorland’s lines, see (Maley and Murphy 2004), “Introduction,” 8–9. Maley and Murphy’s collection provides a richly varied sense of the scope and history of intersections between Shakespeare’s plays and Scottish history and culture: of the mutual influence of Shakespeare’s writing and reception and of Scotland on one another.

13 It is fascinating that the same word, “breach,” is used to evoke an imagined assault on England in Henry’s army’s absence, and later—and famously—by Henry himself to rally his troops during the English army’s siege of Harfleur.

14 The context is a war of succession, the so-called Second War of Scottish Independence, involving English supporters, including Edward III, of Edward Balliol, disinherited son of a Scottish king and claimant to the Scottish throne.

15 Gurr (1992, p. 231). See also (Gurr 1989).

16 As Andrew Hadfield has written, “Elizabethan England was neatly framed by its relationship with Scotland: most specifically, through the Stuart claim to the English throne, but also because Scotland was acknowledged as the site of the most advanced and controversial political ideas in post-Reformation Europe.” “*Hamlet’s Country Matters: The ‘Scottish Play’ within the Play*,” Maley and Murphy (2004, p. 87).

17 For a longer version of this argument, see “Wars of Memory in *Henry V*” (Baldo 1996). On forgetting in *Henry V*, see also Karremann (2015) and Holland (2021).

18 Thomas Merriam argues that the play bears a “Marlovian framework, reworked and added to by Shakespeare, possibly after Marlowe’s death in 1593.” (Merriam 2000). Nine years later he revisited the evidence for Marlowe vs. Kyd as author of the non-Shakespeare parts of the play, using “multidimensional analysis of relative frequency of function words.” The results of the later analysis, Merriam found, “favours Marlowe over Kyd.” Thomas Merriam, “Marlowe Versus Kyd as Author of *Edward III*, I.i, III, and V,” pp. 549–50. David Kernot, Terry Bossomaier, and Roger Bradbury, using a “neurolinguistic approach,” conclude that Kyd was the play’s principal author. Although they find that “the four scenes commonly attributed to Shakespeare also identify as Kyd,” they allow that while “Thomas Kyd wrote the majority of the play . . . William Shakespeare played a lesser role.” “Did

William Shakespeare and Thomas Kyd Write *Edward III*,” *International Journal on Natural Language Computing* 6, no. 6 (2017), 7.

Using software designed to detect plagiarism, Brian Vickers has made a strong case for Kyd as principal author, allowing for Shakespeare as a co-author responsible for a smaller portion of the overall play. “Kyd, *Edward III*, and ‘The Shock of the New,’” (Cussen 2020). J. P. Conlan, who sees the play as a cohesive critique of the persecution of recusants in the wake of the victory over the Armada that is entirely “worthy of Shakespeare’s authorship” (“Shakespeare’s *Edward III*: A Consolation for English Recusants,” p. 201). He attributes the entire play to Shakespeare, as does Eric Sams in his landmark edition of the play. Rory Loughnane and Gary Taylor ascribe the Countess scenes to Shakespeare in the recent (Taylor and Egan 2017).

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