Cosmos and History:
Shakespeare’s Representation of Nature and Rebellion in *Henry IV Part One*

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‘Diseased nature oftentimes breaks forth
In strange eruptions; ...’

(*Henry IV Part One*, III.i.27–31)

In *Henry IV Part One* kingship and rebellion are described via a complex spatial dichotomy of interior and exterior, of centre and periphery. The various central points of power in the play (King Henry, his kingship and Jerusalem) are all depicted as under threat from peripheral forces. In addition, rebellion is represented as a disturbance not just of the political but of the natural order. Nature and natural order are central motifs in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV Part One*, a play which tells of rebellion and disloyalty against an anointed (although arguably not legitimate) monarch. Strange weather and diabolical acts, events contrary to the laws of nature are recorded (and sometimes mocked) throughout the play, and culminate in the symbolic tripartite dissection of England’s landscape on a map. The England of *Henry IV Part One* is a place where nature and the laws that govern it have been dislocated from their conceptual centre. Interestingly, this representation of the reign of Henry IV (1399–1413) to some extent mirrors the picture of England presented by the authors of the so-called ‘universal’ chronicles of the early fifteenth-century, who likewise interpreted contemporary events in the light of strange natural phenomena (such as comets and the migration of birds).

Thus one possible way of interpreting the ‘strange eruptions’ described in *Henry IV Part One* is as a remnant of the earlier universal history chronicle tradition whose use can be traced to Holinshed and Shakespeare; something which has not been sufficiently investigated. This article aims to place Shakespeare as at the end of a long tradition of historical writing, rather than to tie him to a particular chronicler. Beyond this I propose to explore connections between events recorded in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV Part One* and the universal histories written in the early fifteenth century and the mappae mundi which frequently accompanied them; less
in an attempt to determine the sources of Shakespeare’s history plays than to chart
the conceptual centre against which the strange eruptions of rebellion and nature are
said to occur.


‘Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world’

(William Butler Yeats, ‘The Second Coming’)

In Henry IV Part One rebellion is described as a series of tensions between the centre
and the periphery. The imagery Henry uses to entice the rebelling Worcester back to
the crown is a good example of this:

... Will you again unknit
This churlish knot of all-abhorred war
And move in that obedient orb again
Where you did give a fair and natural light,
And be no more an exhaled meteor,
A prodigy of fear and a portent
Of broached mischief to the unborn times?

(V.i.15–21)

Loyalty to the crown and legality are described as revolving around the centre,
as natural, spherical in shape, centripetal,1 static and regular. In contrast the rebel
Worcester’s position is peripheral; as an ‘exhaled meteor’, his activity is unnatural,
centrifugal and disorganized. Rebellion is marked as disruptive and chaotic.

Henry and his kingship form one central point in Henry IV Part One. Jerusalem
forms another. Henry himself acknowledges his centrality and encourages the use
of this ideology. Henry states plainly that his accession has brought peace and
stability to the nation, so that now ‘England can march all one way and be no more
opposed’ (I.i.14–15). The ‘England’ of which he speaks is centred upon himself and
his governance; the time is right, he says, for a crusade to Jerusalem. His belief rests
on a notion of unity and stability which had previously not been achieved and one
which allows him to plan to leave England with the (assumed) knowledge that the
nation will hold strong in his absence. That Henry should see his position as king
as spherical or as an ‘orb’ is significant within the context of legitimacy. The orb
was a powerful symbol presented to the newly-crowned king at his coronation. Its
shape was symbolic of the Earth itself, and represented the king’s responsibility as a
secular leader to protect humankind.
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In Henry IV Part One there is a series of tensions constructed between the centre and the periphery, indicating a disturbance in the natural balance of the cosmos. Messages coming into Henry’s court (the physical focal point of King Henry’s nation) concerning Mortimer’s revolt are described as ‘loaden with heavy news’ (I.i.37) and the Percies’ failure to hand over Scottish prisoners is described by Westmoreland as the coming of ‘uneven and unwelcome news’ (I.i.50). The terminology used expresses a downward pulling movement and as we are told, King Henry himself believes Mortimer’s attempts at fighting Owen Glendower were half-hearted and rebellious, to which Hotspur sharply replies, ‘Revolted Mortimer! He never did fall off, my sovereign liege, / But by the chance of war’ (I.iii.93–95). Movement downwards is not desirable, rather it is a trait of rebellion. It is difficult to get news to the centre from the periphery; it is burdened, ‘loaden’ and heavy, requiring a great deal of effort. Communications are not free and even. However it also raises the issue of the effectiveness of Henry as a centre; the news coming from the periphery to the centre is out of balance within the context of a centripetal universe, indicating that he too is out of balance, a point to which we will return in a moment.

In Henry IV Part One the king’s weakened position due to rebellion is illustrated via a series of changes in nature; nature is out of balance, the scales are tipping, and this is expressed either through excesses in nature or through infertility. Henry describes England’s landscape as damaged and parched by war, saying that ‘No more the thirsty entrance of this soil / Shall daub her lips with her own children’s blood’ (I.i.5–6). In anger at Mortimer’s defection, Henry is determined to let the rebel starve on barren mountains (I.iii.89). Mortimer has come to be associated with the barren mountain landscape, thereby establishing a contrast between the health and the fertility of the landscape and his rebellion. Owen Glendower’s description of his own birth uses a similar image of the desolation and emptiness of the mountains, ‘... at my birth / The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes, / The goats ran from the mountains ...’ (III.i.35–37). Wasteland is connected to rebellion and to the rebel leaders particularly. Nature is vulnerable. There are several examples in Henry IV Part One of the landscape being changed through rebellion or acts of war by anthropogenic means. Hotspur’s threat of building a series of canals to divert the river Trent would potentially distort the natural landscape. King Henry too describes the stability he believes his accession as king brings to England by saying, ‘no more shall trenching war channel her fields’ (I.i.6).

On the other hand there is an immense stimulation of nature brought on by rebellion and war and as Hotspur tells us, ‘Diseased nature oftentimes breaks forth / In strange eruptions; ...’ (III.i.27–31). Owen Glendower tells us that at his birth there was what could be read as an earthquake: ‘At my nativity / The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes. Of burning cressets; and at my birth / The frame and huge foundation of the earth / Shaked like a coward’ (III.i.12–16). Indeed meteors and
comets are referred to on several occasions in Henry IV Part One; Henry describes the civil war that has raged in England as ‘like the meteors of a troubled heaven’ (I.i.10); Worcester is referred to as a ‘meteor’ (V.i.19) that has been expelled from the central orb. Henry too desires to be wondered at like a comet (III.ii.47–49). Weather too is stimulated by rebellion, most particularly in Wales. Glendower tells us that ‘Three times hath Henry Bolingbrooke made head / Against my power; thrice from the banks of Wye / And sandy-bottomed Severn have I sent him / Bootless home and weather-beaten back’ (III.i.62–65). Underlying this is the suggestion that Glendower defeated King Henry with the aid of weather, implying that he has the ability to contravene the laws of nature.

Wales is described as a diabolical and unbalanced space, a place of rebellion where nature has been transgressed. The Welsh rebel Owen Glendower’s use of magic is a source of great discomfort for King Henry, and he refers to him as ‘that great magician, damned Glendower’ (I.iii.82). Likewise Falstaff refers to him as ‘that devil Glendower’ (II.iv.359–60). Owen Glendower is introduced as ‘irregular and wild Glendower’ (I.i.40) which immediately describes his place in the periphery, away from the regular centre, a point which is frequently reinforced; we are told Owen Glendower has been marked as extraordinary and is ‘not in the roll of common men’ (III.i.41). In contrast, Hotspur’s reading of Glendower’s magical abilities is very different; he mocks Glendower and disregards his assertions as futile. While there are many layers of meaning to Hotspur’s indifference to Glendower, one purpose may well be to emphasize the disorganization of the rebellion and to present the periphery in which rebellion sits as chaotic.

Likewise Owen Glendower’s supporters carry out acts which are against nature, this time through the transformation of the body. Welsh women perform atrocities on the dead bodies of the English soldiers after the battle of Bryn Glas, in an act described as ‘beastly, shameless transformation’. The whole passage reads:

But yesternight, when all athwart there came
A post from Wales, laden with heavy news,
Whose worst was that the noble Mortimer,
Leading the men of Herefordshire to fightAgainst the irregular and wild Glendower
Was by the rude hands of that Welshman taken
A thousand of his people butchered
Upon whose dead corpse there was such misuse,
Such beastly shameless transformation
By those Welshwomen done, as may not be
Without much shame retold or spoken of.

(1.i.36–46)
In this scene the Welsh transgression is not merely a theory, but has been put into practice and has resulted in the transformation of English bodies. This highlights the complexity of imagery used to create the centre and periphery in *Henry IV Part One*. The Welsh women de-nature the bodies of the English soldiers and although we are not told exactly what occurred, Owen Glendower and his Welsh followers are set up as the direct opposite of Henry’s central point; Glendower and his followers are not normal, but rather barbaric and ‘rude’, irregular and uncivilized, with the ability to metamorphose the human body, use magic and conjure up bad weather.\(^3\) Glendower is centrifugal in intention and centripetal in effect; his disruption of weather and the atrocity perpetrated by the women is the cause of a great scurry homewards towards Henry. However Owen Glendower’s actions result in the strengthening of Henry’s centre, as the soldiers are drawn towards him. The rebellion as a whole is described as abnormal, oppositional, unbalanced and deviant from the central point or space.

II. *Henry IV Part One* and Universal Chronicles

Why then does Shakespeare use such specific constructions of rebellion as peripheral and chaotic? It is here that I would like to draw some parallels between the representation of rebellion and its connection to nature in *Henry IV Part One* and in universal chronicles of the reign of Henry IV.

It is possible to connect Shakespeare to these universal chronicles by mapping the historiography of Henry IV’s reign between 1399 and 1598. It is well documented that Shakespeare utilized Ralph Holinshed’s *Chronicle of Henry IV*, published in 1577,\(^4\) for the events of Henry IV’s reign. However, modern scholars focus on the importance of Holinshed to the detriment of explorations of the earlier chroniclers’ impact, in particular chronicles written contemporaneously with the events described in the play. Of particular note in this group of neglected chronicles is the work of Thomas Walsingham (d. 1422),\(^5\) and the unknown writers of the *Continuatio Eulogii* completed c. 1413\(^6\) and the *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* (henceforth the *Historia Vitae*).\(^7\) For instance, in his *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, Geoffrey Bullough does not mention this inheritance at all or its impact on the narrative of *Henry IV Part One*,\(^8\) even though several scenes used by Shakespeare have come from these earlier chroniclers’ works, in one instance unaltered, which we will look at in a moment. The historiography between Henry IV’s reign and the composition of *Henry IV Part One* has not been sufficiently considered.

The influence of the chronicler Thomas Walsingham is illustrative; he was the most prominent and utilized of all the earlier sources for the reign of Henry IV; Walsingham’s chronicles were used as authorities by contemporary writers such as the authors of the *Continuatio Eulogii* and the *Historia Vitae*.\(^9\) Of the next generation of chroniclers, John Capgrave (d. 1464) relied heavily on Walsingham,\(^10\) and after him the Tudor chroniclers Edward Hall (d. 1547)\(^11\) and John Stow (d. 1605)\(^12\) are
known to have used Walsingham. Holinshed in turn drew on Hall and Stow, and Shakespeare used Holinshed. This is a very linear case study, and does not take into account the wider influence of chroniclers who relied on Walsingham, thereby overlooking one branch of Walsingham’s influence. And although one would be going too far in suggesting that Shakespeare read Walsingham, there is a tenable derivation from Walsingham in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV Part One*.

It is possible to identify elements of Thomas Walsingham’s influence, direct or indirect, in *Henry IV Part One*. Shakespeare’s usage of the Welsh women performing atrocities on the bodies of the English soldiers is one such historical remnant which has been passed down from the earlier chroniclers. Describing the origins of Shakespeare’s information for this passage, Terence Hawkes states that ‘the source of this information is clearly Holinshed’. In the most recent edition of *Henry IV Part I*, David Scott Kastan quotes from Holinshed in his commentary. However, if we take it back further to the contemporary chroniclers of Henry IV’s reign, it can be seen that the ultimate source was in fact Thomas Walsingham (d. 1422) who first recorded this incident at the Battle of Bryn Glas. Walsingham writes:

> When more than a thousand men had been killed from our countries, this crime had been perpetrated; unheard of in all the ages, for the women of the Welsh, after the conflict, cut off the genitilia of the slain. They placed the genitals, in the mouths of some slain ones. And they made the testicles hang down from the chin, and they pressed the noses into the bottoms of the same men; and they did not allow the bodies of the slain to be given their last rites without a great price.

The image of the innocent soldier naked and helpless is an emotive one across the two different time periods. In his account Walsingham constructs this vivid image through a series of counterbalances, including perpetrators and victims, deceased and living, moral and corrupt and more immediately female and male, Welsh and English. The end result is the construction of the Welsh as harsh, cruel and uncivilized, particularly emphasized by the deeds of their womenfolk. Polydore Virgil and Edward Hall’s descriptions of these events echo Walsingham. Likewise, Shakespeare uses this episode to construct the otherness of the Welsh, who we are told are ‘rude’ and their leader ‘wild and irregular’. However, Shakespeare is not explicit in his re-telling of the incident but rather allows it to pass without the sordid detail, which acts to reinforce the civility of the narrator Westmoreland and his audience, the royal court of Henry. It would be shameful to their ears to hear it. The Welsh women are, if you like, a spring-board from which to describe the civility of the English. Whilst the natural world around them may be unstable, English human nature is constant and consistent.

In the universal chronicle tradition rebellion against the body of the king or of the nation more generally is accompanied by a series of movements in nature,
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Walsingham, the Continuatio Eulogii, and the Historia Vitae all record a ripple of magical activity and supernatural events occurring as a result of the Percy, Glendower and Mortimer rebellion. For example, from the initiation of the Welsh revolt in September 1400 to the death of Hotspur in 1403 the Continuatio Eulogii records a comet, storm and thunder, and an eclipse interspersed with the record of the revolt.21 For the same time frame, Walsingham records a comet, an appearance of the devil in Danbury, Essex, and monsters of dark appearance in the woods near Bedford and Biggleswade.22 Rebellion is depicted as against the laws of nature, and so movements in nature, and strange natural phenomena, are signs or evidence of a shift in the natural balance of the cosmos.

Nature responds to rebellion. Comets and meteorites are two examples of natural phenomena in Henry IV Part One which are used to establish Henry’s centrality, as discussed earlier; Henry describes the civil disunity of England before his accession as ‘like the meteors of a troubled heaven’ (I.i.10); Worcester is referred to as an ‘exhaled meteor’ (V.i.19) that had been expelled from the central orb. Meteorites, comets and shooting stars had long been considered signs of impending war, famine and plague, and were read in primarily a metaphoric framework rather than a literal and scientific one;23 they were signs of imbalance and disturbance in the natural equilibrium of the cosmos. Like Mortimer’s ‘falling off’ from Henry’s ‘orb’, meteoric and falling star too were considered to have a downward movement, falling towards the earth. They were irregular, came from the periphery of the cosmos and were considered to be movements in nature and signs of impending problems.24 So when Worcester is likened to a meteor there is an interesting transferral: the disruption which Worcester embodies is likened to the natural sign that would normally signify that disruption.

It is significant and somewhat curious that there is no comet to signify the battle at Shrewsbury in Henry IV Part One, given the universal chronicle heritage. Shakespeare is re-writing a tradition; Thomas Walsingham records a comet in 1402, which he describes as signifying the shedding of blood in Wales and also in Northumbria,25 most certainly a foreshadowing of the Northumbrian-based Percy rebellion. In the Continuatio Eulogii the unknown writer records two comets; one in 1402 and the other in 1403.26 The first is described as being ‘a horrid sight in the west, whose great flame rose on high’.27 From the chronicle’s position in England, the comet in the west would have pointed towards Wales. When a comet is mentioned in Henry IV Part One it is by King Henry telling his son Prince Hal of his desire to be recognized and celebrated in his youth, so that ‘... like a comet, I was wondered at / That men would tell their children “This is he!” / Others would say, “Where? Which is Bolingbroke?”’ (III.ii.47–49). Henry desires to be an icon of change. Henry is a problematic centre; he tells us himself that he was not raised to be king. Henry deposes the anointed King Richard and in doing so creates a disturbance of the
natural balance. Henry’s questionable legitimacy is expressed though the alignment of himself with a comet, the very sign of cosmic disruption. His kingship is tenuous, he is not the central gazed-at figure that he ought to be, and this is primarily because of his stigma of non-legitimacy as king.

III. Jerusalem, Cartographic Space and Universal Chronicles
Jerusalem is a significant centre in *Henry IV Part One*; it is the idealized centre of Henry’s world, and also of the cosmos as it was understood historically and geographically. Parts one and two of *Henry IV* are framed by the notion of Jerusalem as the object of Henry’s desire. *Henry IV Part One* begins with the king’s ambition to go on crusade to the Holy Land and at his death Henry asks to be moved to the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster so that ‘in Jerusalem shall Harry die’ (*2 Henry IV*, IV.i.370). Once more comparisons to universal history and to the *mappaemundi* which frequently accompany them are instructive in understanding the significance of Jerusalem in *Henry IV Part One*.

There is a strong connection between cartography and history in the Middle Ages; as Evelyn Edson has documented, there was a long tradition of cartography in medieval Western Europe and of universal chroniclers utilising maps. 28 Chroniclers such as Otto of Friesing (d. 1158), Matthew Paris (d. 1259), and Ranulf Higden (d. c. 1363; Figure 2) included *mappaemundis* in their historical texts, which served as visual accompaniments to the chronicle narrative. Further parallels can be drawn between the nature of the information that both of them contain: cartographic images represent visually (sometimes with labels) the more significant

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Figure 2: Ranulf Higden’s Map. Higden’s *Mappa Mundi* from his *Polychronicon*, B.M. MS. Royal 14.C.IX ffv–F2
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intimacy is expressed though the alignment of cosmic disruption. His kingship is tenuous, as it ought to be, and this is primarily because historical events which are documented in the universal chronicles. There are many references to events of history, both biblical and secular, on later maps such as Ranulf Higden’s *mappa mundi* of the fourteenth century. For example, Higden illustrates the Mount of Olives and Eden, Alexander the Great, and there is a gap in the Red Sea (literally coloured red) where Moses and the Israelites crossed. Places of religious importance to Higden’s contemporary era, such as Rome, are represented via pictures of large churches. In England monasteries too are depicted. Thus geography (as a visual representation of the natural cosmos) and history (as a chronological record of human endeavours) are interconnected. These events and places of human history are displayed within a cosmological framework in which nature and landscape features such as mountains, rivers and coastlines are depicted. Maps, such as Higden’s, depict human history, their wars and rebellions as being inextricably linked to the landscape.

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**Figure 3:** Isidore of Seville’s T-O Map. From Isidore of Seville’s *De Natura Rerum*, Burgerbibliothek Bern, cod. 417, f.88v Courtesy of the Burgerbibliothek, Bern.
Medieval maps were predominately spiritual, rather than having any practically geographical use. Medieval cartography is oriented to emphasize the importance of the Holy Land. Isidore of Seville’s T-O Map (Figure 3) is oriented with Asia at the top, to emphasize the importance of that region for human history; it was here that the histories recorded in the Old and New Testaments were played out. Higden’s mappa mundi depicts Jerusalem in the middle of the cosmos, and the city is emphasized by the use of bright colours. On Isidore’s image there is recorded under each of the three continents (Asia, Europe and Africa) the name of one of Noah’s sons, who were thought to have populated these three zones after the Great Flood in Genesis 10, so for example Asia was populated by Sem, Europe by Japheth (spelt Jafeth on the map) and Africa by Cham. While Isidore’s map was produced long before that of Higden, for example, he was considered to be an authoritative source for later mappae mundi; Isidore’s map exhibits clearly the structure of medieval cartography which underlies maps such as Ranulf Higden’s. East is always at the top, Jerusalem is in or very near to the middle and away from the centre, in the peripheral regions are areas of unknown and undocumented lands, animals, and people, a point to which I will return in a moment.

Universal history and cartography construct strict boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. What is displayed on the mappae mundi, and likewise included in universal chronicles is the collective history of Christian humankind; excluded are non-Christian histories and regions, other than some classical history, which have no relevance within the context of human salvation history. History has long been viewed as something which defines humans from brutes; Henry of Huntingdon (d. 1155) commented ‘the knowledge of past events … forms a main distinction between brutes and rational creatures.’ One of the purposes of historical composition in the Middle Ages was to document humanity’s movement towards salvation, in the light of the fall of humankind in the Garden of Eden.

The Holy Land was an important focal point for Christendom both spatially (it is in the middle of a defined world) and chronologically. The narrative of chronicle history was divided into sections or aetates (ages), most commonly into six ages; the first age was from Adam to Noah and the sixth age from the birth of Christ to the contemporary age. While the life of Christ is not the mid-point of the history of the world (indeed it begins the last sixth of world history), it is figuratively central to salvation history and was used as a chronological marker; time is calculated from the birth of Christ in AD 1. Universal chronicles were structured in a strict chronological fashion and use referential dates in the margin. The year (Anno Domini) is consistently used at the start of each new year both in the text and in the margins, and is frequently scattered throughout also; thus documenting the distance between the life of Christ and the contemporary period. This chronological thread unites the narrative of history; by association the Holy Land and Jerusalem in particular as the
main city in the Holy Land and as the place where Christ was tried and crucified, results in the construction of the Holy Land and Jerusalem as central loci of the narrative.

The king, like Jerusalem, is an important centre in universal history with regard to chronology. Given the massive undertaking that writing a universal history entails, it was inevitable that the composition of history would be reduced from a broad history of the whole known world to one which focused on particular nations or kingdoms (regna). Whilst maintaining the strict chronological sequence, it was typical for sections to be titled after a particular king and to refer to the years since the coronation of the king. For example, in the Continuatio Eulogii, the year 1402 begins with ‘[i]n the year of our lord 1402, and the third year of the king ...’. The king, Jerusalem, and the history of the world are interconnected.

King Henry is drawn to Jerusalem; Henry’s desire to go on crusade to Jerusalem is of a personal nature; he craves spiritual fulfilment and forgiveness. It is a penitential journey, we are told in Richard II, ‘to wash this blood from my guilty hand’ (Richard II, V.xi. 49–50). Henry’s yearning for Jerusalem can be read as a desire for his own re-centring; Henry is unsatisfied and is incomplete and decentred. His past misdeeds have left him tainted and it is only through the freeing of Jerusalem from Muslims, or ‘pagans’ as Henry refers to them (I.i.24), that he can perform contrition, receive absolution and then restore his own spiritual balance.

While Henry is a problematic centre (he has a stigma of non-legitimacy) so too is the overun Jerusalem, which can no longer function (in real and practical terms at least) as the centre of the Christian cosmos. In Henry IV Part One Jerusalem needs Henry and Henry needs Jerusalem and so it would appear that it is only through the meeting of the two central points that both can be re-centred, thereby restoring natural balance in the cosmos. Henry’s penitence is important for the whole of Christendom; it is through Henry’s remorse, self-evaluation and self-reflection that the cosmic balance could conceivably be re-instated.

However, rebellion prevents Henry from going on crusade to free Jerusalem. On announcing his intention to go on crusade, Henry is at once diverted by ‘heavy news’ of Mortimer’s defection to Owen Glendower. It is a dislocation of Henry’s political and personal ambitions and reflects the de-centring effect of rebellion; Henry can no longer travel to Jerusalem and receive absolution for his part in Richard’s demise, but must fight off a challenge to his legitimacy as king. The choice is entirely out of his control, and he is left ineffectual as king. It is significant that it is news of Mortimer’s rebellion and not Glendower’s or the Percies’ revolt which prevents Henry from reaching the centre at Jerusalem; Mortimer’s younger nephew, Edmund Mortimer, with whom he is commonly confused, had a solid claim to the throne. Henry’s position is revealed to be tenuous and his options for rectifying his predicament are severely limited. And while Henry does finally reach Jerusalem, it is only in death.
In being moved into the Jerusalem Chamber, Henry is able to die in an abstract or replacement Jerusalem, which is located at Westminster, the administrative heart of his nation, where the laws are enacted, thus bringing together the play’s primary centres.

It is of considerable importance that the rebels plot their rebellion out on a map; the scene makes an explicit connection between the cosmos, nature and rebellion. In the most significant and deliberate act of rebellion against Henry, the rebels Hotspur, Mortimer and Glendower divide England between themselves, formulating a tripartite division of England, reminiscent of the division of the world into three by earlier medieval cartographers like Isidore of Seville (Figure 3). We are told:

The Archdeacon hath divided it
Into three limits very equally:
   England, from Trent and Severn hitherto,
   By south and east is to my part assigned;
   All westward, Wales beyond the Severn shore
   And all the fertile land within that bound,
   To Owen Glendower; and dear coz, to you
   The remnant northward laying off from Trent.

(III.i.70–77)

The natural world is dissected into three and through this action the periphery becomes central; England is re-oriented to reflect the rebels’ ambitions, thereby removing Henry’s sphere of influence. On the map England is both a nation and a natural landscape; attention is given to the natural features, rivers particularly, in placing the boundaries, and to fertility which is the cause of tensions between Hotspur and Glendower. Hotspur contends that the tripartite division ‘cuts me from the best of all my land’ (III.i.97), reiterating Mortimer’s ‘fertile’ of line 75. A similar notion is evident in Hotspur’s ideas of changing the landscape via a channel to alter the course of the River Trent and thus increase his territory to include the fertile lands of Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire, ‘I’ll have the current in this place damn’d up / And here the smug and silver Trent shall run / In a new channel, fair and evenly’ (III.i.99–101). Glendower is horrified at the thought. To alter the map and its newly constructed boundaries is one thing, but to change the landscape is quite another. Glendower recognizes the significance of altering the landscape and reiterates in three different ways ‘I’ll not have it altered’ (III.i.113). For Glendower this is a sign of future problems that Hotspur could potentially bring to the tripartite alliance; Hotspur could rebel and disregard their plans, which he does end up doing and dying in the process, a point to which we will return.
IV. Henry IV Part One, Cosmos and History

The conventions of time and space with Jerusalem as centre point evident in Shakespeare’s Henry IV Part One are parallel to a cartographical tradition which is earlier than Shakespeare’s era. Mappae mundi were linked to universal history, or at least, concepts of a universal history. By Shakespeare’s day cartography had become more accurate and technical. Making a case study of Othello, Christopher Wortham has argued that the re-orientation of cartography from its spiritual and conceptual framework (used by Isidore of Seville and Ranulf Higden) to a more scientific one for the purposes of travel led to anxieties and disorientation about the centrality of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was no longer the centre point in these maps, nor were they oriented with east at the top.

Shakespeare clearly had in mind for Henry IV Part One a cosmological structure which was of the old and spiritual variety of cartography rather than the newer more geographically aware maps which broke with the conventions of the T-O map. In Henry IV Part One there is no anxiety about Jerusalem’s centrality; it is undoubtedly a central point which draws Henry to it. Indeed Jerusalem is pivotal to Henry’s personal salvation and his legitimacy as monarch. Hotspur, Glendower and Mortimer too use the conventions of the T-O map when they dissect England and Wales between themselves in three, reminiscent of the tripartite world of Isidore of Seville (Figure Two). However it is here that tensions between the old and the new cartography can be seen. The archbishop, we are told, divides England so that the largest and most dominant third (Hotspur’s Northumberland) is at the top of the map, just as it is in Isidore’s mappa mundi. However there has been a re-orientation so that now north is in the place of east at the top of the map, just like the contemporary maps of Shakespeare’s era.

Shakespeare too recognizes and uses the earlier spiritual mappae mundi’s time-space devices. As David Read has argued, the tripartite map of Mortimer, Hotspur and Owen Glendower is used by Shakespeare to foreshadow future events; the course of the rebellion is played out and enacted upon it. The map is concrete evidence of the future plans of the rebels; Hotspur’s attempts at changing the map indicate his erratic nature. It is inevitable that Hotspur will try to alter the plans, just as he did the River Trent, and that he will be killed in the process. Subsequently Hotspur is killed at Shrewsbury when he disregards the plans, and Owen Glendower is unable to come to his aid. In this example the map represents a piece of history in the making. This is parallel to the representation of time on the mappae mundi. Time is collapsed and past and present events are represented in one visual image. As the mappa mundi of Ranulf Higden shows, maps contain events from different time periods. For example Noah from the Old Testament (whose ark is depicted on Mount Ararat to the left of Jerusalem) and in the lower part of the same image appear monasteries in England of much more recent foundation. Events of different eras are

more

(III.i.70–77)

Three and through this action the periphery begins to reflect the rebels’ ambitions, thereby enriching the map. On the map England is both a nation and a space through its presence on the map. The rebels’ decision to alter the map as a site of opposition and resistance to the crown is therefore not only an act of rebellion, but also an act of creativity. The act of altering the landscape and reiterates in Shakespeare “ altering the world” (III.i.113). For Glendower this is a sign of the need for the rebels to change the landscape and potentially bring to the tripartite alliance; all of the plans, which he does end up doing and dying for, are in return.
projected into one temporal reality.

The collapsed historical chronology of the *mappae mundi*, which places the distant past alongside the recent past and the contemporary in one visual image, results in a spatial articulation of centre and periphery based on notions of civility and rationality. While Jerusalem forms the centre and is a focal point of history and cosmology, the frontier regions of Christendom occupy the periphery and are allochroic, existing in another time and space. Pockets of strange beings are frequently represented on edges of maps, usually in the region of Africa. The Psalter map of c. 1250 and the Hereford *Mappa Mundi* of c. 1290 are good illustrations of this. Dragons, giants and blemmies (people with their faces on their chests and no heads) are illustrated in the peripheral regions; they are deviant human forms, not made in God’s image, which was considered important within the context of human salvation.

Shakespeare draws on this very specific spatial articulation of civility in *Henry IV Part One* to construct the alterity of the Welsh, and most particularly the Welsh women. Wales occupies the peripheral space within Britain, it is distant from the centre point of Henry's nation, based around Westminster, and is farther west from Jerusalem than England; Shakespeare's Wales is a place of magic and strange weather and the inhabitants of Wales personify their nation space. Collectively the Welsh in *Henry IV Part One* are constructed as barbaric, disorganized and rude, and while the bodily features of the Welsh are not deviant, they do transgress the limitations of individuals by transforming other people's bodies. Indeed to further emphasize the peripheral position of the Welsh, Hotspur mocks Owen Glendower's concept of history, saying to Mortimer:

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... Sometime he angers me
With telling me of the moldwaip and the ant,
Of the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies,
And of a dragon and a finless fish,
A clip-winged griffin and a moulten raven
A couching lion and a ramping cat,
And such a deal of skimble-skamble stuff
As puts me from my faith ...

(III.i.144–51)
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In direct contrast Hotspur’s historiography is centred on chronological progression and fact, rather than myth and legend; he desires his name to ‘... fill up chronicles in time to come’ (L.iii.170). For Hotspur, Owen Glendower’s historiography is unsuitable and unreliable, which is significant within the context of cartographic space and universal history, and its strategy of inclusion and exclusion. The Welsh women are constructed as the ‘marginal’ within the marginal Welsh community so to speak;
The representation of rebellion and kingship in Henry IV Part One is constructed in part through a system of spatial and conceptual oppositions between various centres. Through analysis of the devices of universal history and cartography it is possible to see clearly that the major tensions of universal history and cartography are articulated through the chronicle tradition are the images of disordered nature and the disordering of the human body though this had only alluded to in Shakespeare's play. While climatic and the concept of the elements are not at play in the Shakespeare's play, the creative selections encourage us to look beyond the physical world to which Shakespeare refers.

Notes
1. Throughout this essay, I use 'Henry IV' to denote the historical figure, and 'Henry IV/Part One' the literary work.
2. Universal history and cartography were prominent in medieval chronicles. For further discussion, see Michael Allen, 'Universal History and the Middle Ages', in Daniel Defoe, The History of the Middle Ages (London: J. M. Dent, 1905), pp. 17-42.

Y. Conclusion

The Welsh women who appear in the play are associated with witchcraft, a form of social and political resistance. The Welsh women serve to highlight the centrality of the Welsh while simultaneously constructing the centrality of the English.
Rolf Sprandel ‘World Historiography in the Late Middle Ages’ in Maukopf Deliyannis, ed. *Historiography in the Middle Ages*, pp. 157–80; also see note 40.

3 For a definition of the terms centripetal and centrifugal in relation to language, see M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 272–73. I use these terms to refer not just to physical movement to and from a centre but rather to movement which also signifies support for or revolt from that centre as a position of power.

4 Little is revealed about Glendower other than a few details of his life and education: that he studied at an English court and can play the harp (III.i.119–20), the purpose of which may be to emphasize how far he has fallen from the centre.

5 I shall examine the nexus between weather, rebellion, witches, and changing of the male body by witches in Section IV: Henry IV Part One, Cosmos and History.


8 Thomas Walsingham’s two main chronicles are the *Chronica Majora* which he began in 1376 which is printed in the Rolls Series under the title of *Annales Ricardi Secundi et Henrici Quarti, Regum Angliae, Chronica Monasterii S. Albani*, ed. Henry Thomas Riley, 3 vols (London: Rolls Series, 1866) and the *Historia Anglica* printed as *Thomas Walsingham, Quondam Monachi S. Albani, Historia Anglica*, ed. Henry Thomas Riley, 2 vols (London: Rolls Series, 1863).


11 Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, Volume IV Later English History Plays King John, Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VIII (London: Routledge, 1962). For example, Bullough mentions in passing Thomas Walsingham on pp. 159 and 169, but goes no further than recording his name. The *Continuatio Eulogii* is not mentioned at all, nor is the *Historia Vitae*.

12 The writer of the *Continuatio Eulogii* lifts whole passages from Walsingham’s *Chronica Majora*, particularly for the Welsh Rebellion of 1400 to c.1410. For the relationship between the *Historia Vitae* and Walsingham see Stow’s commentary in his edition of 1977.


14 *Hall’s Chronicle*, ed. Henry Ellis (London, 1809) There are significant similarities between Hall’s and Walsingham’s descriptions of the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403. For example, Hall and Walsingham are similar in describing Henry IV’s praises to God after


18 *King Henry IV, Part One*, ed. David Scott Kastan (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2002), p. 144, n. 44. In his Appendix on the ‘Sources of *Henry IV*’, Kastan mentions Walsingham only once (and this is only in passing) regarding Walsingham’s portrayal of Prince Hal as a prodigal son, which would have been circulating during Prince Hal’s (later Henry V) lifetime.


23 For example, in his Seventh Century text *De Natura Rerum* or *On the Nature of Things*, Isidore of Seville (d. 636) in Chapter 71 ‘On the names of Stars’ gives the correct Greek etymology that ‘a comet is so called because it spreads light from itself as if it were hair. And when this kind of star appears it indicates pestilence, famine or war.’ From Edward Grant ed., *A Source Book in Medieval Science* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 16.

24 Comets, meteorites, shooting stars and the like were considered to be natural phenomena that were in the wrong place, as is described in the chapter on ‘Of the fire and of the sterres that seeme to falle’ (Chapter 30) in *Caxton’s Mirror of the World*, ed. Oliver H. Prior (London: Early English Text Society, 1913), p. 122. For further discussion of cosmology in Shakespeare’s era, see E.M.W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1943).


26 *Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 389.

27 *Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 398.


29 Higden deserves special mention as both a cartographer and a chronicler. Higden’s *Polychronicon* was extremely popular throughout his own lifetime and well into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Antonia Gransden records that ‘over 120 manuscripts survive, dating from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and the early date of some shows that the fame of the work spread during Higden’s lifetime’, Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, Vol. II., p. 43. It is known that King Henry VIII had two copies, one from which the *mappa mundi* in Figure One has been taken. Higden’s influence in
historiography should be noted; his influence on the chroniclers of Henry IV’s reign is significant, the Continuatio Eulogii and Thomas Walsingham’s Annales Ricardi Secundi et Henrici Quarti both profess to be continuations of the Polychronicon and both start their history at the date at which Higden stops. See A. S. G. Edwards, ‘The Influence and Audience of the Polychronicon: some observations’, Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, 17:6 (1980), 113–15.


32 This map of Isidore is from his De Natura Rerum, and is a copy from the late ninth century. Unfortunately none of Isidore’s original T-O maps have survived to this day.

33 My thanks go to Professor Christopher Wortham for his comments and suggestions on this subject. Professor Wortham presented a thought-provoking talk on ‘Cartography and Shakespeare’ to the English and Communication Studies work in progress seminar series in April 2005 at the University of Western Australia.

34 On Isidore’s map the texts reads, as an example ‘Asia. Post conversionem linguarum et gentes disperse fuerant per totum mundi habituuerant filli Sem in Asia. De cuius posteritate descendunt gentes xxvil. & est dicta Asia ab Asia regina, quae est tertia pars mundi. Regio Orientalis Asia.’

35 This will be further discussed below in Part IV: Henry IV Part One, Cosmos and History.


38 St Augustine (d. 430) and the Venerable Bede (d. 735) record that the first age is from Adam to Noah, second is from Noah to Abraham; third is from Abraham to David; fourth is from David to the Babylonian captivity; fifth is from the Babylonian captivity to the birth of Christ and finally the sixth age is from the birth of Christ to the present. For further discussion of the epochs of universal history see Edson, Mapping Time and Space, pp. 97–102.


40 Continuatio Eulogii, 389: ‘Anno Domini 1402, et anno hujus Regis 3...’.
The link between Henry, Jerusalem, and the cosmos in Henry IV Part One is further illustrated by several pieces of imagery: Henry's 'obedient orb' can be read as a reference to the spherical cosmos; the representation of rebellion as a disturbance of the natural order which is implicit in portents and in the imagery of Worcester as meteor; and the parallel threatened centres of Henry and Jerusalem.

Edmund Mortimer (d. 1409) was the protector and uncle of the young Earl of March, whose name was also Edmund Mortimer (d. 1425).

This is not the only map referred to in Shakespeare's plays. Maps are found most notably in Henry V: 'if you look in the maps of the world' (IV.vii.22); King Lear in which England is divided in three: 'Give me the map there. Know that we have divided/ In three our kingdom' (I.1.37–38). There are also references to maps in The Tempest, Twelfth Night and others. For a discussion of this see John Gillies, Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 45–69.

It is interesting to note that like the three sons of Noah, the three rebels too are related. Mortimer and Hotspur are brothers-in-law, and Mortimer and Glendower are son and father-in-law.


For further discussion on the Psalter and the Hereford maps, see Naomi Reed Kline, Maps of Medieval Thought: The Hereford Paradigm (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2001).

Men and women are made in God's image in Genesis 1: 26–27.

John Gillies has examined the connection between cartographic discourse and the construction of otherness in Shakespearean drama in his Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference in relation to such texts as Antony and Cleopatra, Titus Andronicus, the Merchant of Venice and others. See John Gillies, Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference, esp. Chapter Four: ‘The Open World: the Exotic in Shakespeare’, pp. 99–155.

For further discussion of the significance of the Welsh women, see Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin, Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories (London: Routledge, 1997).

Malteus Maleficarum, ed. Montague Summers (London: John Rodker, 1928). Part 2 Chapter VII is entitled 'How, as it were, they Deprive Man of his Virile Member' and tells of witches who 'sometimes collect male organs in great numbers, as many as twenty or thirty members together, and put them in a bird's nest, or shut them up in a box' (p. 121). For further discussion see Moira Smith, 'The Flying Phallus and the Laughing Inquisitor: Penis Theft in the Maleus Maleficarum', Journal of Folklore Research, 39:11 (January 2002), 85–117; Lyndal Roper, 'Witchcraft and the Western Imagination', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 16 (2006), 117–41.

For further discussion of this see Philippa Maddern, 'Weather, War and Witches: Sign and Cause in Fifteenth-Century English Vernacular Chronicles', A World Explored: Essays in Honour of Laurie Gardiner (Melbourne: History Department, University of Melbourne, 1993), pp. 77–98.