

## Research article

# Representing Invisible Politics of Shakespearian Plays in Orson Welles' Chimes at Midnight

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**ORCID**Herditya Wahyu Widodo: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2911-5365>**Abstract.**

The full construction of the main character Falstaff, as a figure in the Shakespearean movie adaptation *Chimes at Midnight*, exists through the intertextual relationship between the film and the original Shakespearian plays. In this study, I argue that much of this intertextual material is non-existent in the film, but relies in its availability the audience's own mind watching the film. By merely hinting at an incomplete material, the film recreates the entire feeling of a seemingly complete Shakespearean material with its original political preoccupations. This illusion of the complete text is shown in the isolated battle scenes that do not contribute much to the development of Falstaff, and the impotent military imageries in the film. However, the scenes where Falstaff's foils are presented: the Earl of Worcester's lies and the dying lamentations of Hotspur, are more evidently meant to give the impression that the film significantly adapt the original plays' political motives that the film do not really concern itself with.

**Keywords:** Chimes at Midnight, Orson Wells, Intertextuality, Shakespeare, Falstaff, 1 Henry IV, 2 Henry IV

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## 1. Introduction

Studies in cinematic adaptation of Shakespeare's plays have noted how original texts have been modified to better suit the cinematic medium, according to the supposedly artistic whim of the film's director, among other considerations [1]. Orson Welles' *Chimes at Midnight*, released in 1965, have been extensively celebrated and studied as one of the masterpieces of Shakespearian adaptation into the realm of the cinema [2]. Welles tried to make Falstaff as a lamentable character, a "goodbye to the Merrie England" [3], by shifting the focus of the play to Falstaff in the film and editing out materials that contribute less to the development of Falstaff [4]. However, I argue that such construction of Falstaff can only exist if the intertextual relationship between the film and the original plays is considered.

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I believe that much of this necessary intertextual material, to a certain degree, is non-existent in the film's material, but is available in the watching of the film. That is, they are already in the audience minds and expectations when they watch the film, but not entirely in the film itself. The film triggers such material inside the audience's mind, by hinting at an incomplete material, to create an impression that the film recreates the whole feeling of a seemingly complete material. This attempt at an illusion of the complete text is shown in the battle scene and the impotent military imageries in the film, but it is most evident in the scenes where the minor characters are presented: the Earl of Worcester's lies to Hotspur and the dying Hotspur's lament over his losing the duel to Prince Hal.

## 2. Method

This study is done as a cultural study on the representation of Shakespearian politics, as adapted by the 1965 Orson Welles' movie adaptation, *Chimes at Midnight*, from the original Shakespeare's plays, namely *1 Henry IV*, *2 Henry IV*, and some elements of *Richard II* and *the Merry Wives of Windsor*. The discussion focuses on the intertextuality between the two different media, focusing on explaining how certain political topics that the original Shakespearean material significantly dealt with, are adapted by the movie by merely hinting or touching at these topics, creating an impression that the movie actually contains significant material of the original plays.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

To begin with the discussion, let us look at the film and its adaptations of Shakespearian material. Orson Welles' *Chimes at Midnight* film takes the daring task to adapt elements mainly from two Shakespearian plays: *1 Henry IV*, *2 Henry IV*, and some elements of *Richard II* and *the Merry Wives of Windsor*, by putting Shakespeare's most famous character, Falstaff, as the film's central figure. This enthusiastic premise seems to be more than enough to guarantee attention, and putting Orson Welles in the spotlight - indeed he is the central highlight of his own movie. Although beautifully rendered, the film had a rough premiere [2]. Later film critics and Shakespearian scholars have acknowledged Orson Welles' elegiac rendering of the life and fall of Falstaff is one of the outstanding translations of Shakespeare text [2, 5].

The film does succeed in bringing together the impact of Shakespeare's Falstaff into the film screen. The full story of Falstaff, himself meant by Orson Welles as the

'lamentable' figure that signifies the death of 'Merrie England,' was beautifully and powerfully presented [3]. However, looking at the huge amount of Shakespearian material dealt with in the movie, certainly, much material must, and should, have been lost in the film adaptation, when the plays are condensed into only 130 minutes of film presentation.

Owing to this omitted material, the full image of Falstaff as a sorrowful symbol of the 'Merrie England' could not have been conjured only by the movie by itself—the film needs to depend on the knowledge of original play 'floating' inside the audience's minds. These necessary but unavailable materials are those which are mainly related to the full political character development of Falstaff's foils: that of Prince Hal, Hotspur, and Henry IV. These characters are not fully established in the movie, only in the original plays. These characters' full development is required as a counterbalance, to create the construction of Falstaff as a hopeless figure in his political downfall. If Falstaff is meant to be the symbol of the 'Merrie England,' an easy-going unpolitical figure, he has to stand in direct contrast to the characters of the seriously political, un-merrie England to best convey his 'merrie' character. The development of the politically wise and seriously 'chivalrous,' Hotspur, King Henry IV, and Prince Hal, constructs the full force required for the audience to lament Falstaff's fall—the failure of Falstaff 'fun' politics, and the end of the politically easy-going Merrie England. Although Shakespearian plays have been renowned for its political content [6] this film however, chooses not to develop the full political force of these historical characters. Yet the film still succeeds, because the film invites the reader to impress their own knowledge of the original play into the lacking material of the film.

Much of the non-existent materials are naturally the result of the film's editing of the plays. The removal of parts of the original plays is a must if the film wants to succeed in condensing together elements of four Shakespearian plays, and still succeed in telling a clear story with Falstaff as the main character. Jorgens has indicated that the parts that survived the cut are those that are primarily concerned with the development of Falstaff [3]. Within this point of view, then, a simplistic approach would dictate that the material of the film should only be basically concerned with Falstaff. The other character: Hotspur, King Henry IV and Prince Hal, would serve only to color Falstaff's development. These characters are secondary characters with secondary concerns, mainly adding context to provide the necessary room for Falstaff to grow and expose Falstaff's true strengths as a literary character.

However, this rule is not followed strictly by the film. The film does start with Falstaff, it has Falstaff's name as the title, and it properly ends with his death, yet there are engaging

scenes that is mainly about other characters, properly leaving out or downplaying Falstaff. Perhaps the most famous example of this is the battle scene, where Prince Hal and Hotspur 'steal' the show, leaving Falstaff to serve only a comedic role.

The battle scene does justice in impressing to the audience Falstaff's self-preserving opportunism, cowardice, and awkwardness in real battle [3]. However, looking closer at this event, here Falstaff's character only acts as a pawn in greater machinations of the real powers of England: that of King Henry versus Hotspur and the rebels. In this sense, Falstaff did not enact the battle, nor he is the reason for the battle; it can be said the battle was not really about him.

It can be argued, that the battle scenes do contribute to Falstaff's character development, ultimately contributing to his fall. Falstaff does join the battle, and his comic and self-preserving way of battle reflects his questioning on the concept of honor and war. By such argument then, Prince Hal can be said to be more motivated to abandon Falstaff later at the end of the film. However, the battle scenes do not really contribute much to such characterization of Falstaff. We get the affirmation of Falstaff's cowardice and his opportunism on the scenes *after* the main battle and the duel—the scenes with Falstaff feigning death, and when Falstaff met with the King on the battlefield, claiming himself, Falstaff, killed Hotspur. The scene where the huge Falstaff failed to mount his horse can be said to provide the same comedic statement as well, but this scene is *before* the main battle scene. The main battle scenes do not really concern about Falstaff.

The battle scenes consist mostly of uniformed soldiers and knights violently clashing against each other, and then ended by the duel between Prince Hal and Hotspur. The battle scenes are full of motion, violence, and screaming. These scenes act as a relief against other scenes in the movie, which are mainly speech-dominated scenes without a lot of physical movements. The battle scenes here impart the image of a shattering civil war: Englishmen against Englishmen, and rebelling peasants with clubs fed to the wrath of professional swordsmen and heavily armored knights. The battle scenes, interestingly enough, make reference to the military and class-conflict themes of the original play - themes which share little to the development of Falstaff in the film and hence are not fully developed in the film.

The battle scenes are the ultimate representation of the clash of classes, and also makes visual the military-dominated power of the English throne: the new, raw power of the usurper King Henry IV, crushing the rebelling nobles once influential in the history of English monarchy. As Tom MacAlindon suggested, such historically important themes are significantly developed in the *1 Henry IV* play [7]. These themes, however, are downplayed in the film, making a notable exception only in the battle scene. These

themes *should* be downplayed in the film if the film focuses on Falstaff, yet the film suddenly creates a powerful rendering of this non-Falstaff related theme by the violent battle scenes. The reason why these scenes do not seem to be out of place, is because the topic of battle has been looming all along in the film, with Hotspur and the Earls clamoring for rebellion and for war. The true implication and brevity of the civil war, which have been signified powerfully by the battle scenes, however, are never significantly explored in the film. The English nobles and masses did not take much notice of the victory; the rebellion is effectively stopped, with Prince John's treacherous dealing with the rebels implied only in passing; and the focus shifts to the coronation of Prince Hal. Within this perspective, the battle scenes stand as isolated scenes, which can only be understood and appreciated fully if one takes the considerations and preoccupations of the *original play*, instead of the film.

It must be stated however, that I do not intend to say that the film does not deal with the military topic. I would argue that the military topic in this movie exists to be appropriated for the character development of Falstaff, and in this process, the military theme loses the brevity that the original play had intended. The original play of *1 Henry IV*, right from the opening of the first Act, stated the military and political views of King Henry IV, making the political and military context to be the significant focus throughout the play. The film *Chimes at Midnight* does this differently by opening the film with Falstaff and Judge Shallow, making the definite statement that it does not concern itself much with the military and political preoccupations of the original plays.

It is interesting that Orson Welles seems to understand the significance of the military theme, and indeed he assigned a number of imageries related to the military and political theme of the plays. The military is actually ever-present in the movie. Most of the scenes involving the King Henry IV for example, is always taken inside a high-ceilinged, gothic castle interior, with soldiers standing mutely in the background with their tall spears at the ready. The castle building was also visible during the exchanges between Prince Hal and Falstaff. Prince Hal is always shown heading toward the castle, leaving Falstaff and his merry tavern behind, foreshadowing his eventual abandonment to Falstaff for his political maturity [8]. McLean has showed how the castle serves as the direct opposition to the tavern image and Falstaff, denoting the opposition between militaristic and politically powerful royal family with the undisciplined, lower class followers of Falstaff. Indeed, the military imagery largely stops here; it only serves as a quiet prop to the story of Falstaff. The military theme is perfectly symbolized by the mute rows of soldiers with their threatening tall spears, and the visually imposing but silent castles; they are there, and they are significant, but they do not contribute

any speech or argument. They serve only to remind the audience that there is a “mute” connection between the film’s England, and the original play’s England. I would like to draw the line here between the ‘speaking’ soldiers: Bardolph, Poins, Falstaff’s inferiors and recruits, versus the silent soldiers—the non-speaking soldier-participants of the movie. I am referring here to the use of the non-speaking soldiers functioning as elements of the setting, as living props.

The difference between the play and the film is most obvious in these military images: the castle and the silent soldiers, as the setting of Orson Welles’ England. The setting in the film is the main signifier by which the film tries to identify itself as Shakespearian England described in the plays. The image of the abundance of non-speaking soldiers in the movie, be them fighting in the battle, standing at attention in the castle, or marching to and fro in the beginning and end of the movie, serve mainly as a trigger to the audience. By seeing the soldiers and the castle in the background, they are reminded of England in the original plays, or even historical England, since they wore the historically accurate apparel and equipment. By putting in the forefront the military images, Orson Welles is manipulating the visual element that is not available in the plays—the visual setting—to bring about themes from the original plays that he purposely downplayed in his film. In other words, Orson Welles is presenting the military image looming at the forefront, so that he can avoid talking about it in his film.

The overwhelming political and militaristic problems that Shakespeare evoked through his description of militaristic England in the original plays, through the guilt of King Henry IV, Hotspur’s military and political aims, the nobles’ machinations, and the turmoil of rebellion-infested England, is simply provided in the film as ‘sterilized,’ silent images of the military. The ever-silent soldiers’ presence is enough to evoke, in the film, the sense of political and military imperatives that the film avoids discussing about. The talking historical figures, however, are another matter, but even in such significant figures, we can see more of the material that Orson Welles avoids.

Indeed, the historical plays of Shakespeare focus much on the political-military aspect by portraying historic figures. Lily B. Campbell and Alice-Lyle Scoufos (in MacAlindon [7]) point to Shakespeare’s attempt to represent the Elizabethan understanding of recurring history, by his construction of the pre-Elizabethan historical characters as resembling the contemporary political characters of Shakespeare’s time. Campbell points out how Henry Percy - Hotspur in *1 Henry IV* plays - is a historical figure of Henry IV’s time, the father of Henry Percy the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Northumberland, but he is made to resemble much the Shakespeare’s contemporary Henry Percy, the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Northumberland. Both are rebellious figures and conspirators against the monarchy, and by portraying Hotspur,

Shakespeare is making a political statement of his day. He is openly alluding to his audience the treachery of the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Northumberland by portraying his rebelling ancestor of the same name, Hotspur.

How the film deals with this issue is unique. The film avoids being too involved with the political machinations of Shakespearian days, by removing the political content from the speech of the characters. The film still brings glimpses of this issue by using *visual* elements in the characters that are unavailable in the original written play, with certain triggers that are meant to incite audience's own creation and addition of non-film material. The presentation of the Earl of Worcester in the film's scene preceding the battle of Shrewsbury makes for a good example of this.

The Earl of Worcester's multi-faceted character in the play *1 Henry IV* is reduced to a single attribute, that of a manipulative mastermind in the film. The film attempts to highlight the most memorable attribute that Worcester creates in the original play, and giving it the *visual* brevity, in order to make it easier for the film version to pass as a complete reconstruction. This is most obvious in the scene roughly at the middle of the film, when Earl of Worcester held a parlay with the King, Falstaff, and Prince Hal [9]. The parts of the original play that are omitted here deserve attention, as these parts significantly develop the military and political force of the original play, which is translated differently in the film.

The parts that are edited out of this scene are those containing deeper understanding of the rebellion and the political relationship of its participants. These parts reveal the deeper aspects of the characters other than Falstaff. The missing parts are hinted in different ways by the film. In the original Act 5 Scene 1 of *1 Henry IV*, which this scene is based on, Earl of Worcester and Vernon meet with the King, and Worcester relates to the King how he, who had helped the King to gain his throne, has now been misused and betrayed by the King [10]. He reminded the King of his oath at Doncaster, which the King has broken, and how the King has been unkind to him. The King answered back that Worcester has colored his arguments to suit his own rebellious needs. The King, as in the film, offers clemency to the rebels. Worcester decides not to accept the King's offer, and this is argued by Vernon. Worcester logically explains that he had been betrayed before by the King, and so he would not be betrayed a second time, and that he will not be spared by the King. This part reveals the deeper, evil characters of both the King and Worcester, as both are politicians whose words are not to be taken at face value, rejecting honesty to suit their own political ends. Worcester then falsely tells Hotspur that the King offers no clemency, but in the play Vernon tells Hotspur that Prince Hal modestly and honorably asks for a duel with Hotspur. Hotspur dismisses

Vernon's flattery of Hal, believing Hal's chivalry to be folly. Hotspur believes himself to be much more chivalrous than Hal, and he roused his army with a battle speech.

The film removes most of this speech, even removes Vernon's part completely, but it complements unspoken words with visual metaphors for its own need. The film does not contain Worcester's reason for the rebellion, and Vernon is rendered silent. The King is therefore presented as the more magnanimous character while Worcester is made as the evil master conspirator whose overriding ambition defeats any morality in enacting a battle. This representation serves in two ways in the film. First, it creates a further complicity in the relationship between Prince Hal with the King, and Falstaff.

If The King is presented as a noble character, then the ill-disciplined Prince Hal can be seen more as a reckless young fellow unable to respect his noble, but stern, father. The visual presentation of the King as a nobler character also adds to the complexity of the Prince Hal's character and to the King's opposite in the film, Falstaff. The film portrays the King in the parlay scene with no crown and no majestic robes, but wearing only a simple tunic, with his bald head, squirming eyes, and meager hair swaying in the strong wind. This gives the King a more pathetic representation: seemingly weak but powerful and noble character, with the row of soldiers and Prince Hal standing behind him. This emphatic and noble characterization, however, gives more negative interpretation to Prince Hal, because his defiance to this noble King so far can be now seen as a personal defect. Falstaff, who is presented in the movie as the opposite of the King, too, can be seen as a corrupt character that influences Hal away from his noble father. There is a direct visual opposition between Falstaff and the King; the King is slight-built, bald, and weak in his simple attire, but Falstaff is huge in his steel armor. As such the film's focus on Falstaff-Hal relationship is magnified, and added with more meaning, since the audience now understands that Falstaff may be the more caring and closer character to Hal, seemingly 'powerful' character to Hal, but the King is the more noble, more pathetic to Hal that Hal could, and should, love.

Secondly, such representation gives more evil attribute to Worcester and his blind follower, Hotspur. Orson Welles seems to have decided to answer the original play's moral conundrum that Worcester is the worst manipulator, rather than the King. Worcester's flat evilness enables a quick, clean ending of the rebellion, which is not the focus of the film anyway. His speech about the King's betrayal to him does not contribute much to Falstaff character development or his relationship to Prince Hal, and thus this material is not required in the film. The brevity of Worcester's evil, however, need to be built in the film, as this can serve to point out to the audience that the film is indeed a close rendering of the play *1 Henry IV*.



Worcester is visually depicted in the parlay scene as wearing a black nobleman's dress, in opposition to the King's crownless, simple outfit. He is depicted as a sour-faced villain whose powerful rebellious ambition, because the reason for his rebellion is only secondary in the film, seems not very comprehensible. The Earl's evil manipulation is depicted in the character of Vernon, who silently and ominously stared at Worcester when he lied to Hotspur that the King is merciless to them. Vernon's stare and his silence to Worcester's dishonesty can function as a trigger to the audience who are knowledgeable of the original play. His mute objection in the speeches of Hotspur and Worcester, if one compares this scene with the original play, can be taken as a hint at the whole political preoccupation of the original play. Vernon's ambiguous stance of despondent approval of Worcester's lies and Hotspur's war speech can mean the dualism of the Hotspur and Worcester's characters. This act symbolizes both Vernon's agreement to assist Worcester's and Hotspur's worthy fight against the King's injustice, and Vernon's disapproval of Hotspur's 'hot-headedness' and Worcester's lack of integrity and treacherous maneuvers. Also, Vernon's silent walk behind Worcester, following his ominous stare in the film, understood *only* through knowledge of the original play, hints at Hotspur's and Worcester's depth of character which is not presented in the film.

Otherwise, if the viewer is not acquainted with the play, Vernon's stare would only signify Vernon's blind obedience to Worcester, and his hatred to Worcester, pointing towards how evil Worcester really is in the film. The possibilities of various interpretation of Vernon's stare, are evidence of Welles' attempt at placing free-floating signifiers in the movie. Such ambiguity can be taken by different viewers to signify different things that in the end always help the film: the knowledgeable audience may see that the film tries its best to portray the complete, deeper material of the original play, while the common audience may appreciate how sharply the oppositions of characters of Hotspur and Worcester versus the King and Hal are built in the film, clarifying the film's ultimate meaning.

This understanding brings the seeming 'complexity' to the film's flat characters. However, this does not mean that these characters are truly represented as complex characters in the film. Hence, when the film tries to visualize significant moments taken directly from the original play, intended by Shakespeare to reinforce or show off the depth of the 'flat' characters in the film, the film fails to do so. These moments bring into the forefront how different the characters in the movie are to the original ones. These are moments in the film where the usually-flat characters in the film suddenly slip speeches that are quite uncharacteristic of them, and thus they fail to deliver a powerful

moment. This is not because of the weakness in acting or delivery, but rather, the necessary character development and clues in the original plays that lead up to these character's powerful statements are removed in the film. As a result, these powerful, moving moments in the film feel weaker than they are in the original play.

An example of this is the scene after the duel between Prince Hal and Hotspur, where Hotspur gives his final speech. The original speech between the duelers before they fight, in Act 5 Scene 4 of *1 Henry IV*, is not present in its entirety in the film. The missing parts are those involving chivalrous and political exchanges between Hotspur and Hal, regarding their identities as knights and heir-apparent. Both Prince Hal and Hotspur exchange flattery of each other's honor and valor, only to politically mock each other's claim to the English rule a while later. Hotspur is especially arrogant and overconfident towards Prince Hal. This statement of chivalry in the play functions to set Henry Hotspur as the equivalent of Henry Monmouth (Prince Hal). This is part of Shakespeare's attempt to set Hotspur the perfect opposite of Prince Hal in the original play, in terms of knightly prowess and chivalry. This is what the King indicated earlier in the play, that Hotspur would make for a better 'prince' than Hal; the climax of the comparisons between Hal and Hotspur ends in this part of the play.

The film, however, takes a different direction than the play. The film does not concern too much about Hal's chivalry or political prowess as compared to Hotspur. Rather, it focuses on Hal's relationship being torn between Falstaff and the King [8], and between Hal's concept of political power and honor versus Falstaff's own political concept of honor. The opposition that exists in the film is between Falstaff versus the King, 'fighting over' Prince Hal. This is luminously presented in the mock throne scene in the movie, which stands in direct contrast with the King's real throne [8].

The oppositional relationship between Hal's careless chivalry versus Hotspur's ideal notion of chivalry is not so much constructed in the movie, because Hotspur's topic of chivalry does not directly concern Falstaff. This can also be seen that, in the movie, Hotspur is not of the same age as Prince Hal, which means that Hotspur-Hal opposition in the film, so carefully constructed in the original play, is neglected in the movie.

Hotspur is made into a flat character, a character so manipulated by his fiery ambitions to the point that he was indeed portrayed as comical in the film. Hotspur's layers of character: his noble sense of chivalric honor and political comradeship, his bravery, his hint of his personal affection and political caution toward his wife, were all reduced in the film into an image of a pompous, emotional warrior who runs around almost naked in his chaotic preparation for battle.

When the intimate dialogue between the dying Hotspur and Prince Hal is enacted, however, Hotspur's character suddenly becomes 'rounded.'. The normally brash and rancorous Hotspur suddenly reveals his soft regrets and deep understanding of the nature of power to Hal. There is a feeling of Hotspur going out of character; revealing a side which is unheard of before or after this particular scene. This scene, perhaps one of the most memorable scenes in the play, is rendered more impotent in the film. Robert H. Bell mentions how Hal's victorious duel is not the focus of the movie [5], but I would add that Hotspur's death in this scene is weakened in the sense that it is isolated, unable to relate to the rest of the movie, since the movie avoids dealing much with Hotspur's character development.

This scene, in general, fit in the film because of the fitting context: both Hotspur and Prince Hal already stated that they meant to fight one-on-one, and the believable characters' acting in playing this part. Yet one should question, if Hotspur has no full character development before in the movie, where and why Hotspur understood all that philosophy? Why is this war-driven, bloodthirsty and self-centered character suddenly aware of the deep understanding he muttered only before his death? Why nobody considers this a plot hole or a misinterpretation of a character? The answer is that Hotspur's development is not in the movie, but in the audience's knowledge of the original Hotspur in Shakespeare's play.

The audience knowledgeable about the original plays will not notice any discrepancy here, almost as if they are being 'misled' by the film. The film just gives a small dash of Hotspur's depth of character, to trigger the audience to conjure *their own* version of original Hotspur of the play. The knowledgeable audience can relate to the version of Hotspur that is not shown in the film, by the 'trigger': original Hotspur's last speech, given in full by the film's Hotspur. The film version of Hotspur masquerades himself as the equal of the play's Hotspur, by tactfully addressing himself *exactly like* the original play's Hotspur: stating his knowledgeable mind and his character depth when he was never been given any of these in the film.

Nevertheless, Hotspur's death scene is also important, because Hotspur is being built as the movie's bad guy, together with Worchester. Hotspur's and Worcester's problematic existence, and their unavoidable deaths, are the issue that the film, as a movie that claims to be a Shakespearian adaptation, must deal with. This is another reason why Hotspur's final speech is given in full in the film: Hotspur, the film's most obvious bad guy, must impart a proper goodbye to the audience.

The final speech, however, contains vestiges of the chivalric and political statements between Hotspur and Prince Hal, especially in the notion of 'brooking' of power, and

Hotspur's "titles" which Prince Hal in the play promised to "crop" and "wear as garlands." This powerful line, that is symbolic of the power struggle between the rebels and the monarchy, is rendered weaker in the film. Aside from the incoherence of these spoken words in the film, which is a technical flaw inherent throughout the movie, the word 'brook' was never before mentioned in the film, and Hotspur has never been fully built to be the opposite of Prince Hal anyway.

There is, nevertheless, wisdom in Welles' choice of removing the heavy political theme and character complexity of Hotspur. The focal point of the whole film is Falstaff, not Hotspur. The film's preoccupation with Falstaff, and Hotspur's relatively unimportant role in developing the story of Falstaff justifies the removal of Hotspur's depth of character. Hotspur is a secondary character put to death in the middle of the film, because the film needs to, and the emotional build-up of his death is necessary to be put secondary to the emotional build-up of the demise of Falstaff. Hotspur needs to cease to exist when the conflict between Falstaff, the King, and Prince Hal start to erupt. Hotspur's significance in the play is subverted into light triviality in the film. This is symbolized powerfully in the film, when his body was being held upside down, ankle-up by Falstaff on his back, and then thrown in front of the King and Prince Hal. The camera did not even bother to put Hotspur's dead face, the symbol of the climactic triumph of *1 Henry IV*, in a proper focus in this scene. Yet the forlorn death and carcass of Hotspur serve the film well in invoking the missing character depth of Hotspur: although his knightly corpse was in plain view of the King, Falstaff, and Hal, it remained forever 'obscure' to the audience.

#### 4. Conclusions

To conclude, *Chimes at Midnight* can be seen as a Shakespearian cinematic adaptation that avoids to present each and every detailed content, political preoccupation, and focus of the original play, but still tries to bring about the most significant feelings that the original play imparts to its audience, by using intertextual 'hints' and 'triggers.' The film, first and foremost, wants to be recognized as Shakespearian cinematic adaptation. Thus, Orson Welles did not do away entirely with the material unrelated to Falstaff. He did not erase the play's important moments that are unrelated to Falstaff, nor did he oversimplify major characters such as Hotspur, Earl of Worcester, or even Vernon, even though these characters do not have a significant impact to Falstaff. These characters did made into flat, one-sided characters, but there are moments when the film tries to evoke deeper meaning, by giving out certain intertextual 'triggers,' visual or otherwise,

that enable the knowledgeable audience to relate and then make up for the missing depth of the 'flattened' characters, or making up missing significant material from the original play, such as the military and political context. The film still gives hints at the missing material's existence. The film therefore must be propped up by the external knowledge of the full development of Fastaff's counter-characters in the original plays—a knowledge which is non-existent in the film. This is very much evident in the film's construction of the characters Worchester, Vernon, and especially Hotspur. What Orson Welles did by creating his own version of Hotspur, refashioning materials out of the play's Hotspur to suit his own film, is actually uncannily similar to what Shakespeare himself did when he made his own version of Hotspur, as Shakespeare was refashioning materials from Holinshed's version of Hotspur to suit his own play. Thus, Hotspur's armored carcass is forever redefined by the writers of his story, but is always out of view to us the audience. Perhaps this image of dead Hotspur in the movie is closer to reality than what we think it may be.

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