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Over the centuries since Shakespeare first wrote *Henry IV Parts I and II*, the character of Prince Hal has often been touted as an irresponsible, wanton youth who undergoes a miraculous transformation to astound all of England as a great leader. However, what if Hal did not in fact undergo this supposed reformation? What if he didn't actually change at all? While it is obvious at first glance that Hal appears to transform from a playful boy to a wise and temperate man, there is nonetheless evidence which also supports a second interpretation of his character, an interpretation that proposes that Hal did not change because he was already a responsible prince at the very beginning. The basis for this interpretation is his famous soliloquy in the first scene in which he appears (*1H4* 1.2.219-41). Hal confides to the audience that he is planning to behave in an unsuitable manner in order later to astonish everyone in the kingdom by his unbelievable "reform."

The most important detail about this soliloquy is that it is just that, a soliloquy, and the only instance in both parts where Hal is completely alone and able to allow the audience to know his real thoughts. In addition, from Shakespeare's other plays, it is apparent that a character's soliloquy, or an aside, is the most reliable indicator of true intentions. Hamlet, for example, much like Hal, tells the audience of his plan "to put an antic disposition on" (*Ham* 1.5.171) and to feign madness in order to carry out his mission of revenge. It is reasonable to assume that Shakespeare intended the audience to always keep Hal's

plan in mind while watching him fraternize with Falstaff in the same way that the audience knows that Hamlet's cruel treatment of Ophelia was a dramatization to divert attention away from his real plan.

In his soliloquy, Hal indicates that he will only study Falstaff and his followers because there are no other immediately pressing orders of state for him to administer. It is important to note that when Hal delivers this speech, Hotspur has not yet begun to rebel against the king and there is no threat to the empire at that moment. He thus takes no risk when he decides that he "will awhile uphold / The unyok'd humour of [their] idleness" (1.2.219-20). What appears to be fun and games is merely a way to pass the time, to teach Falstaff some lessons, and to study his subjects. He later relates to Poins the fruits of his study and thus confirms to the audience that this was his real purpose.

It is Hal's conscious choice to use this opportunity to his political advantage, that is, to convince all of England that he has been neglecting his duties so that all will be in awe of him when he decides to resume them later. He is always in control of his actions, and, as his behavior later confirms, he is never swept up in the moment during this experiment. He is able, like the sun, to "permit the base contagious clouds / To smother up his beauty from the world" (1.2.222-23). The word "permit" indicates that his choice is a conscious one, and, therefore, that he alone controls his actions. Furthermore, his promise to "so offend to make offense a skill"(1.2.240) indicates that each of his acts will be deliberately and purposefully calculated to make him appear as he wishes to be seen. He seeks to master the art of deception as skillfully as an actor who portrays naturally a character unlike himself.

Ironically, Hal justifies his plan with the exactly the same reasoning which his father later chastises him for supposedly ignoring (3.2.46-54). Hal rightly recognizes the value of being seen as fresh and new, of being unknown to the people and making them long for another glimpse of his mysterious character. The difference between Hal's philosophy and that of his father is simply the method of carrying it out. Bolingbroke chose to be rarely seen in public and then astonish the

people by making a rare appearance. Hal proceeds in a more complicated manner; first covering himself with mud, and then washing it off to reveal a new and mysterious persona which nobody remembers having seen before. Bolingbroke shone like the sun when placed next to Richard II, but Hal stages his own brilliance by shining when contrasted with his "former" self which he himself purposely contrived. Hal thinks that he "may be more wondered at / By breaking through the foul and ugly mists / Of vapours that did seem to strangle him" (1.2.225-27). He further observes that "[i]f all the year were playing holidays, / To sport would be as tedious as to work; / But when they seldom come, they wish'd-for come, / And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents" (1.2.228-31). There is little difference between this phenomenon and that which happened to the king himself. He describes his own experience to remind the prince that "[b]y being seldom seen, I could not stir / But, like a comet, I was wonder'd at" (3.2.46-47). Hal does not disregard the way in which his father won the hearts of his people, but simply re-orchestrates the same effect with a slightly modified technique.

Furthermore, from another perspective, it could be said that Hal copies exactly the method of gaining popularity used by his father, but Hal applies this method to the nobility whereas Bolingbroke sought to win the hearts of the common people. Bolingbroke was rarely seen in public and therefore revered by all when finally he ventured out into the streets. Hal, on the other hand, stopped making his appearance in the court for a month, so it was the nobles who were overcome with joy and relief when he decided to return there and take his place among them. They are all so overwhelmed with surprise at his sudden "reform" that together they all fall weakly before him. They are powerless to rebel against him, and those like Hotspur who do can no longer correctly judge his ability to withstand them; therefore, in this way Hal has minimized one of the threats to the nation. Lastly, Hal has also gained an upper hand on the French who will also soon underestimate him once he is king, for after falsely believing that he is merely a lad who can be amused with tennis balls, they too will pay for this misjudgment of his real character.

At the same time, Hal avoids the trap into which Richard II fell. He spends very little time actually frequenting the lower class, only one month (2.4.476). After this short time Hal rejects these people so that they know that he will not fall under their corrupting influence nor listen to their self-serving advice in the way that Richard was led on by his followers.

Hal also describes his intentions as wanting to "falsify men's hopes" (1.2.235), and it becomes apparent that all goes exactly as planned when both Vernon and the king later use almost the same words to describe Hal's behavior. Vernon observes that "England never did owe so sweet a hope, / So much misconstrued in his wantonness" (5.2.68-9). The king tells Hal that "[t]he hope and expectation of thy time / Is ruin'd" (3.2.36-7). Hal does this so that everyone will see later "how much better than [his] word" he is (1.2.234). It could be said that the transformation of Hal, later hailed like a star at his coronation, is analogous to contemporary highly orchestrated public relations.

The line "[t]hat when he please again to be himself" (1.2.224) is of great importance in the prince's soliloquy for it gives the audience the clearest possible indication that all his upcoming acts will not be in accordance with his normal character. He consciously acts out of character, and, when the time is right, he once more becomes the real Hal. All that appears to be friendly fraternizing with Falstaff and the others is merely an act.

A simple metaphor, later furnished by none other than the character himself, explains Hal's deception. In *Henry V*, Hal, now king, walks among the encampment in a cloak to disguise himself in order to talk frankly and openly with his men before the upcoming battle. In *Henry IV Part I*, Hal does essentially the same thing. He puts on a figurative cloak and mask and is thus able to learn much about his people from Falstaff who does not at all hesitate to talk frankly with Hal. Had Hal chosen to go to the Boar's Head Tavern wearing his crown and royal robes and carrying a scepter, Falstaff and the others would undoubtedly have been so intimidated that they would have said

nothing to him at all. By pretending to be one of them, he wins their confidence and their trust, and thus encourages them to speak freely.

Hal uses this same method to gain knowledge when he follows Poins' suggestion and dresses as a humble musician to spy on Falstaff (*2H4* 2.4.216-63). This is a physical manifestation of what he has been doing metaphorically all along. Shakespeare is reminding the audience that Hal has been spying on Falstaff from the very beginning to know how his subjects really live. It is interesting to notice that this also shows one of Hal's better qualities; that is, he is not arrogant and is not bothered with debasing himself to a lower status if it serves a real purpose such as gaining knowledge. King Henry IV would never do this, and in contrast Hal is the better leader. He sees that he is superior to his subjects because he is powerful and educated not because he was born royal. Having been put in prison by the Chief Justice, he knows that it is actions, not birthright, that make the man, and this is why he can allow himself to easily interact with both the lower and the upper classes by simply changing how he acts in each case.

Hal also puts on a mask, or a hard outer shell, when he is feeling grief for his father's illness and inevitable death (2.2.41-58). Had he not briefly confided in Poins, the audience would not at all be aware of what he was feeling underneath because as a great actor Hal doesn't allow anyone to see through his disguise. This is another clue from Shakespeare that Hal is a master of deception throughout both plays, and it serves to remind the audience that he never shows his real self to his father or to Falstaff.

The audience knows that Hal's reason for masquerading in a false persona is because he is there to study the common people who will soon be his subjects. One could compare Hal to Farley Mowatt, the Canadian biologist who in the novel *Never Cry Wolf* goes to the North to study the habits of wolves and must blend into the environment by literally acting and living like a wolf. Hal clearly says early on in the play that his goal is to study his subjects. He confides to Poins, "They call drinking deep, dying scarlet; and when you breathe in your

watering, they cry "hem!" and bid you play it off. To conclude, I am so good a proficient in one quarter of an hour that I can drink with any tinker in his own language during my life" (*1H4* 2.4.15-20). Hal, having learned to talk like the common people and to act like them, has created the illusion that he is part of the pack of wolves. He has just learned how to drain his glass in one draught, a useful talent when he socializes with Falstaff, and he can also talk with these "loggerheads" (2.4.4), another necessary talent that escapes his father. All this is a necessary part of his education. Being able to understand his subjects and to communicate efficiently with them will be a great asset to Hal later as king, especially when he must convince his men to fight to their deaths in France. By sounding out his people and learning how they think, feel, and act, he will have the knowledge necessary to inspire them. In the same way that he will inspire his troops to battle in *Henry V*, Hal also attempts later by various means in both parts of *Henry IV* to inspire Falstaff to be a better person.

When one has finished reading a book, it is customary to put that book back on the shelf and subsequently to pick up another; therefore, it is not surprising that Hal would do this as well in his education of how to be a well-balanced prince. Hal's rejection of Falstaff at the end of *Part II* has been criticized by some, but if Falstaff is seen as only one book on Hal's bookshelf, it is completely normal that he should be put back in place once Hal has finished with him. Hal retains the knowledge that he has learned, but it would not be appropriate to reread the same book over and over again while ignoring others that could be equally useful. Falstaff is a book about the way of life of the common people, but Hal's education has consisted of other elements; he has already learned physical combat, diplomacy, and politics. To linger on only one aspect of his education too long, like Hotspur who knows battle but not negotiation, would be a fundamental error in judgment and would cause his downfall. Hal is right to reject Falstaff and to put this book back on the shelf.

Warwick, one of the king's advisors, realizes just what Hal has been doing, studying his subjects without becoming one of them.

He explains this to the worried king:

> The prince but studies his companions
> Like a strangeful tongue, wherein, to gain the language,
> 'Tis needful that the most immodest word
> Be looked upon and learned, which once attained,
> Your highness knows, comes to no further use
> But to be known and to be hated. So like gross terms,
> The prince will in the perfectness of time
> Cast off his followers, and their memory
> Shall as a pattern or a measure live,
> By which his grace must mete the lives of others,
> Turning past evils into advantages. (*2H4* 4.4.68-78)

Warwick's assessment of Hal is surprisingly accurate although it is questionable whether or not Hal actually grew to hate those with whom he associated. It would be more probable that, having no more use for them, he was somewhat apathetic towards their personal situations because he had more pressing questions on his mind.

Earlier, without fully recognizing the truth of his statement, Vernon also praises Hal, first as modest, dutiful, and a good orator, and then ironically as someone who has "a double spirit / Of teaching and of learning instantly" *(1H4* 5.2.64-5). The irony of this statement is that Vernon uses it in another sense, but, in fact, this is exactly what Hal has been doing; trying to teach Falstaff to be a better person while at the same time learning about his people.

To prove that Hal does not really change throughout the course of *Henry IV*, an illustration of his many princely characteristics exhibited from the very beginning of the first play is necessary. Prince Hal demonstrates many noble and redeeming qualities that may lead the reader to question his supposed rebelliousness. He displays all the desirable qualities of a king; that is, he is generous, honorable, tolerant, and just.

Before even revealing his plan to the audience in his first scene,

Hal already shows some of the qualities of a good prince. His generosity is shown by the fact that he has apparently paid for all of Falstaff's sack, surely at great expense, and when he had no money left used his good name as credit to allow Falstaff to continue to consume to his heart's content. Furthermore, he is honorable and honest when he categorically refuses to steal despite being pressured to participate, replying, "Who, I rob? I a thief? Not I, by my faith" (1.2.154). Hal knows that even while he descends to the lower class, it is out of the question to take this experiment too far and to actually participate himself in dishonorable conduct or behavior that would harm others. To drink a glass of sack does no harm to others, but to rob surpasses the limits of his game by actually breaking the law. He respects the law as much as possible except when protecting Falstaff, but, as is seen later, he does this too with a noble purpose and without causing harm.

The audience also witnesses Hal's honorable traits when he and Poins decide to rob the robbers, which, while it appears to be nothing more than a practical joke, is really an act of honor. He returns the money to its rightful owners and teaches Falstaff several important lessons at the same time. Falstaff will soon learn that Hal mocks cowardice, that he cannot profit from lawbreaking, and that Prince Hal will always have the upper-hand. Hal shows that his courage does not appear out of thin air later when he meets Hotspur, but that he has always been courageous. While the audience might suspect that Falstaff is a coward, his cowardliness has not yet been established nor seen, and for the moment all that Hal knows of him is that he is a knight and thus would know how to fight. In addition, Hal and Poins are outmanned two to four, do not know for sure that the others will flee, and do still have to defend against a few blows before Falstaff actually runs away. Hal states that he does not fear Hotspur, long before he makes such promises to his father. When asked if he is afraid, he replies to Falstaff, "Not a whit, i'faith. I lack some of thy instinct" (2.4.408); that is, he will not run away as Falstaff has just done out of "instinct."

After this incident that displays Hal's physical worthiness, his appearance in the tavern demonstrates his intellectual prowess. As

already mentioned, he learns quickly how to drink and speak like a commoner but also shows his wit, intelligence, sense of judgment, and leadership abilities. First, he correctly assesses the character of Hotspur, with whom he has yet to do battle, as overly zealous for physical combat and completely lacking in manners and civilized conduct. Hal then demonstrates that he is intelligent by trapping Falstaff in his lie with the point that it would have been impossible to see if the men wore Kendal green in the dark, and often shows that his wit is equal too and even surpasses Falstaff's (2.4.351-57,375-86). Hal is also the leader of the group and the others are more loyal to him than to Falstaff whom they have nonetheless known much longer. Bardolph quickly betrays Falstaff and confesses to Hal everything that happened after the robbery. Hal is a natural and effortless leader. He commands respect even when he is in a ridiculous position, as when he wears a cushion on his head for a crown. Unlike when Falstaff did this, neither the Hostess nor anybody else interrupts when he speaks during this game as they all respect him much more than Falstaff. Finally, Hal proves to be stern and truthful, even in the most unnatural of conditions, as he honestly criticizes Falstaff despite the element of game that surrounds the situation.

Hal also rightly assess Falstaff's character, calling him an "abominable misleader of youth" (2.4.508). Even though Hal is playing the game at this point and supposedly joking, he still can be taken at his word. It is human nature, even when joking, to throw those insults which land closest to home and best describe the object of ridicule; therefore, it is logical to assume that Hal's words are very close to the truth. The audience sees in the second play that Falstaff is in fact a misleader of youth when he becomes master of a young boy and begins to corrupt him. Hal sees right away that this is Falstaff's nature and skillfully keeps his distance from Falstaff's pitfalls while simultaneously pretending to be led on by him. Hal escapes the trap by simply playing along with Falstaff's games and humoring him.

Hal's words at the end of this play within a play may seem to be a contradiction to his later actions that could only be explained by a reformation of his character, but in fact they are not. Answering "I do,

I will" (2.4.528) to Falstaff's plea not to banish him, Hal responds truthfully according to what is appropriate at this moment. It is Falstaff's subsequent actions, not Hal's, that force Hal to later banish him. As long as Falstaff remains harmless and in his place, Hal has no real reason to banish him. Later, however, Falstaff oversteps the line by trying to ascend to a higher rung on the ladder of social order both when he speaks out of place in the meeting between the king and Worcester and when he yells out to Hal during his coronation ceremony. Falstaff does not understand that Hal may descend in social order and then retake his rightful place but that he himself cannot ascend the ranks without first proving himself worthy of that honor. He does not see that he can't talk to Hal in public or on the battlefield (*2H4* 5.3.56-57) in the same fashion as in the tavern. Hal has tried to teach him to be a better person, but Falstaff only degenerates and thus provokes his own rejection. Hal's change in attitude on this subject is not an example of "reform."

At the end of the long tavern scene, Hal appears to undermine justice by protecting Falstaff from the sheriff who is looking for the robbers. This seems to be the act of a wanton youth protecting his friends, but in fact it is the act of a merciful prince trying to encourage his subjects to reform and obey the law in the future. In fact, this whole episode could be seen as an exercise in a leader's diplomacy. First, Falstaff does not go unpunished since Hal gives back the loot from the robbery to teach him that he can't evade justice (even though he completely ignores this valuable lesson). He also robs Falstaff's pockets later to try once again to reinforce the message that Falstaff should give up stealing. At the same time, Hal takes control of the situation and, though superseding him, respects the position of the sheriff. While he does lie to him, he does so for a good reason and afterwards returns the money with additional compensation so that justice is still served. Hal is diplomatic in the sense that he solves the problem to the benefit of both sides without hurting either one.

Hal must then return to court to confront his father and explain his recent actions. While Hal constantly accepts his father's position

as right and apologizes for his own wrongdoing, this scene in which he supposedly decides to change his ways is not necessarily proof of reform. Hal must follow his initial plan through to the end and thus must accept reprimand even though he has done no wrong. He does, however, leave clues to the audience that this is all part of his plan to win awe from the court. After his father accuses him of being a disgrace, Hal replies, "I would I could / Quit all offenses with as clear excuse / As well I am doubtless I can purge / Myself of many I am charg'd withal" (3.2.18-21) . Hal knows that he has an acceptable excuse for his recent behavior, but it would ruin his plan if he revealed to his father the real motivation of his actions before playing the game through to its rightful conclusion.

The king then reminds Hal that "[His] place in Council [he] hast rudely lost, / Which by [his] younger brother is supplied" (3.2.32-33). These lines also serve to tell the audience that Hal has occupied a seat in council in the past and obviously done so properly until just recently when he began his plan, because if not he would have been removed long before at the first sign of unworthiness.

It is after this conversation with his father that Hal seems to begin to "reform." One could easily believe that it is because of his father's harsh criticism, but Hal's sudden change of behavior can be explained by the fact that rebellion has now broken out. The time has come for Hal to resume his princely duties in order to attend to this new, more urgent matter. He knows that he no longer has the luxury to study his subjects and that it is time for the second part of his plan now, that is, to win back everyone's approval. He will use Hotspur to gain great honor, more than he would have gained had he not put on this show. He will use Percy as "but [his] factor... / To engross up glorious deeds on [his] behalf" (3.2.147-48). When Hal promises to his father to correct his behavior, what he actually says is that he will "[b]e more [him]self" (3.2.93), not become a new person as one would expect to hear if he had really been inherently wanton. What he is really promising to do is to take off the cloak with which he has been disguising the real Hal.

This conversation also reveals that the king has been misinformed as to the gravity of the situation of Hal's supposedly wanton behavior. The king has never actually witnessed any of Hal's "wanton" behavior; his opinion is based purely on hearsay and the rumors heard by his advisors. Hal refers to "them that so much hath sway'd / Your Majesty's good thoughts away from me!"(3.2.130-31). Shakespeare uses similar words again soon afterwards when, on the battlefield, Hal also says, "they did me too much injury / That ever said I heark'ned for your death" (5.4.51-52). Each time that the king curses Hal's behavior, he does so based not on facts but on rumor, without knowing Hal's real reasons. Only the audience can judge Hal fairly.

Hal's resolve to be more like himself is seen instantly when, in the next scene, he arrives at the tavern marching in a serious manner. Unlike Falstaff who is playing his staff like a flute, Hal has stopped playing games because the time for battle has come and he is ready just as he always has been. He comes to the tavern only to keep his word and to try once more to make Falstaff a honest person. He had already promised Peto that he would procure a charge of foot for Sir John and proves that he is indeed a man of his word. What seems to be a practical joke at Falstaff's expense is really another attempt to make him choose the straight and narrow path. Hal makes him apologize to Hostess Quickly for his false accusations, but he does so unwillingly and still does not see that he should stop trying to hustle others. Hal tries to reduce Falstaff's inflated perception of his own stature by showing that it is he who is superior in pick-pocketing and that Falstaff should give up his dishonorable ways. Hal is generous in giving Falstaff a second chance to learn to better himself, and it is eventually Falstaff's fault that he is banished for failing to learn from his mistakes. The scene ends with Hal saying on his departure that he has "thirty miles to ride 'ere dinner time" (3.2.221) and the audience can be led by this to suspect that Hal is quick to act when he must.

Sir Richard Vernon gives Hotspur an account of Hal in his battle armor and describes him as quick and light as an angel when mounting his horse. Because this skill could certainly not have been

learned overnight, the account leads the audience to believe that Hal has already dedicated much time to training to be a great warrior and has attended to the more important parts of his education before indulging himself in the secondary task of understanding his people. He has definitely not neglected any other part of his education before having decided to pursue this other area that his predecessors themselves ignored.

Prince Hal criticizes Falstaff's choice of unworthy soldiers, warning him that his dishonest antics will not go unpunished in the future. Hal also commands Falstaff to be quiet when he inappropriately offers his opinion during the conversation between the king and Worcester, instituting respect for decorum and proper procedures.

Hal finally shows everyone his true courageous self, recognized only by the audience until this point, when he challenges Hotspur to battle one-on-one. He is willing to shed his own blood to spare that of others, and in the same way that he was often generous with Falstaff before, here he is generous with his life that he offers up willingly in order to protect his forces. He demonstrates again his keen sense of judgment when he correctly predicts that Hotspur's side will not accept his reasonable offer.

On the battlefield Hal, as the sun, finally comes out as promised from behind the base clouds, that is, Falstaff, compared to whom Hal does shine. Hal, in all urgency and seriousness, twice asks Falstaff to lend him his sword. Falstaff passes back a bottle of sack, to which Hal replies, "What, is it a time to jest and dally now?" (5.3.57). Hal is himself again and has thrown off all pretense of games. He charges like a true prince into battle and, despite bleeding from his injuries, urges the others to "make up" (5.4.5), refusing to rest or tend to his wounds until the battle is won. Having saved his father by forcing Douglas to flee, he brings his plan full circle to its intended conclusion and wins back his "lost opinion" (5.4.48) from the king.

The prince's other noble quality, chivalry, comes to light also

on several occasions at the end of the battle. He praises his fallen enemy Hotspur as a valiant fighter, he rises above petty disputes and generously allows Falstaff to claim that it was he who killed Hotspur, he displays mercy for the rebel prisoners, and he allows his younger brother who fought well the honor of conveying this message.

Hal is, therefore, constant in character throughout all of *Henry IV, Part I.* He is generous to Falstaff at both the beginning and the end, as well as noble, courageous, and just at all times. Although he may appear to reform after meeting with the king, he is already a great prince before this. In addition, it would be impossible for him, supposing he truly was a wanton youth, to change so dramatically so very quickly and with such ease. He is able to awe the rest of the court in battle only because he already had skill and prowess before descending to examine the common people. An instantaneous reformation with no apparent preparation would not have allowed him to shine as brightly as he does only days after saying that he will do so. He could not learn to be great in so short a time, thus he had to have been a perfect prince already.

Prince Hal does not appear often in *Henry IV, Part II*, but when he does, his character continues to remain constant. His first words are, "I am exceedingly weary" *(2H4* 2.2.1), but he doesn't say of what. He could well be referring to the masquerade that he still must maintain and to his task of sounding out his subjects. He continues on to say that he desires small beer, that is trifles, from which he certainly would have experienced a certain unexpected pleasure. He decides, therefore, to descend one last time among his people to partake in those pleasures, which he nonetheless qualifies as small and certainly unbefitting of a king, and complete the final chapter of his education.

Hal briefly opens up to Poins, subtly confessing his plan, "Let the end try the man" (2.2.43), and then revealing that he must always hide his inner self under a hard outer shell. Hal's life is always solitary, even in the presence of other people, a necessary sacrifice for a king in order to avoid being manipulated. He also confesses that reason has "taken from [him] all ostentation of sorrow" (2.2.46), his emotional

detachment from friends as well as enemies being a strength for a future king. He is ready to return to his former serious and princely self, and can no longer afford the luxury to "so idly ... profane the precious time" (2.4.338) in observation.

Hal's real nature, however, continues to be misinterpreted by others. Falstaff wrongly theorizes that Hal valiantly beat Hotspur in battle because his blood had been warmed by sack, a non sequitur argument, for if it were true, Falstaff should have been the most valiant of all on the battlefield, easily surpassing Hotspur. Hal is valiant because it is natural to his character. The king also mistakes Hal by saying in a lie that he is generous and charitable (4.4.30-32), indicating that he does not believe this at all. Ironically, Hal has already proven the king wrong by showing the audience on many accounts that the king's words are true.

The manner in which Hal takes the crown after what he believes to be his father's death is wise. He has prepared himself for this moment in advance in order to be strong while the others are weak, especially since everyone had been expecting him to be weak and some may have tried to take advantage of him at this moment to gain undue power. He sets a tone that shows the others in attendance that he will be a strong leader and not the little boy that he has led them to believe that he is.

The episode with the Chief Justice near the end of the second play may seem initially to support the theory that Hal misbehaved terribly as a youth and then reformed. Apparently, there had been a dispute between the two because at some point in the past Hal slapped the Chief Justice, who then sent Hal to prison for this act of insolence. However, Shakespeare supplies no real details of the incident, and thus the whole event is open to a wide range of interpretation. It is possible that this incident was all part of Hal's plan of feigned redemption and that he did this to create a spectacle of himself, but was caught unaware by the Justice's severe reaction. Hal could have been showing off and then been shocked by prison into realizing that his experiment had gone

far enough. Inversely, Hal could have been purposely testing the Chief Justice to see whether he would make an honest and trustworthy advisor. He could have been testing to see whether or not the Chief Justice had enough conviction in the law and confidence in his own sense of justice to send the heir apparent to prison. After being convinced that the Chief Justice would make a loyal and honest advisor who respected the throne and England above himself and the risk of personal danger that his convictions might have, Hal rewards the Chief Justice by making him his most trusted advisor. In this way, Hal protects himself from the presence of foolhardy advisors like those to whom Richard II listened and from dishonest advisors who constantly lied to reassure Henry IV.

The last and most commented incident in *Henry IV Part II* is Hal's outright and public rejection of Falstaff. Hal's first words to Falstaff, "I know thee not, old man" (5.5.48), may seem excessively harsh, but are open to interpretation. First, he is saying that he no longer acknowledges Falstaff as a friend, and, secondly, that he can no longer understand and participate in Falstaff's way of life in the same way that Falstaff cannot possibly know and understand Hal's real way of life. This is a less severe attitude than simply to say that he does not even know who Falstaff is because these positions are based on the logic of the social structure. Falstaff, in fact, does not know Hal either because this is not the same Hal with whom he fraternized; this is the real Hal whereas the other was an illusion.

Hal must reject Falstaff because he failed to take advantage of the many chances to prove himself and thus cannot realistically expect a place in court. Falstaff has been in denial of the fact that, in the court of a great king, office is awarded by rank and merit, not bestowed freely on a whim. Falstaff is an element of disorder and could only gain access to participate in a system of order if he were to reform as Hal has often encouraged him to do. Hal nonetheless leaves the door open for Falstaff to return if ever he does decide to improve himself to a suitable level of conduct. He also provides for his sustenance in order to allow him more freely to give up his life of crime in a final generous

attempt to encourage Falstaff to better himself.

The rejection of Falstaff must not be falsely associated with the "reform" of Hal. Hal's rejection of the Boar's Head Tavern group would only be a symbol of his reform if he actually was part of this group, but he was not. Hal used the group to attain the knowledge that he needed about his subjects but always remained exterior to the group as an observer. What he actually rejects is the group's attempt to infiltrate into his world. He can enter their world (because every inch of England is his kingdom), but he must explain to them that they cannot enter his world (because the common people have no intrinsic right to the halls of power). The audience falsely associates the rejection of Falstaff with the reform of Hal because it is attached to Falstaff as a lovable character. Hal was never the naïve youth in danger of being molded by Falstaff but rather a wise observer who objectively collects that knowledge about his people which will be useful to him in the future. Hal has a whole kingdom to protect and cannot continue to waste his time solely protecting Falstaff if he won't even attempt to do so himself. Finally, if Hal truly underwent a reform, he would have rejected all that he had learned from Falstaff, but in *Henry V* he shows that he has not done so. He plays a trick on Michael Williams by taking his gage, and, in the same way that he played tricks on Falstaff, he intends to teach him a lesson for so quickly questioning the judgment of the king (*H5* 4.1.185-211). As with Falstaff, he also shows his generosity with his purse, and after the trick is done rewards Williams for being an upright man.

Hal's philosophy throughout *Henry IV Parts I and II* was always, "Let the end try the man" (*2H4* 2.2.43). Only the ends are important to Hal, whatever the means, and thus it is perfectly acceptable in his opinion temporarily to masquerade as someone other than who he is if this will solidify his goal of being a powerful king. None of his means to this end is important, including possibly hurting Falstaff when he no longer needs him. He does reach his goal and becomes a great king in *Henry V* with perfect control over subjects who do not hesitate to follow him into a foreign war. It is reasonable to assume that he may

have felt that he was right and the means of creating a false persona for himself was justifiable. From a modern perspective this attitude might seem excessively harsh, but in Shakespeare's time, less than a century after Machiavel's *The Prince* which encouraged this exact same philosophy, it is far from astonishing and even acceptable.

The philosophy proposed in Machiavel's famous work fits surprisingly well in the context of both parts of *Henry IV* and in *Henry V*. This philosophy, centered on the individual protecting one's own interests, is exactly the kind of philosophy that Hal needed to justify having the crown. The order of the divine right of kings had been broken by his father who usurped Richard II and took the crown from Richard's designated heir Edmund Mortimer. It is thus Hal's obligation to prove to all of England that he deserves to inherit the crown because he will be good king and has the personal merit to deserve this honor. He must show that he is strong and just to establish his fitness to be king. He has little choice but to adopt a plan to shock and blind everyone by his unexpected greatness. This plan is much more cunning than that used by his brother to make the rebels surrender (4.2.59-119). Hal does not trick a small army but all of England and proves that he is more Machiavellian than his younger brother. It was necessary and justifiable for Hal to think only of his own person when he devised this charade in order to validate his claim to the crown.

Hal is not really, however, Shakespeare's example of a purely Machiavellian prince. He is calculating and cunning but not cold or without mercy. He merely formulates a plan and follows it through to the end. At the same time, he is generous, honorable and just. The Archbishop characterizes him in *Henry V* as well versed in religious rhetoric, affairs, policy, and war, and as an exceptional problem-solver who is able to speak so elegantly that his words are like music. His character is overall a paradoxical mix of the perfect Renaissance humanist and the perfect Machiavellian prince. He is excessive in neither extreme; instead, he does his best to maintain a balance between these two attitudes which are necessary traits of a great leader and one whom Shakespeare would choose to immortalize.

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