Showing One’S Manhood: The Social Performance Of Masculinity

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SHOWING ONE’S MANHOOD: THE SOCIAL PERFORMANCE OF MASCULINITY

by

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ABSTRACT

Contrary to much criticism of the past thirty years that regards Shakespeare’s Prince Hal as the epitome of unfettered Machiavellian subjectivity, Hal should be regarded as a teenaged male navigating the contradictory discourses of early modern masculinity in order to perform an integrated, consistent masculinity for his audience. His acceptance of hegemonic masculinity is complicated by his father Henry IV’s usurpation of the throne. The resulting ambivalence in Hal results in his participation in the counter-masculine world of Eastcheap. However, once Hal “chooses” his role as Prince of Wales, he finds it difficult to sacrifice his personal self, or body natural, for the sake of his public persona as king, or body politic. While Hal successfully transforms his youthful riot into kingly masculine self-control, becoming the legendary King Henry V, he still longs for the fraternity he experienced before his accession, desires that others recognize his inherent superiority, and approve him for “who he is” rather than his social position. However, toward the end of Henry V, he seems to have doubts about the masculinity he has so successfully presented to others, and, when denied relationship with others, asserts his dominance over them in a show of “breaking bad.” Not receiving free approval of his masculinity from them, he coerces their acceptance to prove his manhood to himself.
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INTRODUCTION

GOOD MEN VS. GOOD MEN, KINGSHIP, HEGEMONY, AND HAL

King

O worthiest cousin!
The sin of my ingratitude even now
Was heavy on me. Thou art so far before
That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less deserved,
That the proportion both of thanks and payment
Might have been mine. Only I have left to say,
More is thy due than more than all can pay.

Macbeth

The service and the loyalty I owe
In doing it pays itself. Your highness’ part
Is to receive our duties, and our duties
Are to your throne and state, children and servants,
Which do but what they should by doing everything
Safe toward your love and honor. (Macbeth 1.4.14-27)¹

King Duncan’s courtly deference towards a thane, followed by Macbeth’s strained committal of loyalty, seems strange, given their respective social positions. Why do Duncan and Macbeth talk to each other in registers, that, taken out of context, seem counter-intuitive to their class statuses? Rather than merely illustrating Duncan’s praise of Macbeth and Macbeth’s expression of humility and service, these lines of dialogue demonstrate concisely both the social and performative nature of masculinity.

Towards a General Model of Masculinity: Good Men

At this point in Act 1, Duncan has already lavished upon Macbeth the title and lands of the Thane of Cawdor privately by sending word with Ross and Angus. However, Duncan’s generosity must also be seen by the other thanes to show that Duncan is worthy of their loyalty. He must publicize his gift. Anonymous donation will gain Duncan nothing. Thus, Duncan deems Macbeth “worthiest” due to his accomplishments on the battlefield. The rest of his speech illustrates his consciousness of Macbeth’s good behavior as loyal subject and acknowledges that he cannot possibly repay Macbeth. In part, Duncan uses the inexpressibility topos to accurately describe Macbeth’s worthiness, but he also resorts to it to properly perform in public as king, in keeping with the late medieval and early modern assumption that honor “demanded public recognition of individual worth.” Because Macbeth deserves “a high reputation in the peer-group world of gentlemen as a person deserving respect and ‘worship,’” Duncan must show the other thanes that he acknowledges Macbeth’s feats of “vigorous…combative, self-assertion…and military glory in the field”; Duncan, as feudal king, must keep not only Macbeth, but also his other vassal lords happy to ensure their loyalty to him, for they might rebel otherwise. Thus, while he has already granted Macbeth the accolades attending upon the Thaneship of Cawdor, he issues forth this self-deprecation because he must publicly perform his generosity and wisdom in recognizing Macbeth’s worth to make himself look worthy to be served.

Macbeth, for his part, plays the loyal, humble warrior. Being a good subject and kinsman, he attempts to deflect Duncan’s self-denigrating comments about his gifts.

Macbeth echoes the standard sentiment, “The service and the loyalty I owe / In doing it pays itself” (1.4.22-23). As one loyal to the king, his job is to render his military services. Macbeth takes up Duncan’s language of debt and describes himself as the one who owes. Duncan’s duty as king, according to Macbeth, “is to receive our duties, and our duties / Are to your throne and state, children and servants, / Which do but what they should by doing everything / Safe toward your love and throne” (24-28). Macbeth echoes King James’ own sentiment—“Kings are compared to fathers in families: for a King is truly parens patriae, the politic father of his people”—casting Duncan as father of Scotland and himself and everyone else as dutiful children. He uses Duncan’s metaphor of debt/payment to cast himself as a faithful subject and a humble warrior, while Duncan deploys the same metaphor to depict himself as beneficent king. Macbeth, playing the loyal noble, deflates the embarrassment of wordy riches Duncan bestows upon him, in part to show the other nobles that he is indeed worthy of the lands and title newly bestowed upon him. He also plays the laconic warrior, uncomfortable with praise, who merely performs the duty owed his sovereign.

While Macbeth and Duncan engage each other appropriately, they also present themselves as behaving appropriately to the other thanes and attendants present in this scene because although notions of martial masculinity depend on virtuous deeds, “masculinity is a matter of appearances,” as Bruce Smith argues, and “masculine identity of whatever kind is something men give to each other.” As masculinity is a matter of appearances, other men must approve of the way one shows masculinity. Masculinity, dependent upon the approval of other men, cannot exist in a vacuum. Duncan’s bestowal

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3 Stone, The Family, Sex, and Marriage, 110.
of a title and Macbeth’s deflection of his deserts to resituate the power in their relationship on Duncan’s side both serve to establish the other’s manhood. Duncan and Macbeth, in their engagement with each other, publicly affirm the other’s masculinity while also presenting their own for the approval of all the participants in the scene (Duncan, Macbeth, and the other thanes). Recognizing each other’s manhood stabilizes their own. This interchange illustrates the three operative assumptions of my investigation:

1) Masculinity is social.

2) As such, masculinity must be performed.

3) Performed masculinity must be accepted by the audience (present or internalized). It is performed in relation to men and women for the sake of other men.

Showing one’s manhood is the only way to achieve manhood. Because masculinity is social, it must be awarded by other men. Its dependence on outside approval thus requires masculinity to be performed, not just for the sake of the performer but also for those who observe and verify, as “gender is not fixed in advance of social interaction, but is constructed in interaction.” Thus, as Smith argues, while “early modern men testify to a central essence in personhood, to something that they feel makes them unique,” that is to their being men, the existence of varied and contradictory dicta from conduct and courtesy books in the Early Modern period attests that “masculine identity was understood to be a social construction long before post-structuralist theory made an issue

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of the fact.” Although often regarded as inherent and essential to the individual, in practice masculinity is a social construction that therefore must be ratified by others. One cannot have said of himself, as Fluellen concludes about Pistol in *Henry V*, that “he is not the man that he would gladly make show to the world he is” (3.6.82-83).

The thrust of my argument will be that, in the face of the many factors that might prevent or limit one’s being a proper “man” (such as age, marital status, health, social status, or behavior), good men often go bad by attempting to demonstrate this masculinity to other men, who are the arbiters of masculinity. Because the behaviors endorsed by traditional feudal-aristocratic or Christian strands of patriarchal masculinity, though often considered “proper manhood,” were harder to show to other men, men insecure about their masculinity or desirous to be known as *men* adopted more easily demonstrable behaviors to illustrate their manhoods—what we in our modern society might refer to as “toxic masculinity.” Acquisition, dominance, and violence would thus be employed to prove one’s masculinity.

**Towards a General Model of Masculinity, Continued: Bad Men**

Something more sinister lurks in the background of Duncan’s overdone politeness and Macbeth’s glib loyalty in the above selection. Indeed, Duncan attempts to manipulate Macbeth into subservience, while Macbeth denies his power over Duncan, and perhaps even his designs on Duncan’s crown.

Duncan’s anxiety about Macbeth’s worth appears at the very beginning of his address to Macbeth. He seems to be aware of it as well, for he pairs the word “worthiest”

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7 Smith, *Shakespeare and Masculinity*, 40.
with “cousin” (1.4.14), acknowledging Macbeth’s worth, while also putting him in his place. Duncan seems to be saying, “You deserve more than I can possibly give you and might more deserve to be king because of the military service you have done me, but please remember your place as my kinsman.” Duncan further reveals his anxiety over Macbeth’s worth by merely rewarding Banquo with a hug. Although Banquo “hast no less deserved nor must be known / No less to have done so” (30-31), Duncan gives him nothing but lip service. Duncan shrewdly chooses to reward one and not the other, limiting the number of powerful nobles. Duncan cautiously thanks Macbeth materially and Banquo verbally because he wants to keep their faction from gaining too much power and to set them at odds with each other by their unequal rewards.  

Duncan uncomfortably tells Macbeth, “Would thou hadst less deserved, / That the proportion both of thanks and payment / Might have been mine” (1.4.18-20), which the Arden 3 glosses, saying, “In the florid style typical of courteous exchanges in this play, Duncan wishes that Macbeth’s deservings had not been so great, so that he could have rewarded him more adequately.” But Duncan, more so than rueing that he cannot give Macbeth his full due, laments his inability to participate in the “negative usury” that is his prerogative as king, a term that Harry Berger coins to describe “giving more than you get—but in order to get more than you give.” He wishes Macbeth had deserved less, fought less valiantly. Duncan would then be able to over-compensate him and have a better “proportion” of the “thanks” Macbeth would now owe him for the over-payment he has received, therefore ensuring Macbeth’s ongoing loyalty to him. Because Macbeth’s

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9 Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 481, writes “offices suitable to the nobility were restricted in number; the greatest care had to be exercised in the distribution of these few so as to prevent a monopoly of tenure by any one faction.”

10 *Macbeth*, 150, n. 1.4.18-20.

deeds on the battlefield are so great, Duncan can only inadequately speak the “donor’s discourse”\textsuperscript{12} that he once so adequately performed. Duncan, who desires to persuasively play the generous benefactor, resorts to depicting himself as the debtor, foiled in his need to be on the better side of the transaction. He ostensibly describes his debt to Macbeth to show that, regardless of his status as king, he remains humble, and so over-praises Macbeth’s feats and denigrates the title and lands he has awarded to Macbeth.

This seems rather unbecoming of a king, but Duncan, in making himself the vulnerable debtor, ironically uses the instability in the power dynamic of their relationship to shame Macbeth into loyalty and obedience. The publicness of Duncan’s words to Macbeth would likely make Macbeth uncomfortable. The king’s groveling before one of his lords in public, before all the lords of Scotland, would call for that lord to try to reestablish the power dynamic by confirming the authority of the weakened king. Macbeth cannot possibly let the king devalue himself before him \textit{while everyone else is watching} because Macbeth would seem to be stepping out of his place and not performing his duties in solidifying Duncan’s social position. Thus, Macbeth downplays his accomplishments and wards off Duncan’s verbal barrage. Macbeth might also be motivated into responding diplomatically because he \textit{has} thought about killing Duncan and becoming king himself. Duncan recognizes Macbeth’s surplus of worth, so Macbeth, to evade possible suspicion, must rededicate his deeds to the service of his king.

But whether consciously or unconsciously, Macbeth understands his power over Duncan and asserts it with words that are at once passive and aggressive. Macbeth betrays some animosity toward or Duncan when he describes his and everyone else’s role as “doing everything / Safe toward your love and honor” (26-27). The enjambment after

\textsuperscript{12} Berger, Jr., \textit{Making Trifles of Terrors}, 229.
“doing everything,” when read or if performed just so, might highlight that the king passively receives the benefits of what everyone else has done, which is everything. The king does nothing. Those who serve the king do everything “safe toward [his] love and honor.” While on the surface, “safe [guarding] your love and honor” probably means that those who serve Duncan do whatever they can to be worthy of Duncan’s love and honor of them, Macbeth might also mean their actions are what protect the love and honor everyone else has for Duncan. Duncan’s position, therefore, is predicated upon the labor of others and not his own.

The General Model of Masculinity/Breaking Bad

This brief exchange between king and thane, who have peacefully coexisted but now harbor anxiety and resentment towards each other, points to the shared assumptions by which many male characters in the period’s drama construct their masculine identities.

1) Masculinity is a dynamic field, comprised on the one hand of biological and social factors that one cannot control and comprised on the other hand of social factors, behaviors, and discourses (or strands of those discourses) that one “chooses.” While one’s manhood was largely a product of external factors one could not himself control, men picked up disparate strands of cultural behaviors and attitudes from society at large.

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13 Smith also notes in *Shakespeare and Masculinity* that manhood could be constructed or constrained by external factors as age, health, and social class.

14 Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) uses “manhood” as an umbrella term describing two competing ways of being a man, termed as “manliness” and “masculinity.” While “manliness” refers to “sexual self-restraint, a powerful will, a strong character”—the ideals of middle-class Victorianism—“masculine” comprises “ideals like aggressiveness, physical force, and male sexuality”—traits that came to be expected of twentieth-century men (18-19). Katherine Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England*, (New York: Routledge, 2013) writes that medieval authors differentiated between “manly,” “[signifying] courage and combat,” and “manhood” was “frequently associated with notion of honour and reputation” (6-7). I use the terms “masculinity” and “manhood”
Traditionally, masculinity has been defined through its opposition to the feminine, and this opposition has seemed to be universal. However, early feminist work on the early modern period, especially the groundbreaking studies of Janet Adelman and Coppelia Kahn, has illustrated the contradictions in something as seemingly obvious as discourse defining masculinity by its contrast with femininity. Adelman argues that Shakespearean tragic men cannot accommodate the female sexual body in their imaginings of the world and themselves, as it undoes their fantasies of male self-sufficiency and evokes a time in which they were wholly dependent, the facticity of their physical origins inevitably contradicting their self-conceptions. \(^{15}\) To escape this tainting, men try to secure their masculine identities in opposition to the feminine. I would like to point out that this psychological rejection of or resistance to the feminine is not just situated in the individual psyches of those who desire to be men but is propagated through social discourse. Because masculinity is social, youngsters, when first asserting their manhoods, must prove to others their differentiation from the mother figure, not because they themselves are necessarily desirous to distinguish themselves from their mothers but because of social expectations. However, because these cultural discourses often contradict each other, Kahn points out that, while men have spent their lives defining themselves in opposition to women, in order to achieve full manhood, a man becomes dependent on a woman, as wife and mother of his children, to assure his masculine identity. \(^{16}\)


Hence, there would be contradictory beliefs, behaviors, and impulses residing in the individual, not just regarding the feminine, but all other aspects of masculinity. Indeed, these differing cultural beliefs and ideas might stay relatively inert and coexist with each other in society at large or in the individual himself. One may only unconsciously intuit or be totally unaware that one performs his masculinity for other men by presenting a “complete,” “whole” masculine self to others. Because of the illusion of the wholeness of the body, we often do not recognize that there are multiple men or conceptions of manhood residing in a single man. Underneath the performance of what is considered a fully integrated masculinity lies a potpourri of manhood. Men could, like Leontes, make some peace with the feminine sexual body, again illustrating that “masculine” rejection of the feminine is not universal or inevitable, and these differing responses would also be circulating in the discourse. As important as differentiating themselves from women and the feminine is for men in constructing masculinity, there is a “gender politics within masculinity.”\(^\text{17}\) What matters more than men defining themselves in opposition to women is their defining themselves against the examples of other men, as both R.W. Connell and Alexandra Shepard, following Connell, assert.\(^\text{18}\)

But if there are internal inconsistencies, or a gender politics within masculinity in general, then there would also tend to be a gender politics within a particular man’s masculinity. However, these conflicts or inconsistencies are often hidden by masculinity’s relationality. Scholarship of the past two decades has shown that a man’s sexual identity, i.e. performing his gender appropriately, particularly in his being a good

\(^\text{17}\) Connell, *Masculinities*, 37.
\(^\text{18}\) Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) adopts Connell’s model to discuss early modern masculinity. Both assert that masculinity is more often defined by relationships between men rather than dominance over women. Shepard points out that some women benefit from patriarchy while other men suffer from its ideal.
householder—entailing being of a certain age and married—and exercising stern, but not severe, control over one’s wife, children, and servants—not just commanding, but deserving obedience—helped ensure a man’s good reputation among other men.\(^{19}\)

Manhood was, thus, an art of moderation, of correctly balancing competing expectations because a man had to keep up his reputation as he was socially bound to other men.\(^{20}\)

Yet, because any one man would have multiple networks of relationships with others, as Connell explains, “Any one masculinity, as a configuration of practice, is simultaneously positioned in a number of structures of relationship, which may be following different historical trajectories.”\(^{21}\) Thus, an individual man’s involvement in overlapping and often noncomplementary social networks would require a man to himself be a repository of different masculine selves. While people often believe or act as if there is a “fixed, true masculinity” underlying everything else as “true masculinity is almost always thought to proceed from men’s bodies” and that it “[expresses] something about a male body,”\(^{22}\) a man becomes a man by playing or performing these various social roles effectively. This dynamic can be best summarized by Judith Butler’s now-classic formulation:

> If gender is a kind of doing, an incessant activity performed, in part without one’s knowing and without one’s willing, it is not for that reason automatic or mechanical. On the contrary, it is a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint. Moreover, one does not “do” one’s gender alone. One is always “doing” with or for another.\(^{23}\)

While being constrained by physical circumstance and the behavioral expectations of their varied and various social roles, individuals nonetheless “choose” how they get to


\(^{21}\) Connell, *Masculinities*, 73.

\(^{22}\) Connell, *Masculinities*, 45.

play any or all of them. Or, as Connell puts it: “Whatever is significant in issues about masculinity involves both personality and social relations; centrally, it involves the interplay between the two.” While physical circumstances and often contradictory social expectations can constrain an individual man’s choices, that does not eliminate the man’s ability to find room to improvise a “personal” style of manhood. However, the success of their improvisations depends on how their audience responds to their performance. Receiving approval from their peers for an effective performance would also propagate the illusion that the performed masculinity was singular and fully consistent, gilding over the reality that men who successfully perform their manhoods do so despite the contradictory discourses they have internalized.

Returning to *Macbeth*, Duncan, an older man with colder blood, would be considered fitter to be king than a younger man because he should be more prudent. His performance of generosity to Macbeth before the other nobles supporting him speaks to the wisdom he has achieved in old age. However, while his physical maturity might speak to his superiority of mind or his prudence, it also calls into question his bodily integrity for “male identity was then, and is now, sited in the body.” Duncan, due to his age and his status as king, must hang back from the front of the battle and hear unsatisfactory accounts of the action of the battle because he is not able to participate himself. Macbeth, his noble kinsman and thane, has stood out on the battlefield, and those who accomplish awe-inspiring feats with their bodies in feudal Scotland, Jacobean England, or 21st century America, are often considered the manliest of men. Proper to his

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26 We should consider that perhaps Duncan asks the question “What bloody man is that?” (1.2.1), not because he has been unable to discern who the soldier is yet, or because the man is unrecognizable from the blood covering him, but because he does not know his own soldiers well enough.
position and his age, I argue that Macbeth “epitomizes what Ptolemy, Aristotle, Galen, and Christian theology all took male adulthood to be, a time, in [Henry] Cuffe’s words, of ‘venturous boldness in quarrelling combats.’”  

While it is culturally more fitting for Duncan, as older man and king, to sit on the sidelines while the younger men risk their lives, this notion competes with another cultural value that valorizes men who risk life and limb and come out victorious. Macbeth is arguably the greatest warrior in Scotland, and, in some sense, the manliest of all the men in Scotland, yet he still must show his deference to the older and higher status Duncan. Both characters, before experiencing issues with each other, occupy their masculine roles much as they should, despite the contradictions inherent in the interpretations of their social roles.

2) A man often becomes “aware” that he must prove himself a man after an external conflict or circumstance precipitates an internal conflict that sets the contradictory notions or value systems at odds with each other. More simply said, these men become unsure about their social/gender position because their illusion of masculine integrity has been compromised. A man is in some sense always proving his manhood, however he defines that for himself, but when his imagined wholeness becomes questionable, the sufferer faces a crisis. Whether or not an individual consciously identifies the cause of his crisis, the disorientation or instability I describe is akin to Hugh Grady’s formulation of “disinterpellation”: “a self is severed from its ideology-identity and set adrift to construct a new one in a world now (consequently) seen as alien and unmeaningful.”  

While Grady brilliantly describes how individuals become unmoored from the ideology that had once defined them and must then seek to establish new

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27 Smith, *Shakespeare and Masculinity*, 80.
identities, my take differs in at least one major way. Grady generally treats the individual in a more abstract sense, although frequently alluding to their gender; by contrast, my investigation assumes that there is no identity that is not gendered; all identity is gendered identity. The work of sociologist James Messerschmidt supports this approach, explaining that

we expect others to attribute a particular sex category to us—a sex category that corresponds to our ‘essential nature’—and we satisfy the ongoing task of accountability by demonstrating that we are a ‘male’ or a ‘female’ by means of concocted behaviors that may be interpreted accordingly. We configure our behaviors so we are seen unquestionably by others in particular social situations as expressing our ‘essential natures’—we do masculinity or femininity....; Because we believe there are but two natural sexes, we attempt to become one of them.\textsuperscript{29}

Although Messerschmidt’s scholarship focuses on contemporary masculinity and its intersections with crime, race, and class, I believe his formulation, though not transhistorical or somehow “universal,” nonetheless applies to the practice of gender in early modern England.

Due to the illusion provided by the integrity of the body and the body’s performance being taken for the representation of a fully-consistent masculine self, men (can) hide psychic distress from others or themselves through performing their social roles properly, with whatever improvisations they deem to be expressive of their true selves. Any possible disturbance in the way one sees oneself can be quelled by the

\textsuperscript{29} James Messerschmidt, \textit{Masculinities and Crime: Critique and Reconceptualization of Theory} (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1993), 80. I recognize the potentially problematic nature of limiting my discussion of gender to heteronormative binaries. Limiting a contemporary study of gender to male and female would be reductive, and likely also is in discussing early modern England. However, I want to suggest that, given what I argue in the rest of this introduction, whatever was not gendered masculine in the early modern era would have been gendered as feminine or effeminate, regardless if it were what we might define as asexual, intersexual, transsexual, queer, bisexual, gender-fluid, etc. Essentially, things were defined in terms of masculine and non-masculine. Anything deviating from traditional masculine norms would be an outlier lumped together with all other such nonconforming behaviors, just as “sodomy” defined any and all “deviant” sexual behaviors.
approval of one’s social group. However, because one houses so many different attitudes, beliefs, and even cultural behaviors, there is always the chance that these will conflict with each other. This internal conflict thus results from external circumstances or conflicts that set at odds the competing masculine dictates, norms, and expectations that the individual man has internalized.

The reader/spectator of Macbeth can see how external circumstances can ignite long dormant desires that might contradict one’s prevailing self-image. Macbeth has faithfully quashed rebellions on two separate fronts. However, once he receives the news from Ross and Angus confirming the prophecies of the witches, he is overcome by “things forgotten” (1.2.149), possibly fantasies he has entertained prior to the action of the play about gaining the throne. Macbeth seems content in his social position until the witches’ prophesy comes true, promising him a “better” and more patriarchal station, becoming the father of the Scottish kingdom. Duncan himself suffers an instability in his own masculine identity when Macbeth over-performs. Duncan, as king, cannot compete with the feats Macbeth has accomplished on his behalf and must compensate verbally because he feels that the material compensation gifted to Macbeth is inadequate. While both men could seek security in the rigid contours of their social roles, they have also internalized the evolving and emergent definitions of those roles (while not necessarily giving conscious credence to them), and, because they now feel the precariousness of their positions, these competing notions are dredged up, creating their feelings of instability and division.
Macbeth, residing in a play set in feudal Scotland but written during the burgeoning of proto-capitalist acquisitive society in early modern England,\(^3\) is torn between loyalty to his king and acquiring the throne for himself. Both options would be considered “manly” respectively by the residual and emergent cultures of Shakespeare’s time. These competing styles of masculinity, having been internalized by Macbeth, battle each other in his psyche. While at the beginning of the play, Macbeth espouses a more traditional feudal-aristocratic way of thinking, stressing the loyalty he owes his kinsman and king, he has also been imbued with the emergent ideology of acquisition, which his wife espouses and later persuades him to adopt. Thus, the witches’ prophecy’s coming true (an external circumstance) has destabilized his social/gender position and sets these competing value systems, which had “lived” together inside Macbeth, at odds with each other.

3) Once this internal, psychic schism (arising from an external stimulus) destabilizes a subject’s masculine position, he must demonstrate the wholeness of his manhood to other men or the social group(s) they have internalized. This proving comes through what I am calling showing one’s manhood. Manhood, as earlier stated, while thought of as an intrinsic essence and value that one simply has, must be demonstrated to others (especially other men) or to the others they have internalized through accepting social constructs concerning one’s behavior. While there were prescriptive models of masculinity delineated in sermons, courtesy manuals, and household guides, these models tended to privilege inwardly directed behaviors, such as temperance and prudence. The most obvious and visible way to demonstrate one’s manhood is through adopting more outwardly-directed behaviors. Because masculinity is often equated with patriarchy and

\(^3\) Smith, *Shakespeare and Masculinity*, 58.
dominance, while not necessarily being defined by those, conflicted men desirous to perform their integrated masculine selves gravitate toward more “toxic” forms like physical violence or manipulation because of their visibility and acceptance. As masculinity is relational and granted by other men, there tends to be a zero-sum quality about it: “What [Cawdor] hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won” (1.2.68). Thus, as masculinity in these instances seems to originate from the body and tell some truth about that body, violence becomes the preferred method of demonstrating one’s masculinity. As Connell argues, “violence becomes important in gender politics among men. Most episodes of major violence…are transactions among men.”31 One exerts physical dominance over another man to indicate he is manlier than the defeated man, thus proving the “truth” of his own masculinity. Of course, masculinity is generally considered a zero-sum game, aside from physical domination of one man over another. Someone else’s well-acknowledged manliness endangers how manly oneself is. Duncan feels threatened by Macbeth for his extreme physical valor, while Macbeth feels emasculated because he must still pay fealty to Duncan due to his superior social position. Because the most easily discernible ways to reassert the wholeness of one’s psyche is to exert power, many of these otherwise good men “break bad.” Good men cease being good men in trying to be good men.

In order to satisfy the doubts others or oneself has about one’s masculinity, one must perform a seemingly uncomplicated and complete manhood and receive approval or imagined approval. The psychology of Alfred Adler provides a useful way to talk about the dynamic at play here. As has been argued, the manhood one performs for others is riddled with contradictions. Early in a male’s life, Adler explains,

31 Connell, Masculinities, 83.
Submission and striving for independence occur together..., setting up an internal contradiction between masculinity and femininity... The adult personality is thus formed out of compromise and exists under tension... But if there is a weakness..., there will be an anxiety which motivates an exaggerated emphasis on the masculine side of things. This 'masculine protest'... means over-compensation in the direction of aggression and restless striving for triumphs.  

Thus, while the male as a child is rewarded and taught to perform masculine behavior, he must also behave submissively towards his elders and follow the strictures of his social or religious group. This submission gets characterized as feminine. Among other traits exhibited by young men that are classified as feminine is youth itself, dependence, and lack of self-control. Despite these traits often being naturally situated in the body, they become grounds to deny youth a proper masculine identity. I argue that an external stimulus triggers the conflict between internally and externally directed styles of manhood, a conflict between masculinity as dominance and masculinity as obeisance to the status quo. While Adler describes the conflicting values boys are inculcated with as masculine and feminine, we can also think about these different cultural masculinities within specific gender constructions within the early modern period as overlapping in large part with Curtis Brown Watson’s terms, pagan and Christian.  

These conflicting value systems often made strange bedfellows in prescriptive literature. Courtesy and conduct books that seemingly contradicted Christian values would often state that saving one’s soul should be an individual’s ultimate concern. Louis B. Wright observes that father-to-son advice books would often mix religious precepts with seemingly contradictory pragmatic tips to stay ahead in court, and courtesy books

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would often preach both authenticity and the keeping up of appearances. The Bible itself, divided into a vengeance-oriented Old Testament and a New Testament predicated on inner strength, could be the source of conflicting values. As Jennifer Low writes, “Most men of the early modern period indicated the contesting conceptions of manhood that underlay their actions not when writing about the concept of gender identity but when they wrote about *appropriate or admirable behavior*” (emphasis added). As Low’s statement indicates, people at the time often theorized manhood to be simple and static but presented contradictory visions of what comprised manhood, oftentimes in the same treatise.

Any Christian, as most early modern English would have called themselves, would theoretically privilege the spirit over the body. At the same time, they would have been influenced by older, pagan ideals of masculinity, particularly if they were members of the gentry or nobility. Men were associated with the spirit, but, again, masculinity seemed to stem from the body. Brown writes, “A favorite metaphor endlessly quoted by the eclectic Renaissance moralists compared the inseparability of virtue and honor with that of the body and its shadow,” and James I himself in *Basilicon Doron* “recommends a careful orchestration of the virtuous king’s visible gestures and action on the grounds that ‘they serve as trunch-men, to interpret the inward disposition of the mind, to the eyes of them that cannot see farther within him, and therefore must only judge of him by the outward appearance.’” One’s actions were to be reflective of one’s inner character.

Thus, we see that familiar Renaissance humanist problem of appearance vs. reality,

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rhetoric vs. truth, at play here. One’s actions are to speak to and for one’s manhood, to represent the fiction of the stable manhood that inheres in one despite there being no fixed gender underneath its performances. Thus, while Renaissance thinkers, and presumably the people they influenced, would agree that traits such as self-control, piety, and prudence were the most important traits a man could have, in practice, they lauded strength, violence, and power in their men. Thus, because one must always be performing and showing one’s manhood, a morally upright good man, having suffered some doubts in his masculinity, might be compelled to engage in questionable behaviors to show himself a good man.

Macbeth’s killing of Duncan illustrates the tendency for men conflicted about their masculine identities to resort to violence or otherwise “break bad” as the most demonstrable method for seeking approval. Macbeth’s murder of Duncan is an obvious case, but Duncan’s proclamation of Malcolm as his successor could be read in a similar fashion. While succession was hereditary in Shakespeare’s England and Macbeth himself worries about his lack of offspring to inherit his throne, it seems that kingship in Macbeth could either be blood or merit-based, given that Duncan must publicly announce that his oldest son is heir (rather than it being assumed), and Macbeth’s reaction to the announcement, “The Prince of Cumberland—that is a step / On which I must fall down or else o’erleap, / For in my way it lies” (1.4.48-50), seems to be one of shock and anguish. Perhaps Duncan feels his masculinity shaken by Macbeth’s bloody valor and so “breaks bad” by naming his son his successor rather than the man most deserving of the title. The clear-cut choice for Duncan would be to name Macbeth, and the beginning of the scene, filled with his effusive praise for the new Thane of Cawdor, suggests Macbeth might be
his choice. However, Duncan must assert his power to the thanes—especially Macbeth—and so denies the best soldier, the man most deserving of the office of king, giving it to his own son who had been captured in battle. This accords with David Gilmore’s general observation that while “true manhood” in the period “is a precious and elusive status beyond mere maleness, a hortatory image that men and boys aspire to and that their culture demands of them as a measure of belonging…it’s vindication is doubtful, resting in rigid codes of decisive action in many spheres of life: as husband, father, lover, provider, warrior,”38 which seems to imply even those regarded as “unquestionably” men still may have weak spots in their performances of masculinity. Duncan lacks as warrior, and due to Macbeth’s deserts, he cannot provide adequately. Thus, he bests Macbeth by resorting to his position as father. Naming Malcolm as his successor shores up his patriarchal legacy as well as being a possible dig at Macbeth’s childlessness, his failures as a husband and lover. If Macbeth picks up on this slight, is it any wonder that he follows through on his desire to kill Duncan?

What I am suggesting is that Macbeth kills Duncan not merely because he desires to become king, but also because becoming king offers a means of settling the conflict between the two prominent discourses of masculinity roiling within himself. The traditional feudal model Macbeth supports, and then abandons, bases manhood on loyalty to one’s peer group and serving one’s sovereign; Lady Macbeth’s model, summed up in the lines “When you durst do it, then you were a man; / And to be more than what you were, you would / Be so much more the man” (1.7.49-51), corresponds to an emergent “affective individualism” where the concerns of the individual are prioritized over the

concerns of the peer group. While it could be argued that Lady Macbeth sets him on to the murder by redefining masculinity, Macbeth would not be persuaded so easily by her had he not already, at some level, been exposed to affective individualistic discourse. Thus, Macbeth, prompted by Banquo’s interruption of his reveries, declares, “My dull brain was wrought / With things forgotten” (1.3.152-3), suggesting that the fulfillment of the weird sisters’ prophesy has stirred up earlier thoughts Macbeth had of ascending the summit of Mt. Masculinity.

While he originally grounds his masculinity on his bonds to other men (despite the acquisitive ambition he also harbors), Lady Macbeth defines masculinity as surpassing or transgressing those bonds, “to be more than you were.” As I have mentioned earlier Duncan secures loyalty through ample reward, binding his thanes to himself through the practice of what Harry Berger, Jr. dubs “negative usury.” These lands and titles enhance his lords’ honors. Lady Macbeth’s logic implies the inconsistency of the Scottish feudal system in which a man can rise through the ranks, only to be stopped short of the ultimate prize: kingship. Because Macbeth’s excessive worthiness and the weird sisters’ prophesies have set conflicting masculine discourses at discord with one another, he must definitively resolve the internal conflict to stabilize his masculine identity. He kills Duncan, but not because he desires to carry out the day-to-day functions of the king. He kills Duncan, in an act of violence and domination, to demonstrate his masculinity to his most immediate audience, Lady Macbeth. She speaks her disapproval of Macbeth’s current performance of masculinity and offers him a way to “truly” be a man, a method she approves of before the fact. Thus, while Macbeth had defined his

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39 Stone, _Crisis of the Aristocracy_, 35-36, argues, “Humanist education with its cult of heroes was teaching the upper classes that each man was an empire unto himself, whose duty it was to strive for personal glory.”
masculinity by service to his sovereign, he later views becoming the sovereign by
dethroning the old one as a truer form of masculinity, or at least one that better
demonstrates one’s inner masculine essence. Kingship, as it comes to be viewed by
Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, becomes shorthand for masculinity itself.

Parricide, Hal, and Kingship as Hegemonic Masculinity

*Macbeth* is hardly an outlier in Shakespeare’s canon to fuse masculinity with
kingship and regicide/parricide. The fusion of kingship, violence, and masculinity is
illustrated in Old Hamlet’s killing of Old Fortinbras, who tests both his manly and kingly
mettle against a peer. Their battle is significant for also taking place on the birthday of
Old Hamlet’s son, the heir to his throne, the continuer of his patriline, and the son whose
obedience he needs to establish his reputation as a competent householder. Hamlet
himself receives some satisfaction in psychically retaliating against his father. *Richard
II*, another play about an ineffective, tyrannical king, implies that Richard assassinates his
uncle and explicitly depicts his contempt for his uncle John of Gaunt. The play
culminates with Bolingbroke’s deposition of the *parens patriae*, his cousin Richard,
setting up Shakespeare’s deepest dive into the evolution of masculinity in his extended
treatment of Prince Hal/King Harry. Hal must somehow reconcile the ambivalence he
feels towards his father, kill off his surrogate father Falstaff, and fill his great-
grandfather’s shoes in becoming father to the English nation.40

40 It should be noted that, in order to be a good king, one had to ensure a stable succession, which
was dependent upon the physical fact of having children and being a father. One also had to have the self-
control required to be a good householder, thereby eliciting responsibility and obedience in one’s children.
The last major achievement of Shakespeare’s Henry V is securing his position as a husband and a father.
Unlike Macbeth who has an established masculine identity and chooses to adopt a new one after becoming “disinterpellated”—more surprising due to its resulting from his successful display of warrior masculinity—Hal is a teenager and must forge his identity whole cloth. He faces competing imperatives on his behavior; on the one hand, he is a nobleman and heir to the throne and must, like Macbeth, negotiate his dealings with other men publicly, recognizing his ties to them and theirs to him, while remaining respectful of his elders as his youth requires. Yet as a young man and as a nobleman, Hal also desires to exercise independence and control, to determine his own masculinity unfettered and on his own terms. His father’s usurpation sets impossibly high expectations and burdens upon him. Hal, in large part, creates his masculine identity by participating, both consciously and unconsciously, in a family romance in which he rejects, resists, rebels, and retaliates against his father, reconciles with his father, and lastly reprises and revises his father’s role.

These struggles with father figures are not merely Oedipal or psychological acts, but are, in fact, psychosocial ones, given the societies these characters inhabit. Macbeth kills his cousin, the king, to become king himself. Similarly, Bolingbroke/Henry IV deposes his cousin, the king, to also become king himself. They do so, not just to have the rights and privileges provided by kingship; they aspire to kingship because of the hegemonic masculinity they have been inculcated with.41 Given that “the political order can be seen as a reflection of the gender order in society as a whole, in which case the political virtues are best understood as the prescribed masculine virtues writ large....the

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41 “Hegemonic masculinity” is Connell’s coinage and adopted by Shepard and Lewis.
state acts to reinforce masculine norms.”  

In a culture in which nobility and masculinity are not just prized as separate commodities but are taken to inform each other, a man’s place in the sociopolitical order becomes his place in the gender order. Further, because the gender and political orders are so intimately tied up with each other, Macbeth’s treasonous desires to take Duncan’s crown “[shakes] so [his] single state of man” (1.3.142). While most likely using “man” to refer to any individual regardless of gender as a “state” to be ruled or kept in order, Macbeth’s phrasing places his ambition in conflict with a traditional style of feudal masculinity, a situation that ends up resulting in the instability Macbeth feels within his psyche. His “state of man,” referring to his formerly stable masculine identity, now shakes with the uncertainty which he now feels in performing a proper masculine role. For Macbeth and for many other Shakespearean characters, being king is not just “the ornament of life” (1.7.42) but a crucial and “essential” part of existence. In a society in which respect is due kings, fathers of their nations, and biological fathers, it is not surprising that noblemen, particularly those facing instabilities in their gender identities, might desire to become king in order to prove to themselves and others that they are truly men. For some, hegemonic masculinity can only be achieved if one is himself the hegemon. If the political order truly reflects the gender order, then should it not be true that the manliest man should be the king? Given the political system of Scotland and its definitions of masculinity, Macbeth might feel inadequate as a man unless he himself ascends the throne.

A recent study of kingship and masculinity by the historian Katherine Lewis argues that hegemonic masculinity, though determined by the nobility or the ruling

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classes, “derives its authority from resting on attributes which were not solely applicable to the social or political elite, but which were commonly admired by men drawn from a range of backgrounds, some of which attributes could potentially be within any man’s reach.” As we know, it is not so much those in power who keep hegemony in its place but those below them, granted the “patriarchal dividend,” who do not reap the lion’s share of the rewards of the social system but are awarded dominance over other socially marginalized groups that keep it in its place. Although most men would have no opportunity to benefit from the system of hegemonic masculinity, status as father or head of household marks them as special and gives them certain privileges. We also see that one does not necessarily need to be a man to benefit from the “patriarchal dividend” or the system of hegemonic masculinity. Thus, in Richard II, the newly widowed Duchess of Gloucester, not the most obvious beneficiary of the patriarchal system—certainly when compared to her brother-in-law John of Gaunt who more visibly benefits from hegemonic masculinity—chides him, arguing, “That which in mean men we entitle patience / Is pale cold cowardice in noble breasts” (1.2.33-4), anticipating Nietzsche’s arguments in On the Genealogy of Morals. While she has become the Duchess of Gloucester because of the patriarchal system, she would not need to necessarily preach to her brother-in-law, who presumably is at least as inculcated in the patriarchal system as she is. However, she regards his Christian patience and subservience to a bad king as slave morality and professes allegiance with more traditional classical noble values.

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43 Lewis, Kingship and Masculinity, 34-35.
44 Connell, Masculinities, 79.
45 Connell, Masculinities, 79. These men embody what Connell calls the “complicit” mode of masculinity.
prioritizing activity and retaliation. She chides her noble brother-in-law for not acting like a nobleman. Fortunately for her, John of Gaunt’s son defines himself more according to her model than to his and deposes the effeminate man and bad king Richard.

The conflict between the Duchess of Gloucester and John of Gaunt illustrates the truth of Connell’s formulation that “hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees...the dominant position of men and the subordination of women,” while also indicating that the recipient of the patriarchal dividend does not necessarily need to be a man. The key takeaway is that hegemonic masculinity reflects “the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy.” So, while both models represented by Richard and Henry are patriarchal, Richard’s personal failings as divinely ordained and rightfully descended king created a “monarchical crisis,” and Bolingbroke’s emergent style of masculinity, based on successful performance rather than succession, overtakes the older model as the hegemonic one. Hegemonic masculinity, just like any other identity, is always transforming due to circumstances and the individual’s or collective’s interventions.

Yet, just because a man ascends to the top of the peak does not mean his position is taken as granted. Masculinity (or gender in general), and kingship as well, for that matter, are based on an individual’s repetition of certain discrete actions, a “body” of work if you will, that gets approval from an audience. Henry, though he takes control due to his masculine power play, apparently does not fully convince some of the other nobles in his performance of kingly masculinity, thus the rebellions he must extinguish.

47 Connell, Masculinities, 77.
throughout his reign as depicted by Shakespeare. Similarly, Macbeth becomes king, yet his status as a man can never be fully solidified. As medieval and early modern scholars have shown, proper manhood was only a phase in a particular man’s life, and that was dependent upon multiple social factors, whether he had a wife or a household, for example.\textsuperscript{48} Moreover, this phase of life only lasted until advancing age would compromise the integrity of the body, however much the mind or temperament might have matured. Because attainment of masculinity was never fully guaranteed, one’s characteristic moves are often defensive\textsuperscript{49} as slander or a single misstep could cost his credibility with his peers. Thus, Lady Macbeth chides Macbeth at the banquet, after he sees Banquo’s ghost—“Are you a man?”—because he is not performing a consistent kingly masculinity. She is not upset so much at his guilt but that he reveals his fragility in public. As man and king, one had to perform a consistent and fully integrated self before others. Macbeth still experiences an identity instability, thus inquiring about Macduff’s whereabouts before preemptively attacking the Thane of Fife’s castle before Macduff. Macbeth, in Lady Macbeth’s view, loses any claims to manhood when he visibly and publicly performs his guilt. However convincingly one performs manhood at one instance, he can lose it the next. As Connell concludes, “Hegemony, then, does not mean total control. It is not automatic, and may be disrupted—or even disrupt itself.”\textsuperscript{50}

Good kings could become bad kings by being perceived as acting too effeminately, even if they had acquitted themselves as effective rulers for decades. Edward III, considered the greatest English king and model for those who followed due


\textsuperscript{49} Neal, \textit{The Masculine Self}, 11.

\textsuperscript{50} Connell, \textit{Masculinities}, 37.
to his fusion of moral rectitude with physical valor, embodying all of hegemonic masculinity’s conflicting and competing strands, was, later in life, believed to have become effeminate through his sexual overindulgence.\textsuperscript{51} This licentiousness, however, did not only affect Edward’s body natural but had ramifications for his whole kingdom: “Edward himself presents an example of hegemonic masculinity compromised by the indulgence of sexual desire and reduced to disgraceful effeminacy, with disastrous results which went way beyond the merely personal.”\textsuperscript{52} A king’s self-mastery was generally considered the basis of his good governance.

Starting with the example of Edward III, Lewis argues in \textit{Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England} that, while historians have come around by viewing queens through the vantage point of their successful performance of gender, successful kings, particularly Edward III and Henry V, still are described as having had their manhoods naturally proceed from them, rather than successfully performing their masculine identities. Lewis demonstrates, however, that medieval kings were judged, even by their contemporaries, on how well they conformed to gender expectations. Deposed kings like Edward II, Richard II, and Henry VI were often described as effeminate, while more successful kings, like the aforementioned Edward III, before his licentious old age, and Henry V, were described as being masculine. She writes that Henry IV's “forceful adult manhood had played…a key role in the claims for his right to rule in place of Richard II.”\textsuperscript{53} Thus, Henry’s usurpation at the time was justified in certain circles as his acting suitably and desirably masculine for the kingship he had unlawfully taken. Not only did kingly effectiveness correspond to the successful performance of

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\item \textsuperscript{51} Lewis, \textit{Kingship and Masculinity}, 2.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Lewis, 2.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Lewis, 72.
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gender, but these monarchs oftentimes, particularly Henry V, carefully cultivated their images as king/man.

However, this kingly version of masculinity was not one-dimensional. In addition to military prowess, a true man also displayed intellect and prudence. Sir John Fastolfe differentiated between the “manly man” and the “hardy man.” While the “hardy man” impetuously threw himself into battle to show his courage without concern for the ramifications it might cause his fellow soldiers, a “manly man” fought both boldly and prudently.\(^{54}\) Despite Abbot John Wheathampstead’s description of Henry VI as “his mother's stupid offspring, not his father's, a son greatly degenerated from the father, who did not cultivate the art of war”\(^{55}\) (emphasis added)—corroborating my assertion that men are judged men by how easily they demonstrate their manhoods to others—“rationality, moderation, and sobriety,” “essentially masculine attributes,” were also expected of a king.\(^{56}\) I want to clarify that these moral values were expected of men and could be demonstrated to others, but what I am arguing is that a man who is uncertain about his masculine identity, to show it to others, will prioritize dominance and control over justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude, the cardinal values of a Christian ruler.\(^{57}\)

Although a good king had to balance the competing and sometimes conflicting masculine values of moral rectitude and physical valor, as Lewis argues, “in order to be a good ruler he had also to include qualities such as mercy, pity, meekness and humility

\(^{54}\) Lewis, 24.
\(^{55}\) Lewis, 59.
\(^{56}\) Cynthia Herrup, “The King’s Two Genders,” *Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 3 (July 2006): 500.
\(^{57}\) Lewis, 17.
which were frequently identified as feminine.”\textsuperscript{58} Or to use Cynthia Herrup’s revision of Ernst Kantorowicz, the king had to demonstrate his “two genders.”\textsuperscript{59} The king was therefore required to balance stern justice with mild mercy and to be a “nursing father.”\textsuperscript{60}

However, extremes in either direction were also considered undesirable. Phyllis Rackin and Jean Howard argue that \textit{Richard II} describes Richard and Henry as feminine and masculine respectively, to Richard’s loss and Henry’s gain: “In \textit{Richard II}, the king’s patrilineal authority is vitiated by his womanish tears and his effeminate behavior: he has no taste for foreign wars, he talks when he should act, and he wastes his kingdom’s treasure by indulging in excessive luxuries. Bullingbrook, who has no hereditary right to the crown, acquires it by the successful performance of masculine virtues.”\textsuperscript{61} In other words, by veering over too much in the feminine realm, Richard loses his legitimacy. While representing conflicting examples of masculine discourse, Richard as patrilineal inheritor, king by the tradition of inheritance, on the one hand, and Henry, king by his assertion of an emergent form of “affective individualism,” on the other, Rackin and Howard astutely illustrate Richard’s association with “feminine” qualities, particularly his tears and his effusions, while Bolingbroke is associated with “masculine” traits, particularly his willingness to act, even when it flouts well-established social conventions. Thus, while both models of masculinity remain available and are patriarchal,\textsuperscript{62} the residual form, embodied by Richard, is cast as feminine or effeminate,

\textsuperscript{58} Lewis, 28.
\textsuperscript{59} Herrup, “The King’s Two Genders.”
\textsuperscript{60} Herrup, 498.
\textsuperscript{62} Howard and Rackin, \textit{Engendering a Nation}, 187.
while the emergent form, predicated upon individual achievement embodied by Henry, is considered masculine.

While kings who desperately want to appear manly might end up meting out harsh punishments and withholding rewards from their nobles to appear invulnerable, “tyranny was the consequence of effeminacy” and “showed not only a king's capacity for personal decay but also the power and danger still left in effeminate behavior,” as tyranny was defined as the lack of masculine self-control. Thus, Macbeth, perhaps in a concerted effort to avoid the sorts of binds the “nursing father” Duncan faces in needing to reward the incomparable Macbeth while still retaining power, becomes a tyrant and hosts joyless feasts in order to perform his masculinity, overcompensating for his conflicted masculinity. Medieval and early modern writers expected good kings to balance both genders, just as they would balance martial might and manly wisdom. Macbeth’s tyranny thus “unmans” him more than his fright at seeing Banquo’s ghost.

Plato’s assertion that a despot “must live like a woman ensconced in the recesses of his house” and is unable “to rule others when he is not his own master” aligns with the findings of Herrup and Lewis that self-control was seen to be the most important trait in a king and a man. One could hardly be imagined being a good governor of others if one could not control one’s self; hence mirrors for princes and other books focused on training the nobility for public service stressed self-mastery above all other things. Thus, a king’s ability to juggle martial manliness with patience in hearing counsel, or his mitigation of justice with mercy, shows that his self-control has extended beyond the

63 Herrup, “The King’s Two Genders,” 499.
65 Lewis, Kingship and Masculinity, 9 and Herrup, “The King’s Two Genders,” 499.
control of himself and his body natural to his ability to control the body politic wisely and effectively.

Hal: from Counter-Masculinity to Hegemony

Self-control was seen to be the most important aspect of a king and man in Platonic, medieval, and early modern thought. Shakespeare’s portrayal of Hal’s evolution from dissolute young prince to model of measured masculinity in his Second Tetralogy is thus the most comprehensive engagement with masculinity and its various discourses in early modern literature. Whether he is read as earnestly reforming, going from prodigal youth to paragon of manhood, or more commonly now, read as having always been in control, Hal begins 1 Henry IV fully immersed in the counter-masculine world of the tavern and ends up, in a few short years, being named the heir to the French throne at the end of Henry V, ensuring that Lancastrian patriarchy will continue and expand its influence. He goes from being described as “young wanton and effeminate boy” (Richard II, 5.3.10) by his father to becoming the embodiment of English hegemonic masculinity in defeating the French and forcing a treaty.

Prince Hal’s growth into King Harry reveals remarkable insights into a range of early modern English masculinities. Hal provides a good model to investigate because he himself engages in a wide variety of behaviors. His immersion in counter-masculine behavior in Eastcheap by participating in youth and working-class cultures that invert the values of hegemonic masculinity illustrates how concerned he is with the hegemonic ideal even before he officially adopts those aristocratic values as his own. His wildness also suggests that he is acting properly as a youth, and, with time, he will assume his
proper place, going from sowing his oats to controlling his desires in a powerful act of self-mastery.\textsuperscript{66} Alexandra Shepard argues that normative early modern English masculinity defined itself in opposition to so-called deviant masculinities,\textsuperscript{67} but alternative, counter-\-, and complicit masculinities also defined themselves in relation to the hegemonic model.\textsuperscript{68}

Connell can help us explain Hal’s rebellion against the patriarchal masculinity he had grown up with. Henry’s usurpation and Hal’s now prescribed future as king, combined with his youthful need to define his masculine identity, “disable” Hal from achieving his full potential; so, he rejects his position as Prince of Wales and “vilely participates” in a youth culture that allows him to retaliate by inverting the values he has long been governed by. Because Hal undergoes a conflict in which he must reconcile the discourses circulating within himself, or to put it another way, because he has become identity-disabled, he has three options with which to deal with dominant masculinity:

“One is to redouble efforts to meet the hegemonic standards…Another is to reformulate the definition of masculinity, bringing it closer to what is now possible, though still pursuing masculine themes such as independence and control. The third is to reject hegemonic masculinity as a package.”\textsuperscript{69} While Connell formulates these differing responses to hegemonic masculinity as ways to act due to physical disability, his model applies to \textit{all} performances of masculinity, particularly since masculinity is seen to originate from one particular body, although it may in reality house many selves.

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\textsuperscript{66} Lewis, \textit{Kingship and Masculinity}, 8-9, echoes sentiments similar to those articulated by Shepard and even Roger Ascham in \textit{The Schoolmaster} in regards to the belief that youthful wildness often promised proper manhood in the future, but her focus on kingship illustrates why prior wildness in a male could be seen as a good thing—\textit{their} wildness becomes a foil to set off \textit{their} self-mastery.

\textsuperscript{67} Shepard, \textit{Meanings of Manhood}, 9.

\textsuperscript{68} These are Connell’s classifications in \textit{Masculinities}.

\textsuperscript{69} Connell, \textit{Masculinities}, 54.
Hal employs all three strategies. His first move, after his father’s usurpation, is to reject hegemonic masculinity and leave court. His father notes in Act 5 of Richard II that he has not seen Hal in three months. Having, however, become one of the Eastcheap crowd, Hal insists on his change in our first encounter with him in his first soliloquy, declaring that he will assume his princely part, thus “redoubl[ing] efforts to meet the hegemonic standards,” to borrow again from Connell. Although this is Hal’s stated goal in 1 Henry IV, he could be more accurately described as “reformulat[ing] the definition of masculinity,” as he tries to assert his independence and control with his friends at the Boar’s Head and avoids court for as long as possible, not wanting to negotiate his desires to be the man with social expectations that bind him to others, as Macbeth so uncomfortably does. In addition to being the soldier his father longs him to be and adopting new hegemonic standards, like his father’s political calculation, he learns from the underclass in Eastcheap and also exemplifies the residual chivalric masculinity of Hotspur. He attempts to surpass the examples of Falstaff, Hotspur, and his father by emulating all of them. Playing many men indicates just how manly he is. Rather than be reduced to his role as Prince of Wales, he can “be of all humours.”

2 Henry IV sees Hal, now that his father is sick, struggle with the realization of the impending burden of kingship. He has difficulty detaching himself from his friends and his relatively carefree existence, but he finally succeeds once he reduces himself to his role, although tailoring the role to his person. He makes the robes fit appropriately by fusing his kingly responsibility with the role-playing he has learned in the tavern. In Henry V, he plays his role superbly for the most part and seems to have successfully refused the king’s two bodies. However, he also refuses the doctrine of the king’s two
bodies, desiring for others to see him as worthy of love and admiration as a man, separable from his role as king. Thus, while he achieved the hegemonic ideal while also catering to his personality in *2 Henry IV*, it seems that in *Henry V* he feels the robes to be too constricting, and, rather than reduce his body natural to be more effectively seen as representing the body politic, he desires, at times, to flip the equation, to have his body politic seem to flow naturally from his body natural; he not only happens to inhabit the position of king by happenstance, but his kingship derives naturally from his inherent superiority of character. Yet, Williams and Kate resist, and he must overwhelm them with his status, “breaking bad” with each of them in a show of dominance. Having achieved the hegemonic standard, he tries to expand its bounds to accommodate his private self when he realizes how inadequate it is at showing his manhood.
CHAPTER 1

“OF ALL HUMOURS”: HAL AND LIMITLESS MASCULINE POTENTIALITY IN

1 HENRY IV

The State of Hal Criticism

Since World War II, the bulk of criticism dealing with Shakespeare’s Second Tetralogy and its star, Prince Hal/Henry V, has concerned itself with analyzing how this set of plays represents the political thinking of the early modern period. E.M.W. Tillyard’s work argues that these plays propagated the “Tudor myth,” that the deposition of Richard II ruptured the God-given universal order, and that only after the purgation of the guilty parties could a divinely ordained monarchy (founded by Henry VII) establish stable rule. Subsequent scholars took issue with Tillyard’s belief that this conservative monarchism pervaded Elizabethan society top to bottom, pointing out that opposing views are dramatized in the plays themselves and highlighting the dangers of generalizing about a culture’s beliefs. The critical turn in Second Tetralogy criticism


(which we are largely still in) was inaugurated by Stephen Greenblatt’s essay, “Invisible Bullets,” which portrays Hal as a Machiavellian instrumentalizer unable to recognize this in himself as “monarchical power in England[’s]…moral authority rests upon a hypocrisy so deep that the hypocrites believe it.” Although Tillyard and Greenblatt’s arguments start from opposite sides of the political spectrum—Tillyard’s conservative acceptance of monarchy as divinely-sanctioned versus Greenblatt’s take that power, epitomized in the figure of Hal/Harry, utilizes the subversion it strives to contain—they (and those informed by their respective readings) operate from the premise that the characters involved in the drama are the effects of larger social forces.

While these interpretations are often compellingly argued, at their worst, they reduce the characters, particularly Hal/Harry, representations of real people, to products of power. While much of the post-New Historicist criticism on Hal remediates the Foucauldian schema employed by Greenblatt, many critics do not effectively separate themselves from this critical tradition enough to postulate that Hal is a “conscious, thinking subject” capable of acting in ways not imposed on him by some irresistible, unchanging “Power.” Raymond Williams’ dynamic version of Marxist ideology, it seems, jumps out the window when Prince Hal enters the room. Many critics, for all their criticism of Tillyard, have seemed to ignore that power is not monolithic and that, in the dialectical relationship between individual and society, even seemingly pointless


“subversion,” overwhelmed by dominant culture, leaves strands of its DNA in societal structures, allowing for all sorts of mutations in the future. Containment is never total.

While some recent critics offer useful counters to the Marxist narratives of Hal/Harry’s reduction by political power and his subsequent production of it, striving to uncover an authentic private Hal, some of their rationalizations for his behavior miss the mark: “Henry's fault is not ‘juggling’ hypocrisy, but an apocalyptic idealism that is incapable of doubting its own validity” (emphasis added).76 Similarly, Tom McAlindon believes that “[Hal’s] exuberant humor… distances the practical joke on Francis from the kind of sinister cruelty which ‘Invisible Bullets’ imputes to it” and that “only a determinedly humorless response could produce [that] interpretation of the scene.”77 McAlindon’s essay correctly critiques the reductiveness of Greenblatt’s treatment of Hal, particularly faulting Greenblatt’s argument’s dependence upon analogy, but McAlindon’s own version of Hal seems naïve, often taking Hal’s word as the uncomplicated and true assessment for his words and actions. Each extreme of reading Hal, either as Machiavellian powermonger or as rebellious youth making right, as Norman Rabkin says, “persuasive as it is, is reductive, requiring that we exclude too much to hold it.”78 Rabkin pointed out the failure to reconcile these two incompatible yet coherent descriptions of Hal over forty years ago, and yet there is still the tendency to treat Hal as one-dimensional.

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The scholarly reductiveness of Hal’s character is driven in part by the tendency in literary studies to define subjects based on their “position” on a “grid” of “systemic structurings,” resulting in a “subject without subjectivism: a subject constructed by external mechanisms.”\(^{79}\) Drawing on Foucauldian poststructuralism, many academics frequently reduce individuals to the sums of the intersections of their identity categories, reducing people (both real and fictional) to social effects. Demographic information becomes predictive of human behavior. In light of Marxist theory, critics who define characters by their position on a grid constructed of different entanglements tend to be blind to characters’ capacity to move between and through different points of convergence,\(^{80}\) or, to put it another way, they have difficulty conceiving of the character as a “thinking, speaking subject.”\(^{81}\) Understandably, it can be difficult to argue that a character is an amalgam of competing, conflicting impulses and socially acceptable behaviors when trying to prove a logically coherent thesis. Several recent cultural histories, however, acknowledge the reality of masculinity’s multiplicity, describing the competing and conflicting discourses and behaviors available to medieval and early modern men. Rather than oversimplify Foucault to argue that freedom and choice are illusory, these scholars take the dynamic approach to Marxist theory as outlined by Raymond Williams.\(^{82}\)

Even the most nuanced discussions of Hal’s prodigality and reformation discuss the logic underpinning both his dissembling and its ramifications but never ask why he

dissembles in the first place.\textsuperscript{83} These readings often take his “being” for granted. If they see him as changing and becoming, they do not suggest what internal struggles Hal deals with. Those who do notice his inner turmoil tend to focus on King Harry’s concern over his culpability in waging war on France in \textit{Henry V}\textsuperscript{84} or inheriting an unlineal throne. But what causes him to “play” the prodigal in the first place? What comprises Hal’s individuality at the start of the Second Tetralogy? What conflicts afflict him? Who is he?

Traditional poststructural or Marxist theory can only take us so far in answering these questions. Psychological criticism, an overlooked strand of the critical tradition about this quartet of plays, reveals how Hal negotiates (consciously and unconsciously) his web of social entanglements and manages the various and competing cultural discourses that shape him. While psychoanalytic arguments investigating early modern drama’s “being shaped by the politics of narrative convention and the constraints of an historically constructed cultural unconscious”\textsuperscript{85} are useful, they tend to ignore the individual in order to express truths about the cultural psyche. I want to use a psychological model based on the practice of Ernst Kris, particularly his essay “Prince


Hal’s Conflict,” which catalogues the inconsistencies in the depiction of the prince, something many often ignore. Kris argues, among other things, that Hal heads to Eastcheap as a way to dissociate himself from treason and regicide (and those same impulses that he feels towards his father); claims it is Henry V’s “political shrewdness or self-deception which prompts the King to pose the question about whether he can rightfully claim the throne of France” (emphasis added); and asserts that “ambiguities and schisms of motivation are characteristic of the King.”

Rather than seeing Hal/Harry as either a duck or rabbit, Kris astutely assesses Hal/Harry as being thoroughly conflicted.

As I indicated in the introduction, I follow Hugh Grady in understanding that Shakespearean characters can be “disinterpellated” through various upheavals in the social order or in their lives—any crisis that causes them to lose their sense of identity. I differ from Grady, however, in highlighting that identity is always gendered. I see Hal, in trying to prove his agency and perform his manhood, as re-narrativizing his prior riot. Pre-deposition, Hal would have certainly been influenced by the competing and contradictory discourses of masculinity that would have been circulating, as would have any other male. However, his father’s usurpation and regicide of Richard becomes the catalyst of his disinterpellation, causing Hal to question his masculine self due to these contradictory dictates being set into conflict with each other. However, rather than being free to define himself as a man, his life at court hamstrings his ability to define himself on his own terms, particularly because of his youth. Thus, he seeks out a counter-masculine identity in Eastcheap available to him as a teenager. By the beginning of 1 Henry IV,

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87 Kris, “Prince’s Hal’s Conflict,” 158-9, 161.
88 Rabkin, “Rabbits, Ducks, and Henry V.”
however, he has reconciled himself to achievement of the hegemonic masculinity of court, and thus claims in his soliloquy that his real “wildness”—which he had undertaken to distance himself from those myriad troubles—is in fact an act and the method by which he will better satisfy his future responsibilities as man and king.

A Sea of Competing Discourses.

Returning to the question of Hal, I want to offer a model of agency informed by Brian Massumi and others that recognizes that individuals can find a certain amount of freedom despite their overlapping social responsibilities and expectations, that their conflictedness can result in seemingly contradictory actions by the same person, and that an individual has a repertoire of behaviors to draw on that are not always consistent. This model could best be summarized by Lise Nelson’s review of Paul Smith’s *Discerning the Subject*, that “[sees] [agency] as a disturbance in *self-certitude*” (emphasis added). Nelson continues, “How individual…subjects negotiate multiple and contradictory discourses…is an inherently unstable and partial process. Moreover, although this negotiation, acceptance, or struggle may be conscious, it is never *transparent* because it is always inflected by the unconscious, by repressed desire and difference.”

This model acknowledges the myriad entanglements individual subjects must deal with while also allowing room for them to “choose” how to “do identity.” Particularly important is this model’s accommodation of psychology—while subjects might be conscious of “doing identity,” their being shaped by both conscious and unconscious influences impedes full awareness of their motivations. While some actions will seemingly be reactions to specific events, there is a whole history of which the individual remains unaware. Thus,

certain behaviors might respond to competing social dictates but could also be responses to past experiences, particularly those dealing with friends or family members.

My approach, then, will draw from the Marxist and poststructurally-informed criticism of the last three decades of Hal criticism and recent social histories as well as the psychological approach undertaken by Kris in order to show how Hal’s myriad conflicts result from his feelings of instability (the “disturbance in self-certitude”) caused by his father’s usurpation and precipitate his need to “show more goodly” (1.2.204) by performing an integrated masculinity for his audience. I want to present a Hal, who, though bound by social expectations in his role as Prince of Wales, styles himself as a Machiavellian schemer in part to resolve his ambivalence toward the great responsibilities that have been thrust upon him and the father who so burdens him. Hal is not some unspotted ego ideal that simply wills or acts and receives what he desires; he is burdened both socially and domestically. While he reproduces the aristocratic assumptions he was brought up with and inherits his father’s guilt, he also studies men’s behavior and chooses to fraternize with the underclass. Hal is a character who changes over the course of three plays and performs different versions of masculinity rather than one who merely unfolds his manly essence as though he had sprouted fully formed from Shakespeare’s head. He ultimately conforms to the demands of his social position but remains adept enough to tailor his kingly robe to fit his body natural.

Because masculinity is a performance that must be approved of by other men—real and/or imagined—and because it is a performance that grants certain privileges and powers to successful practitioners, it is no wonder that a youth becoming a man in the

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90 And, if it were not obvious from the lengthy treatment of Macbeth in the introduction, I am also greatly indebted to Harry Berger, Jr. for the way I read Shakespeare.
midst of social turmoil would struggle to solidify his identity for himself. While several
discourses of thought and behavior regarding masculinity circulate at all times, Henry’s
deposition of Richard, mirroring the clash between the values of feudal loyalty and
“affective individualism,” would further contribute to Hal’s difficulty in performing a
consistent and integrated manhood.

Although Hal is a medieval prince who lived two centuries before Shakespeare,
Shakespeare uses his story to investigate the tensions in his own society. Lawrence Stone
argues that “the critical change” between the medieval and modern value systems “is that
from distance, deference and patriarchy to…affective individualism.” Stone continues,
“The ideal of a society in which every man had his place and stayed in it was breaking
down under a combination of material and ideological pressures…Humanist education
with its cult of heroes was teaching the upper classes that each man was an empire unto
himself, whose duty it was to strive for personal glory.” While Stone describes the
“change” in value systems as a transition, value systems never fully die out but may lie
dormant, still available to be claimed or to inform emergent and newly dominant
discourses. The change he describes is not of medieval values passing away as modern
values take hold but medieval values *residuating* while modern values *emerge*. They still
would have coexisted in culture at large and inside the psyche of the individual who has
internalized the “grid.” Other scholars, focusing on Shakespearean literature, have agreed
with Stone’s assessment, writing “chivalry was giving place to realpolitik”—an older
style of masculinity giving way to a newer style.

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1987), 360, quoted in David Carnegie, “‘So the Falklands, So Agincourt. ‘‘Fuck the frogs’’: Michael
The shift in a patriarchal society’s hegemonic norms would entail a shift in the expectations regarding masculine behavior, as the political and gender orders mirror each other. The residual feudal norms of masculinity would consider loyalty and subservience to one’s lord as the pinnacle of masculinity for most men. Derek Neal’s work shows that medieval men were granted the status of “men” in their just dealings with the members of their peer group. However, the emergence of acquisitive masculinity, a mode of masculinity predicated upon gaining as much honor, power, property, etc. for one’s self, prioritized individual accomplishment (rather than inheritance or social bonds) and attainment of a man’s individual desire over faithfulness to his peer group.

Related to the tension between socially-defined and individualistic patriarchy described above, the English Renaissance is often portrayed as “a period in which the attempt is made to weld together two distinct systems of value.” Ruth Kelso writes, “The Christian virtues of faith, hope, charity, and humility were more or less perfunctorily added to the pagan virtues, but with small effort to reconcile inconsistencies, and indeed often with no apparent consciousness that such inconsistencies existed.” In general, men at the time abided by both codes and were

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95 See Neal, *The Masculine Self.*

96 My coinage, largely stolen conceptually from Lawrence Stone’s “affective individualism.” My use of the term tries to stress that early modern agency (gendered masculine, of course) no longer defined itself based on one’s family ties or other social bonds but what one could gain for oneself. Inheriting, after all, is not as masculine as earning.


usually unaware of their contradictions. However, when conflict did arise for men navigating these competing value systems, it originated in whether to privilege an internally or externally-directed ethics. Christian values oftentimes did not correspond to one’s honor obligations, as moral rectitude privileged by Christian humanism might contradict precepts from an older value system that stressed loyalty to one’s peers or seeking satisfaction for some slight. The clash in values between feudal and modern masculinity is similar to the clash between Christian and pagan value systems; the desires of the individual conflict with the desires of the social group.

While both men and women would have been subject to competing and conflicting social imperatives on their gendered behavior, a young nobleman like Hal would be under more stress due to his social position as a noble, whose identity was based on honor and military service. Robin Headlam Wells observes that “for the Renaissance the heroic ideal is essentially masculine” and consisted of “courage, physical strength, prowess in battle, manly honour, defiance of fortune,” illustrating that although the aristocracy’s primary function had shifted from war to diplomacy, they still prioritized the residual form of masculinity, presumably because warfare is a more demonstrative performance of one’s manhood. Thus, residual medieval modes of aristocratic masculinity were important to men aspiring to hegemonic masculinity in the early modern period. Although we often point to Bolingbroke’s usurpation of the throne in the Second Tetralogy to illustrate the Early Modern era’s transition from the medieval

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notes the existence of two separate and co-existing modes of behavior that men often both ascribed to: “the men of the 16th century had available to them two integrated systems of ethics, two separate ideologies, which, as it turned out, were maintained almost on an equal footing. If it was a sacred duty to fulfill one’s religious obligations, it was also a sacred duty to fulfill the ethical obligations which stemmed from the code of honor” (3).

99 See Wells, Shakespeare on Masculinity, Watson, Renaissance Concept of Honor, Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy, and Armon, Masculine Virtue among others.

100 Wells, Shakespeare on Masculinity, 2.
values of loyalty and warfare to the modern values of acquisition and political
calculation, we see both coexisting in this time period and in Shakespeare’s plays. Even
Castiglione argued that the courtier should foremost be of use to his prince militarily.\textsuperscript{101}

At the same time, the largely humanistic education needed by the ideal courtier
signifies a shift in expectations, as the nobility undergoes the transition from “defense to
display.”\textsuperscript{102} As is now commonly argued, the nobility had to negotiate the change from a
decentralized, feudal society to a burgeoning, centrally-organized nation-state.\textsuperscript{103}
Christian humanists and authors writing conduct books for the privileged classes “sought
to define manhood in broadly patriarchal terms of discretion, reason, moderation, self-
sufficiency, strength, self-control, and honest respectability,”\textsuperscript{104} perhaps best exemplified
by the Erasmian precepts of The Education of a Christian Prince. Yet despite the new
emphasis on diplomacy in Shakespeare’s time, Elizabeth I and James I struggled with the
war parties in their courts, those brought up with the expectations that warfare proved
their manliness and worth, even as the military ethos ostensibly violated their religious
faith.

The tension between displaying masculinity through warfare, on the one hand,
and the emerging imperatives to exercise reason and prudence in conducting affairs of
state, on the other, highlights the tension between political reality and Christian

\textsuperscript{101} Baldesar Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier, ed. Daniel Javitch (New York: W.W. Norton &
\textsuperscript{102} Armon, Masculine Virtue, 37
\textsuperscript{103} See Armon, Masculine Virtue, Wells, Shakespeare on Masculinity, and Stone, The Crisis of the
Aristocracy among others.
\textsuperscript{104} Shepard, Meanings of Manhood, 9. Shepard continues, “Especially given their own inherent
contradictions, conduct books merely articulated strands of identity which might be selectively invoked
rather than a comprehensive set of morals for internalization. Men primarily sought validation of their
manhood from each other, and the responses of peer groups, superiors, and subordinates were arguably far
more influential than the paper images constructed by moralists, however much they chimed or clashed
with particular contexts and circumstances” (11).
humanism. While one could argue that the Second Tetralogy illustrates the disorder visited upon a society whose divinely anointed ruler has been dethroned, the plays also illustrate that religion, at best, is a collection of toothless moral prescriptions and at worst the mechanism for manipulating the masses for one’s own purposes. Machiavelli wrote that princes should *portray themselves* as acting according to Christian precepts but should *act* in the opposite manner; “[The prince] should appear all compassion, all honor, all humanity, all integrity, all religion. Nothing is more necessary than to seem to have this last virtue,” yet were a prince to “exercise them all the time, they are harmful to you; when you just seem to have them, they are useful.” Following St. Augustine, many theologians debated the question of a just war. Should princes follow Machiavelli’s advice, their shows of piety would gloss over their warmongering. Castiglione, the great theorizer of humanism who stressed diplomacy and well-roundedness for those in the king’s circle, could even write that “the principal and true profession of the Courtier must be that of arms...and let him be known among the others as bold, energetic, and faithful.” While princes had to publicly profess the pieties of the Christian faith, they had to make political calculations to consolidate power, oftentimes resorting to war when expedient. However much a king might worry himself over policy decisions, “domestic affairs will always be secure, as long as foreign policy is successful,” as Machiavelli observes. Given my arguments about kingship and masculinity, this double standard

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should come as no shock. Pacific faith can easily become a vehicle for self-aggrandizing violence. And, when in doubt, masculinity, the “essence” of proper kingship, can best be guaranteed through acts of domination rather than acts of patience and mortification.

The conflict between Christian pacifism and politically pragmatic warfare also mirrors that between the inner, private person and the exterior, demonstrable social self. Regardless of the specific codes of masculinity one might follow, men in the early modern era were obsessed with the idea of “honor.” C.B. Watson writes,

Honor, in one of its meanings, is an exclusively social virtue. Honor, in this sense, may refer to one’s reputation in the community, to one’s credit as a man of integrity, to the honors or rewards which are bestowed publicly as a testimony to one’s virtue, to the glory and fame which one acquires as the result of exceptional or heroic accomplishments, or to the good name which is gained when one consistently behaves in a fashion which wins the respect and esteem of one’s fellows.109

Honor, like masculinity, often thought of as something naturally inhering in a man or reflected in one’s actions, must be granted by others, hence Watson’s” terms: “reputation,” “glory,” “good name,” and “respect.”110 While a man might earn these accolades through his actions, these actions must be seen to be appraised. Because earning honor rewarded one with manhood, one had to perform one’s masculinity for others to win their approval for one’s performance. While these performances were based on the overlapping and often conflicting models of virtus and rectitude, they could guarantee a male manhood if they could be properly demonstrated to other men.

Yet, given the Christian faith that informed much of Renaissance thought, others like John Dod and Robert Cleaver prioritized God’s perception over public perception: “For men first look to the outward behavior, and hence descend to judge of the heart, but

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109 Watson, Renaissance Honor, 11.
110 For all intents and purposes, we could consider honor to be, not public recognition of one’s individual worth as Lawrence Stone states, but recognition of one’s successful performance of manhood.
God first approves the heart, and then the outward action.” While public honor depended on performing one’s masculine self for others (illustrating one’s essence by making it appear so to others), religious authorities thought these displays superficial, unnecessary, or antithetical to Christian values that privileged one’s private self, as one prioritizes what other people think versus what God sees. While much of the period’s literature argued over the priority of authenticity and appearance, Christian writers argued that any outward behavior should reflect inner character. Even so, many recognized that, in a social world, seeming is more important than being. There was yet another definition of honor at the time, influenced by Christian thinking. Watson, who describes the more prevalent definition of honor, akin to Lawrence Stone’s formulation that it was “public recognition of private worth,” also defines an internal version of honor as:

one’s private and personal judgment of one’s own actions, one’s inner conviction of innate moral rectitude. Honor, in other words, relates to self-esteem as much as to public approbation…It is possible that a man may paradoxically risk the loss of ‘honor’…in order to preserve his ‘honor.’

This definition of internally-directed honor specifically refers to a man’s flouting social expectations to adhere to some inner conviction. Watson’s portrayal of these two forms of honor implies that private honor is “inalienable,” while public honor is always contingent upon outside opinion, and thus, subject to gain or loss. I want to argue that this dynamic is more than unidirectional: a man could just as well decide to violate his personal standards of acceptable masculine behavior in order to satisfy social expectations and thus receive recognition of his manhood. While men and society

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113 Rather than foregoing public honor for private conviction, a man, pressured into acting in prescribed ways for greater social approbation, could just as easily lose self-esteem by compromising his
professed the supremacy of conduct described in behavior manuals often informed by Christianity, humanism, or both, men were ultimately more concerned with proving themselves to other men.\footnote{Usurpation, or How Hal Learned to Worry (Over His Masculine Identity)}

Usurpation, or How Hal Learned to Worry (Over His Masculine Identity)

While many men and their theatrical counterparts could sail this sea of conflicting behavioral dictates with relatively little trouble, generally through their lack of awareness, Hal’s struggles establishing his manhood stem from his father’s usurpation of the English crown. His father’s violent usurpation disrupts even the appearance of integrating conflicting religious and political structures, instead setting the various social expectations and discourses of masculinity at odds.

Had Henry not usurped the throne, Prince Hal would just be Hal, not expecting to accede to the throne. While he would have been groomed for his future duties as Duke of Lancaster, namely in being loyal to the throne and providing military service to the king, it seems he would be overwhelmed by his future responsibility for the whole kingdom and its integrity. Rather than being a nobleman who would mostly enjoy the fruits of his privilege privately, he is now forced to be the most public figure in the realm, tasked with considering others’ needs and desires. Furthermore, stanching the bleeding kingdom’s civil wounds would be an inconceivable burden for any heir to manage, let alone a teenager—the historical Hal was thirteen years old when his father assumed the throne—

\footnote{In a sense, this is what many critics of these plays suggest about Hal and what I hope to make more explicit—Hal tries to (re)define masculinity on his own terms but ultimately resorts to more commonly recognizable hegemonic strategies so that others may recognize his masculinity/kingliness. If a man’s private self dwindles to satisfy the expectations for his public self, as Grady, Ruiter, and others argue about Prince Hal in 2 Henry IV or King Harry in Henry V, Harry’s lack of interiority could be understood more as a defensive avoidance of this self-recognition and less as pure political pragmatism.\textsuperscript{114} Shepard, Meanings of Manhood, 11 and Derek Neal, Masculine Self, 7.}
who must also deal with his father’s crime: “Given the circumstances in which Henry IV had come to the throne, and the unprecedented rupture of the direct line of succession, it was all the more important for both him and his son to prove that, by their conduct, as much as their claim, they were rightful ruler and successor.”

Accordingly, his father’s return, seizure of the throne, and killing of his second cousin must also certainly have complicated Hal’s emotional state. For one, Holinshed records that Hal was with Richard in Ireland on the expedition that allowed his father to return from exile. While there, Richard knighted Hal “for some valiant acte that hee dyd, or some other fauourable respect, which the king bare to the lord Henry son to the Duke of Hereford.” Secondly, while Richard also knights nine or ten others, he publicly recognizes an adolescent boy’s worth, demonstrating to Hal that Richard regards him as a man, something his banished father is unable to do. In a sense, Richard could have been considered by Hal as a surrogate father, and his choice of the verbose and “effeminate” Falstaff could be Hal’s reclamation of a prior surrogate father figure. The medieval historian Katherine Lewis points out that Shakespeare, in writing his plays about Henry V, drew on two centuries of history and lore, and her scholarship grounds some of my intuitive suspicions with some historical basis. She writes, “Not much is known of Prince Henry's childhood but it seems that he did not see a great deal of his father, although this

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115 Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 68, writes, “While much of that role and its responsibilities was generic to any nobleman there was far more at stake in Henry's abilities as Prince of Wales than if he had simply been heir to the duke of Lancaster.” She continues, “The exploits of Prince Henry were part of the means by which Henry IV’s dynasty would ensure the good government which Richard II had not provided, and would do so in dashing martial style to boot.” Given the implications of this passage, reading these plays against the historical record further suggests and corroborates my assertion that Hal’s wildness is earnest retaliation against his father.

116 As stated earlier, Kris argues that Hal retreats from court to distance himself from his father’s crime.

was not in itself an uncommon occurrence for aristocratic children at the time. More specifically, [K.B.] McFarlane traced the roots of the later opposition between father and son in the prince’s esteem for Richard II.”\footnote{118 Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 72.} We will see some textual evidence of this in time, as I argue that Hal attempts to rewrite his line of inheritance. Yet regardless of how the historical or fictional Hal might have felt about his uncle, \textit{given that he was brought up in a feudal society to respect his father and his king, Hal must have felt torn loyalties between the father he should be loyal to and the king/surrogate father who has rewarded him, especially as his father’s accession doubly elicits his subservience in addition to Henry’s ouster of the man who most publicly recognizes Hal’s manliness.}

Hal must now, uncomfortably, be subservient to his father/king who has severed the logic underpinning the natural loyalty he owes to both figures.\footnote{119 Constance C. Hunt, “The Origins of National Identity,” 135, writes, “The political order set in motion by Henry IV disturbs both the political and familial order, especially the hierarchical relation between father and son.”} As the gender and political orders mirror each other, the disturbance Henry causes in deposing Richard becomes not just a political issue but unsettles notions of what constitutes hegemonic masculinity. Moreover, the political order of medieval England propagated the notion of “the king’s two bodies,” having transferred the concept “that the Church, and Christian society in general was a ‘\textit{corpus mysticum} the head of which is Christ,’” “from the theological sphere to that of the state the head of which is the king.”\footnote{120 Ernst. H. Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 15.} However much the indivisibility of the bodies natural and politic were insisted upon, Richard’s deposition ultimately destroys the logic of their congruence. \footnote{121 Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, 21, writes, “As the universe was ordered in a great chain of being, so the nation was regulated by obedience to a hierarchy of superiors leading up to the king…and so the family was ordered by obedience of wife and children to the pater familias…peace and order could only}
Henry’s rebellion has demonstrated that there is no divinity that protects a king. Henry must somehow establish himself as the rightful authority of a kingdom whose rightful monarch he deposed. Although Richard initially cleaves the “natural order” of filial succession by confiscating Bolingbroke’s inheritance from John of Gaunt, once Bolingbroke turns the tables and usurps Richard’s place, the grievous sin of power’s delegitimizing itself transfers from Richard II to Henry IV. Richard, it seems, understands that he needs to somehow enlarge himself to seem more kingly; however, his strategy is to rule by whim and make himself larger by inflating himself with florid verbosity. Richard’s reign, thus, has struck the natural order a potentially fatal blow. Yet despite Richard’s tyranny and perhaps greater role in severing the king’s two bodies, Henry’s role in Richard’s murder and the ensuing civil strife are far more apparent—Richard is deposed and dead, after all. Because he is dead, Richard can later be adopted as a saintly figure for those bristling under Henry’s rule to rally around, thereby absolving him of all guilt. While Richard is more than complicit in his overthrow, the sin of instigating disorder gets solely attributed to Henry by most interested parties. Hal, somehow, must pay fealty to a father and king considered responsible for undermining the very patriarchal system that requires his fealty.

be preserved by the maintenance of grades and distinctions and by relentless emphasis on the overriding need for subjection of the individual will to that of superior authority.” I would like to highlight that, according to this ana-logic, Henry’s deposition and killing of Richard disturbs the universal order, thus undermining any expectations he might have at his son being obedient to him. Henry’s usurpation and complicity in killing God’s representative on earth for personal achievement disturbs the “natural” orders concerning governance and filial loyalty, calling into question the very doctrine of monarchical inheritance itself.


Take Hereford’s rights away, and take from Time
His charters and his customary rights;
Let not tomorrow then ensue today;
Be not thyself, for how art thou a king
But by fair sequence and succession?
Hal’s greatest concern, then, consciously or unconsciously, is the burden to legitimize his father’s usurpation and to cleanse his family’s legacy from the sin of regicide.123 As Machiavelli writes, “hereditary states which have grown used to the family of their ruler are much less trouble to keep in hand than new ones are.”124 Of course, his father’s seizure of the throne not only makes England a “new state,” but because kingship was a quasi-mystical office, Henry has not only committed something unlawful but also has committed a sin. This is quite the predicament for a teenaged son to find himself in. While he benefits from the fruits of his father’s crimes, he must also redeem his father and his family name. His own reign must justify his father’s, rather than his reign succeeding naturally from his father’s. He must play the redemptive and cleansing Christ to his father’s “offending Adam,”125 absolving his father of arguably the greatest sin a man in a fallen world could commit.

Not only must he absolve his father’s crimes as a person, but in order to restore the family’s good name and legitimize not just his father’s reign but his own, he must, somehow, re-fuse the now two free-floating bodies of the king. To do this, he must meld two different styles of kingship and manhood—Richard’s and Henry’s. Jean Howard and Phyllis Rackin call Henry IV the “model of a self-made theatrical man,” observing that he “conceives his reign as a drama and theatrical performance as the basis of royal

123 Spencer, “Princes, Pirates, and Pigs,” 168. Spencer among others, sees Hal’s stated goal as outlined in his soliloquy “to restore legitimacy to the crown his father has usurped.”
124 Machiavelli, Prince, 4.
125 Henry V, 1.1.29. I would like to suggest that the proximity of “The breath no sooner left his father’s body” (25) to “Consideration like an angel came / And whipped th’offending Adam out of him” (28-9) in Canterbury’s speech suggests that Henry himself was the offending Adam. Given the multiple swappings of Henrys for each other, it seems to make sense here and supports Jonathan Crewe’s argument in “Reforming Prince Hal: The Sovereign Inheritor in ’2 Henry IV,’” Renaissance Drama New Series 21 (1990): 225-42. Crewe notes that that sovereign inheritance is guaranteed by the transference of wildness from one king to another.
authority.”

Although Bolingbroke in *Richard II* is noted for his taciturnity, he still often performs the humble subject in Richard’s presence, despite his real intentions, and certainly instructs Hal in how to properly play the king. This is in contrast to Richard’s theatricality, which, as Howard and Rackin remark, is “presented as a powerful expression of personal subjectivity.”

Drawing on Howard and Rackin’s assessment of the respective theatricalities of Richard and Henry, one whose theatricality only seems concerned with his interior person, while the other’s is concerned with the presentation of authoritative kingliness, we could understand Richard as embodying the king’s body natural and Henry as embodying the king’s body politic. Hal knows that the king cannot seem too impersonal, as his father does, particularly in his forgetting of his friends, nor can the king seem too self-involved. Just as at the Battle of Shrewsbury when Hal is visually seen as the mean between Hotspur and Falstaff, he is also the mean between two different masculine and kingly styles, Richard’s and Henry’s. Hal strives to humanize the impersonal force of the state.

And yet, he must not only purify his father but also follow in his footsteps and exceed his accomplishments. While the nobility had to adapt to changes in hegemonic masculine values, from “aristocratic ‘honour’” to “politically practical virtue,” from the values of inheritance and social obligation to those of private individual acquisition, they still had not quite lost the sense that lineage and blood outweighed individual action. Hal must show he is worthy of the legacy of forebears such as Edward III, the Black Prince, and John of Gaunt, and at the same time he must also illustrate his own

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126 Howard and Rackin, *Engendering a Nation*, 162.  
127 Howard and Rackin, 156.  
acquisitive masculinity in the mold of his father. While his father’s usurpation eventually causes social chaos and civil war, his overthrow of an anointed king in a sheer act of will is undeniably a demonstrable show of dominant acquisitive masculinity. Hal must both redeem his father and show himself his father’s son. He must both embrace and deny the deposition of Richard. Given the double bind in which Hal finds himself, he feels ambivalence toward Henry for receiving the privilege and burden of kingship. I will argue that this paternal ambivalence is perhaps the largest motivating factor for Hal’s actions, evident even in the kingly language of Henry V’s “Once more unto the breach” and St. Crispin’s Day speeches. King Harry emphasizes to the soldiers the goal to imitate their fathers and to prove their fathers’ paternity. The need to please and excel his father still pervades King Harry’s mentality.

Youth Culture vs. Patriarchal Control, the Allure of Eastcheap, and the Need to Re-narrativize

While much poststructuralist-inspired criticism often presents a fully developed Hal that solely desires controlling others, I assert that Hal wants to be seen as being in control, as being a man, a fully-formed masculine agent, because he is not. Given that the conflicting dictates of masculine behavior described above were hard to manage and negotiate among those who were unquestionably “men”—given their age, social position, marriage, and householding—a youth forging a masculine identity for himself must have been more fraught with difficulty as “age, more immediately perhaps than social class, structured this unstable and insecure world for both sexes.”

Youth were denied their status as men by those who most benefited from the patriarchal system that reserved

130 Neal, Masculine Self, 15.
competence and rule-making for those of a certain age, particularly as young men were expected to act impulsively. Although “the hot vigour of youth” was often praised, this behavior disqualified them from the full benefits of proper manhood, even while such youthful behavior suggested that they were on their way to becoming proper men in time. Roger Ascham regarded the ages of seventeen to twenty-seven as the wildest years of a male’s life, and most literature of the time considered one to achieve proper manhood between thirty and thirty-five years of age.

Thus, Hal needs to stage his control and independence to the audience to perform the manhood he lacks. Earlier, I argued that the possible responses to hegemonic masculinity outlined by Connell should extend from those who are physically disabled to include those who, for whatever reason, become psychically disabled from engaging in the hegemonic project, most likely through the process of disinterpellation. Hal, particularly in his soliloquy, claims participation in the hegemonic program he has become alienated from and that, as Ernst Kris and others have written, Hal has fled to disassociate himself from usurpation and regicide. Further, as I have argued, he wants

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132 Shepard, Meanings of Manhood, 56.
134 Roger Ascham, The Schoolmaster, ed. Lawrence Brian (Ithaca: Folger Shakespeare Library/Cornell University Press), 40, writes, “From seven to seventeen young gentlemen commonly be carefully enough brought up, but from seventeen to seven-and-twenty (the most dangerous time of all a man’s life and most slippery to stay well in) they have commonly the rein of all license in their own hand, and specially such as do live in the court,” seeming to lament their lack of close supervision. Many critics have discussed 1 Henry IV as Hal’s coming of age and see his playing the prodigal as the retreat from manly responsibility. However, the transition Hal undergoes from 1 to 2 Henry IV is from childhood to youth, not youth to manhood. His having to skip a step in development is yet another factor in the destabilization of his identity. Not only must he define himself as a male, he must define himself as a man before traditionally ready to do so.
135 It seems Henry reveals these motivations himself in Richard II 5.3.2, saying his son has been absent from court for three months.
to flee from the unimaginable burdens now placed upon him, legitimizing an “unlineal” throne, reestablishing the doctrine of the king’s two bodies, purifying his father while also emulating his father. Hal feels psychic disability in attaining hegemonic masculinity, so he makes himself *physically incapable* of attempting its achievement by his absence at court. He feels thoroughly burdened, so he asserts his agency via his retreat from court.

Being a youth, Hal still needs to assert his maleness and “chooses” to redefine it. Thus, he immerses himself in youth culture, what Alexandra Shepard describes as a counter-culture to traditional manhood:

> The most explicit counter-codes of manhood were expressed in the rites of youthful misrule...Young men contested patriarchal notions of manhood rooted in thrift, moderation, and self-control with a culture of excess. Youthful rioting, drinking, gambling, and sexual prowess was largely performed for and validated by their peers...fraternal bonds...facilitated young men's inversions of patriarchal norms.\(^{136}\)

By participating in youth culture, Hal creates his own social network, rather than be bound by the aristocracy he was born into. He also retreats from and retaliates against his father and the burdens facing him in becoming a proper man and king. Lastly, Hal’s class superiority gives him independence from and control over his friends. Were he to remain in court, he would have to reconcile his subservience to his king/father and the social bonds that tie him to the other nobles. His class status affords him distance to define his masculinity on his own terms while also eliciting the respect and admiration of his chosen “peers.” However much he enjoys their company, he still retains much of the class bias he has been inculcated with.

Despite exerting control over his Eastcheap friends, Hal worries about being perceived as in control. He asserts in his soliloquy that his feigned wildness will make

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him seem reformed\footnote{Lewis, \textit{Kingship and Masculinity}, 88-89, writes, “The fact that it would have served Henry's purposes to present himself as a new man lends weight to the contention that the story of his ‘conversion’ has its origins in his reign, especially when considered in relation to his reputation in the latter years of his father's life. Henry V needed to be seen to reform even if the reports of his behaviour were more or less manufactured. Indeed, the image of Henry as newly and suddenly embodying the ideal man and king, of him moving from rebellious to regulated masculinity, has all the more power and impact precisely because he had been so badly behaved (or was thought to have been)...it was all the more significant that Henry was seen to have experienced and given in to lust, but could now exercise restraint. The stories of his conversion highlight the extent to which this self-control was an achievement and recognized as such.”} but makes sure to emphasize that he does not need reforming in the first place. He wants others to see that his self-control arises from an act of will that speaks to his “natural” manly essence. Afraid of over-association with the tavern world, Hal re-narrativizes his retreat from patriarchal burdens as a ploy by which he may better fulfill them, glossing over the attractiveness of a world of play free from responsibility.

If we have some remaining doubts about the reality of Hal’s riot, his reported striking of the Lord Chief Justice suggests that Hal was indeed earnest in his youthful rebellion, however much he fictionalizes his past now. The Page first introduces the audience to the Lord Chief Justice in \textit{2 Henry IV}, describing him as “the nobleman that committed the Prince for striking him about Bardolph” (1.2.56-57). This, coupled with the Justice’s fear of reprisal once Harry becomes king, forces us to conclude that Hal struck the Lord Chief Justice for challenging his princely privilege, and that the Lord Chief Justice reasonably expects Hal’s vengeance. It might seem odd that Hal would strike an authority figure over Bardolph, but because “loyalty to a friend in a quarrel was a moral duty, regardless of the merits of the case”\footnote{Stone, \textit{Crisis of the Aristocracy}, 223-24.} and “because good servants not only extended but also reflected the social selves of their masters, good husbandry meant defending them not only from physical attack but also from defamation of character.”\footnote{Neal, \textit{The Masculine Self}, 87. Granted, Bardolph is not Hal’s servant, but given their difference in social position and Hal’s class arrogance, the analogy fits.} Thus, Hal defends Bardolph for two distinct reasons: one, because they are friends, and a
gentleman cannot brook any slight; two, because he is a youth and denied proper manhood, Hal must redefine householding to accord with his “residence” at the Boar’s Head; he must defend Bardolph out of “good husbandry” as he provides for Bardolph and as Bardolph is an extension of his social self. Yet, this impetuous act seems out of character for the Hal we see in 1 Henry IV, who professes the calculated nature of his prior prodigal self. But if we understand Hal’s striking of the Lord Chief Justice as taking place *before* the beginning 1 Henry IV, the chronology reveals that the Prince’s prodigality has some basis in fact.\(^{140}\)

Hal has experienced a change between striking the Lord Chief Justice and the beginning of 1 Henry IV. I would argue, however, that his change is not complete. As much as tries to convince the audience of his mastery, Hal announces his plan to reject counter-masculine tavern life *to himself* so that he might act out a new way of living. Hal, in speaking his detachment from his friends, contracts himself to the obligation of being the Prince of Wales, and, yet, buys a little more time in Eastcheap. Hal’s greatest asset is his ability to improvise, and, although he “has dissociated himself from the court that his father won by treason” and “turned to the tavern rather than…participate in regicide,”\(^ {141}\) he has, before the start of this play, reconciled himself to fulfilling his assigned social role and all that it entails, including making good his father’s reign, embracing hegemonic masculinity, and rejecting the world of the tavern and its counter-masculinity.

\(^{140}\) I argue that this striking of the Lord Chief Justice must take place before this play—it is not depicted here, and the Hal of 2 Henry IV is aloof, not only from court, but also his friends. It seems unlikely that post-Shrewsbury Hal, however much he has fallen back into old habits, would strike his father’s representative over Bardolph (or any matter for that matter). I doubt he would risk imprisonment, regardless of how much he still resents his father.  

\(^{141}\) Kris, “Prince Hal’s Conflict,” 158.
If he has undergone a change in character, he would still be eager to sanitize his potentially damaging past—one in which he strikes the Lord Chief Justice and gets imprisoned for his crime—for the sake of an audience. As I mentioned earlier, an “audience” denotes those that are on stage, those in the playhouse, and those imagined others internalized in the forms of social dictates or expectations of his peer group(s). All of Hal’s utterances, regardless of their publicity or privateness, therefore, are done for the sake of an audience, including and especially Hal himself. My close reading of Hal/Harry’s language (and other characters) follows Harry Berger, Jr., who posits that every dialogical speech act contains within it an element of monologue or soliloquy. And every monologue or soliloquy is dialogical because it represents the I that speaks as performing before the I that listens. Yet, if we premise that the I is the object created by its utterance as well as the subject that uses and commands it, we may find ourselves opening up a gap between what speakers do with their language…and what their language does with (or to, or for) them.142

Thus, a character speaking on stage becomes both an active speaker and a passive listener, trying to persuade others of its point of view while at the same time appraising its performance, a subject by virtue of speaking and an object by virtue of being spoken about. Regardless of how internally consistent a character might be, the act of speaking entails the act of listening. A speaker thus coaches others how to judge the speaker while also judging itself in how effectively it coaches. A character performs himself or herself for others, those present in body but also those who are present in thought or spirit. Thus, the speaker is not alone even in soliloquy, as he or she carries with them internalized others and must still present a face for themself as well as others they imagine, even if unconsciously. Thus, characters constantly rationalize themselves to themselves because they are afraid to know the unvarnished truth.

Hal declares his “expectations strategy” in his soliloquy because he himself is unsure of his motivations. The words he voices and rehearses for himself attempt to rationalize away his real motivations in having fled to Eastcheap, substituting grander ones that correspond to the hegemonic masculinity he aspires to. He longs to demonstrate to himself and (internalized) others that his masculine self was never conflicted by competing discourses, his father’s usurpation, or his youth, never having doubts about the proper way to portray himself. He must say this aloud to himself to convince himself of and contract himself to his consistent and integrated masculine identity.

Yet, I want to emphasize that Hal enjoys his time of play and unbounded potential, asserting freedom against familial constraints as “young people were asked to display neither creativity nor spontaneity” but “to observe the limits of household discipline, and steer clear of the alehouse and dancing green.” He enjoys the low-stakes bonding that youth culture, coupled with his superior social position, entails in his interactions with other men. His interactions with Falstaff and Poins earlier in 1.2 seem like good youthful masculine fraternizing.

However, the criticism regarding Hal as Machiavellian tends to view this camaraderie with cynicism. Despite the persuasiveness of the Machiavellian arguments, Hal’s seeming attraction to Eastcheap suggests there is more going on under the surface. David Ruiter has argued that Hal genuinely seeks connection with his Eastcheap friends, but that however much Hal desires their friendship, his socially instilled aristocratic condescension and personal desire for control always impose themselves. Hal has run from court partly because of his youth but also because he needs to escape the burdens

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143 Spiekerman, “The Education of Hal,” 121.
144 Griffiths, Youth and Authority, 70.
145 Ruiter, “Harry’s (In)human Face,” 69.
placed upon him by his social position. Or as Henry Peacham puts it: “for Majesty and
greatnesse cannot alwayes stand so bent, but that it must have the remission and
relaxation sometime to descend from the court to the cottage, which cannot choose but
give it the better taste and relish.”Interestingly, Peacham seems to understand the
overwhelming burdens placed on young aristocrats and assumes they will need to spend
time in the common world not only to “decompress” but to better appreciate the “taste
and relish” of the world they have left.

Just so, Hal never cleanses himself of his aristocratic assumptions and biases and,
as many educational manuals advise, keeps from being “intimate” with those beneath
him. The camaraderie of the tavern is the perfect retreat for Hal, fostering “bonds of
comradeship [that] facilitated bids for independence,” as opposed to the “intimate
friendship[s],” which ”imposed constraints of dependence and reciprocity.” While
seeking out a community, Hal desires one in which he is free from the constraints placed
on him by the court but one in which he can assert his masculine independence,
particularly one in which no one is of sufficient social standing to call him out for
inappropriate behavior or dictate his social performance. Hal, who will not appear in
court until scene 3.2, would certainly abhor the kinds of courtly performance Macbeth
and Duncan undertake with each other. Hal gets along with his cronies, but their
interaction must always be on his terms, those of a young aristocrat fleeing the courtly

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Yet, Peacham also desires, like his fellow educators, that noble youth have “virtuous companions” (224)
and advises against excessive drinking (229).
149 Poins does just this in 2 Henry IV, and this perhaps allows Hal to finally leave Eastcheap and
fully consign himself to the duties of rule. See the next chapter for an extended discussion of their
discussion.
world’s behavioral expectations for a world in which his social performance has no constraints and only receives plaudits.

The Soliloquy

While it is true that Hal has experienced a change between the striking of the Lord Chief Justice and the beginning of this play, his change is not complete. Hal, as much as he tries to convince the audience of his mastery, announces a plan to contract himself to a new way of living. Rather than reflecting some already present reality, Hal, in speaking his detachment from his Eastcheap life and friends, binds himself to the obligation of enacting a hegemonic masculinity, becoming king, and redeeming his father. As I have argued earlier, Hal does not reveal some inherent essence in voicing his soliloquy but visualizes a virtual self to imitate. Deborah Cameron writes, “Whereas sociolinguistics traditionally assumes that people talk the way they do because of who they (already) are, the postmodernist approach suggests that people are who they are because of (among other things) the way they talk,”150 and Hal himself, while perhaps revealing himself while soliloquizing, also rehearses the self he wants to be perceived as.

Because Hal distances himself from Falstaff and Poins by attempting to display his masculine self-control in a soliloquy “that sets the tone of all performances,”151 this passage may be read in a myriad of ways, as the Arden edition documents:

Hal may be rationalizing his prodigal behaviour, as Johnson thought: ‘a great mind offering excuses to itself’ (Johnson, 4.123); or revealing his ‘political calculation’ in using his tavern life as in Traversi, 58; or facing an uncomfortable truth about his life.152

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151 1 Henry IV, 162, n. 1.2.185-207.
152 1 Henry IV, 162, n. 185-207.
I argue that this soliloquy is multivalent, includes all of these resonances, and more. I also want to suggest that, while it provides an important understanding of the man Hal sets out to be, the soliloquy is more important for the fissures in Hal’s identity it reveals. Hal purports to display his true, untroubled masculine essence in this speech, but a closer look reveals that Hal has yet to accommodate and resolve all those contradictory and competing discourses and unasked for social burdens.

Hal addresses a “you” (185), seemingly directed at an outside other, and implies his distance and detachment. Yet, this address also ultimately reveals his ambivalence toward himself. Ostensibly, this “you,” coupled with the verb “know,” is separate and outside of himself, and his purported knowledge casts him as subject and the “you” as object. If Hal refers to his former boon companions whose values he has been imbued with while slumming, the “you” he addresses are not only his soon-to-be-rejected Eastcheap friends, but also that part of himself that has willfully and gladly taken on these values as his own. Hal instrumentalizes himself—at least a prior, and, I would argue, authentic, version of himself. In casting his prodigality as an act, he reduces and reifies his anxiety-ridden younger self into a practitioner of politically expedient theater. His self-knowledge, particularly of his past self, contains the potential danger in “uphold[ing] / The unyoked humour of your idleness” (185-6). However, his declaration of self-knowledge might also acknowledge the authenticity of his riot and his need for his Eastcheap holiday, thus giving him longer license to fleet the time in play. As I argue throughout, this speech is as much Hal’s performing his superiority and distance from those around him as it is a flattening of his past subjectivity, whose very roundness
reveals his potential vulnerability to the counter-masculine life and dependence on his social inferiors.

What Hal lacks in masculine substance and consistency, he makes up for in style, seemingly using the word “all” as an intensifier or single-syllable to pad his meter, needing the exact iambic pentameter in the first lines of this soliloquy to sound as orderly and controlled as he tries to portray himself. “All” further stresses his knowledge of the “you” but also indicates that the “you” is not limited to a certain individual or set of individuals and may include those who “idle” thoughts about his riot run unchecked. He will continue to play to (false) expectations concerning his behavior so that he shall “falsify men’s hopes” (201)—explicitly referring to the world of court, and specifically, his father. If his underclass friends and those at court are included in the “you” whose expectations he falsifies, he thus puts the courtiers and his father on the same level as Bardolph and Peto, suggesting his superiority over them and their ignorance of his true nature. As teenaged Prince of Wales who attempts to assert independence while filially and politically bound to his father, Hal’s conflating Eastcheap with the court allows him to take the dominant position and portray himself to the audience as such.153

However, his taking the dominant position calls for him to portray his old self, too, as inferior. “I know you all,” referring to himself, would suggest that he knows himself thoroughly. Although it could be argued that the redundancy of the redemption narrative in 1 and 2 Henry IV implies that he lacks the control he so desires, he asserts his mastery to himself to contract himself to his plan of reformation and, what I will term, “re-interpellation.” Re-interpellation is ultimately a strategy of defensive self-deception.

153 The conflation of the two arenas also anticipates my arguments about King Harry’s successful accession in 2 Henry IV and finally achieving the appropriate balance of court and tavern, authentic and theatrical, body natural and body politic.
Rather than coming to terms with the weakness and vulnerability that had him earnestly seek out Eastcheap as a refuge, Hal re-narrativizes his past, casting his flight to Eastcheap as a staged act. His prodigality becomes a political ploy to impress his audience when he lives up to the expectations of his social role. Hal styles himself as actively embracing his princely responsibilities rather than passively accepting them. He performs his masculine control rather than admit that he can be put upon.

Thus, if he is addressing his “former self,” his “unyoked humour” is precisely his prior behavior in Eastcheap, hanging out with Falstaff, Poins, and Bardolph, but also his more serious actions like striking the father surrogate the Lord Chief Justice. Although he purports that his playing along with the “unyoked humour of your idleness” is part of his plan to make himself more splendorous, it is also a copout for him to stay in his prior course: he “will awhile uphold” his life in Eastcheap. While stating he will reform, he allows himself an indefinite time in which to complete his task.

As if recognizing the indefinite timetable he has set for himself and its dangers, he spells outs his logic, for the audience’s sake and for himself, “Yet herein will I imitate the sun” (187). While it seems he will continue wasting his time away, he rationalizes that he will in fact be enhancing his royalty. His uttering “Yet herein” sounds mildly condescending and presents the royalty he strives for, added to clue in the audience (including his Boar’s head friends and his father), incapable of following along with the rationale. However, along with the condescension toward others in telegraphing his reasoning with a drawn out conjunction, there is perhaps a bit of over-protesting on Hal’s part. He spackles together his prodigality and reformation with the conjunction “yet herein,” suggesting that he might have trouble seeing it himself; he must make the
connection grammatically because there might not be a connection logically. He is still figuring out his plan, and the “yet herein” rationalizes continued dalliance in Eastcheap. Unready to face the twin burdens of kingship and Lancastrian legitimization and desirous to retaliate against his father via his unbecoming rebellion, Hal hides his true motivations from himself in reasoning that his continued dalliance will further enhance his royalty.

While Hal allows the possibility that he will hang out in Eastcheap longer than might be seemly, his declaration that he will “imitate the sun” (187) differentiates him from his surrogate father Falstaff, who claims to be one of “Diana’s foresters” (24). If Hal is the sun allowing the clouds to cover up his greatness, he gets to both be with Falstaff and above him at the same time. The sun image also harkens back to his uncle Richard’s favorite metaphor to describe his own divinely mandated authority, thus in a sense positioning himself as Richard’s rightful heir (“sun”/son). Though quite a popular metaphor at the time for royalty, the fact that this metaphor is intimately tied up in how Richard views his hereditary and divine right of kingship indicates that Hal, not only having acquired behavior, values, and rhetoric from his father, Falstaff, and Hotspur, has also taken on the language of the last legitimate king of England. Hal, in a sense, rewrites his paternity, allying himself to Richard and distancing himself from his father, illustrating to the audience the right he will have when he assumes the crown. He

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154 Kantorowicz, The King’s Two Bodies, 33, n. 18, points out “The ‘sunne arising out of the clouds’ was actually the banner borne by the Black Prince.” I suggest later in the Henry V chapter that, although Hal attempts to rewrite his paternity here and claims to inherit from an “anointed” king, he would much rather skip over the problematic reigns nearest to him, and place himself as a Black Prince surrogate, directly claiming from Edward III himself.

155 It is especially important to note that his guilt-ridden father later uses an unfortunate metaphor and compares himself to a “comet.”

156 Lewis, Kingship and Masculinity, 72, writes, “[K.B.] McFarlane traced the roots of the later opposition between father and son in the prince’s esteem for Richard II” and also notes that one of Henry V’s first acts as king was to re-inter Richard “to emphasize Henry V’s legitimacy by symbolically presenting himself as heir to Richard II” (73).
makes this rhetorical maneuver because he himself is troubled by his father’s usurpation. Otherwise, he would feel no need to make the evasion.

Although Hal distances himself from his father and rewrites his paternity, his lines about “playing holidays” and “nothing pleaseth but rare accidents” (197) illustrate how much he shares his father’s worldview. In distancing himself from Eastcheap and imagining himself as transcendent of his surroundings, he imitates his father’s contempt for the mob later voiced in the king’s 3.2 lecture to Hal. Hal’s class condescension throughout the Second Tetralogy, most evident in the episode with Francis, grants him psychic distance from those he is acquainted with while at the same time illustrating his fitness for future rule in sounding like Henry. Despite their contempt for commoners, Henry and Hal know that “the masses are always impressed by the superficial appearance of things, and by the outcome of an enterprise,” and so they play to those audience expectations—Henry, “By being seldom seen” (3.2.46), and Hal “By…falsify[ing] men’s hopes” (1.2.201). Thus, while Hal has counter-masculine motives in remaining in Eastcheap a little longer—distancing himself from his father’s crime and gaining some measure of control over his father through his retaliation—he also can imitate his father by conforming to and then transcending the commoners’ expectations of him.

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157 Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 75. Lewis relates some truly fascinating history, including in her book the text from a letter the Prince of Wales wrote to his followers after his father passed him over for a military assignment in France in favor of his younger brother. The historical prince rejects rumors that he was planning on staging a rebellion against his father “and that in this way I would seize his sceptre and other royal insignia on the grounds that my father and liege lord was living a life to which he had no proper title and which relied on tyrannical persuasion.” I would like to highlight that the prince himself acknowledges his father’s usurpation and might have mentioned it in this letter as a way to legitimize his own future reign. Acknowledging his father’s crime, even in a denial, is a way for the prince to wash the sin from off himself.

158 Of course, the mob aids Henry’s usurpation, thus perhaps accounting for his dismissal of it in trying to distance himself from the questionable act.

159 Machiavelli, *Prince*, 49.
As we have seen thus far, this soliloquy, often taken as evidence of Hal’s brazenly political nature, is riddled with Hal’s anxiety in effectively positioning himself as both young heir to the English throne while also not being limited to any particular role. And, when he veers toward too much familiarity with the underclass, his class condescension takes over, freeing him from the taint of commonness.

Hal’s fraught triangulation in articulating his subject position is crystallized in his statement that he will “pay the debt I never promised” (199). It is unsurprising that this line sometimes gets mistaken for a boast, given how much of the criticism regarding Prince Hal treats him as the archetypical calculating politician. Yet however much control Hal tries to convince himself and the audience he has in this situation, the burden of legitimizing his father’s crime of usurpation has to be immensely heavy, and one cannot help but hear Hal’s frustration and annoyance, and perhaps underneath those, his fear of failure, that he must pay off the debt of Richard’s deposition and death that has been thrust upon him. However, by asserting that he means to pay it, he transforms this burden into something he actively accepts. As with the rest of the soliloquy, Hal paints himself as readily choosing the life into which he has been interpellated. Given no choice in his future, he runs away, then casts his acceptance of his prescribed path as his own free action, “re-interpellating” himself.

Rather than expressing his inherent Machiavellianism in this soliloquy, Hal asserts his distance from and superiority to his acquaintances (including those at court who are mistaken about him) as well as the Hal who had first arrived in Eastcheap. In rationalizing his behavior to himself, Hal effectively reifies his older self into a dissolute prodigal. This self that he has overcome was itself a staged fiction, implying that he never
needed reforming in the first place. Hal spins the vacillations of his psychodrama as a political ploy to make his nobility, when he assumes it, more majestic. He re-narrativizes his prodigality, much like Falstaff would, but in the name of rule and order, making use of a past fault to pave the way for his staged reformation. As John Wilders writes, “it is doubtful whether Hal himself knows wholly what he is doing: his assurances, in his first soliloquy, that his profligacy is merely a sham, may be an attempt to justify his actions to himself.”

Rather than existing prior to the play as a whole cloth Machiavellian schemer, Hal, as much as he promises to betray his friends in this soliloquy, tries to convince himself that his prior prodigality had a practical political purpose. His distancing of himself from himself might thereby free him from dependency upon the Boar’s Head crew, and by setting himself apart and above from the common mass, he makes his riot more palatable to his princely self.

Now that Hal has accepted his future role as king, he can make his real, actual faults serve his purpose. If he “reforms” and becomes a “Christian king,” he can expect to not have his future motives questioned. He has enjoyed his time of riot, but now that he plans “to be more [him]self,” he re-narrativizes the riot of his madcap youth as an act from its outset. Hal tries to control us into believing he has always been in control. Hal’s reformation is not moral so much as it is filial/political, reforming from rebellious son to one who accepts the responsibilities that have been placed upon his shoulders. He stages his passive reception of the crown as a masterful and calculated plan to assertively accept it. Because he is so thoroughly bound by various familial, social, and political bonds, he casts what was an authentic rebellion into a “playing holiday” to persuade the audience

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that his desire to “play the coward with [his] indenture…and show it a fair pair of heels” (2.4.46-7) is his accepting his future as king and decathecting from his former friends.

**Eastcheap, the Illusion of Control, and the Continued Allure of Falstaff**

Hal, as his soliloquy indicates, has “self-banished” to Eastcheap for several reasons, but most particularly because he is intimidated by having to follow in his father’s ultra-masculine footsteps. His father, who now needs the support of his nobles to maintain his status as king, who must say in scene 1.3, “I will from henceforth be more myself” (5), who reveals his guilt continuously, was, in the past, man enough to dethrone the anointed king. Being Prince of Wales, heir to the throne, would surely elicit comparisons to his father, especially being named Henry himself. All his actions would have to speak to his fitness for the throne and at the same time be demonstrably as masculine or bold as usurping the throne. So, Hal both cannot live up to his father’s masculinity and, now that Henry is guilt-addled and unable to squash rebellion, cannot stand to be implicated by his father’s crime. A pot of ale seems a nice alternative.

The counter-masculine world offered by the Boar’s Head, arguably, would be a “natural” draw for a youth like Hal and would provide an escape from the burdens he has inherited in emulating and redeeming his father. Given that Hal needs to establish an independent masculinity, the Boar’s Head and its clientele would have been the perfect fit. As Shepard’s research on the period documents, “fraternal bonding was…a ‘safe’ form of male intimacy for its participants who were unhampered by accountability, and a vital part of young men’s claims to power located in practices antithetical to the
patriarchal values of thrift, order, and self-control.”\textsuperscript{161} Because these avenues are not available to him as a young prince, he seeks out those masculine behaviors that would have been available to him, particularly drinking, mischief, and verbal sparring. Thus, while intimate friendship with his social inferiors or involvement at court would “exact obligation,” putting himself in relationship with others, this form of youthful male bonding “offered opportunities for liberation.”\textsuperscript{162} Despite Hal’s defining his masculine identity in relating to others, he still needs to illustrate to his audience (himself primarily) that he is independent. So, though he depends upon the Eastcheap crowd, the bonding at the Boar’s Head involves much less commitment. He gets to experience community without responsibility, a desirable option for a burdened young man who knows he will one day be responsible for the English nation and perpetuating the Lancastrian line. Rather than be subjected to socially performing his indebtedness to others and his subservience to Henry as both son and subject, he seeks the social performance opportunities offered by a lower-class setting, in which he gets to be the dominant male figure. The playful, counter-masculine modes of male bonding in Eastcheap allow Hal, despite how strong his desire for real relationship is, to assert his superiority to his peers and independence from them, largely via his aristocratic condescension.

In addition to Hal’s forging himself independently away from court—“his striving for narcissistic completeness” and desire for “hegemonic masculinity,” “to appear defiantly separate and independent”\textsuperscript{163}—he enjoys the bonds of community without its obligations, exercises unchecked noble privilege, distances himself from his father, retaliates against his father’s imposition upon him, and finds a surrogate to shower him

\textsuperscript{161} Shepard, Meanings of Manhood, 125.
\textsuperscript{162} Shepard, 125.
\textsuperscript{163} Derek Neal, Masculine Self, 201.
with the affection he desires from his father and that he can abuse instead of his father. As much as Hal “plays the prodigal to distance and decontaminate himself from the dubious legitimacy of his father’s accession,” he also wants to retaliate against this father by keeping unseemly company, as “a godly father can leave behind him no monument more excellent than his sonne, the very lively Image of his maners, virtues, constancie, wisdome, and godlinesse” and “advice writers and moralists therefore cast the follies of youth in terms of an absence of self-control which they laboured to equate with unmanliness.” Thus, while retreating from his multiple burdens earnestly to forge a “true” unmediated masculinity, Hal resorts to a counter-masculinity that inverts hegemonic patriarchal values so that he can prove both to himself and others that he is a man, while, at the same time, retaliating against the burdens his father has placed upon him by performing a counter-masculinity his father would deem unmanly.

Epitomizing Hal’s need to express his manly independence while at the same time participating in homosocial bonding is his complex relationship with Falstaff, the perfect amalgamation of Hal’s fears and desires. Hal might very well be drawn to Falstaff as someone who “disinterpellated” himself from the world of hegemonic masculinity. While Eastcheap is the realm of counter-masculine working-class and youth culture, concerned with “conviviality” and “play,” Falstaff is the individual paragon of these

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166 Shepard, Meanings of Manhood, 28.
167 While Hugh Grady defines “disinterpellation” as a self’s passively being cut off from their “ideology-identity” and so needing to forge a new one in a now meaningless world, I use it here to indicate that, rather than external conflicts alienating Falstaff from his former hegemonic social self, it seems that he has extricated himself from his social responsibilities. Hal, who aspires to demonstrate a similar type of independence and seems to yearn for freedom from hegemonic expectations would necessarily find someone who has successfully freed themselves compelling. However, Falstaff might have struggled with burdens we are not privy to.
168 Griffiths, Youth and Authority, 120.
virtues. Although Hal has, seemingly, prior to the beginning of *1 Henry IV*, resolved himself to be the noble aristocrat, the part of him that bristles against the limitations of his social role must surely gravitate to the fat man. Further, Hal receives love and praise from a father figure he is superior to intellectually and socially. Norman Holland writes:

> Falstaff is a father in that he substitutes for Henry IV; he gratifies those wishes of Hal’s that cannot be gratified by his stuffy, businesslike real father…[,] serves as the projection of those wishes of Hal’s which are inconsistent with the ego ideal of the hero-king. Henry V[,] [a]nd …is also a generalized parent…who gratifies those same childish wishes of Hal’s that he himself embodies.169

Thus, Falstaff serves as a Swiss Army knife of psychological remedies, providing the support Hal feels is lacking from his father, as “there was a general psychological atmosphere of distance, manipulation, and deference” “in the sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century family.”170 Falstaff also serves as the scapegoat for Hal’s aggression toward his father, a living library of improvisational techniques and “sober” materialism, and a trash receptacle in which Hal can “leave” his prodigal self.171

Hal’s contrary feelings for his father, coupled with his transition from counter-masculinity to dominant manhood, play out in Hal’s relationship with Falstaff. Their relationship is based on playing an early modern version of “the dozens,” or a game of friendly oneupsmanship, and their interactions in scenes 1.2, 2.4, and 3.3 correspond to this model of male bonding. However, nothing much needs to necessarily change in their relationship, even after Hal has declared his reformation. Because “teasing”—

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170 Stone, *Family, Sex, and Marriage*, 88.
171 Neal, *Masculine Self*, 215, situates the difficulty and desire of securing paternal approval in its historical context: “Especially among elite social ranks, the parenting patterns of the Middle Ages would have made father’s approval a much more difficult thing to earn, much more loaded with significance…than was the case arguably either among lower ranks or in later eras, or with mother’s approval. An environment where affectionate fatherly contact was rare would not necessarily eliminate it as a factor. It would rather make all signs of father’s love, however small, even more prized and sought after, just as the subject would have even more feared father’s wrath.”
“conversational joking…directed at someone present”—can be used to bond, correct undesirable behavior in others, or to vent (and hide aggression), and because teasing is a “continuum,” “these constructs are not mutually exclusive and the boundaries are not always clear.” Thus, Hal can interact with Falstaff much as he always has, but may only change the tenor of his joking or the intent behind his jokes. If necessary, Hal can rationalize his violence as affection if he wants to convince himself he is a good person and friend; on the other hand, if he worries that he is too friendly and vulnerable with Falstaff, he can rationalize the affection implied in his teasing as violence. Teasing allows him to fulfill his need for fraternal bonding while also distancing himself and decathecting from the world of commoners and counter-masculinity. Falstaff becomes the punching bag Hal is too afraid and too reverent to make his father. Thus, Hal gets to inflict, oftentimes asked for, verbal and physical violence on Falstaff that he could not dare of committing against his natural father and king, all the while being able to rationalize it as jest or the counter-masculine fraternity of the tavern. Hal perhaps says similar things as he always has when “ribbing” Falstaff but may add a particular tone, stress, or gesture to accommodate friendliness or dominance. Yet, the form of play, as well as the masculine relation that underlies it, remains.

Having decided to reconcile himself to his “vocation,” Hal begins decathecting from Falstaff but hides this from his friends and himself due to the oftentimes combative style of homosocial bonding in Eastcheap. I want to reiterate, however, that although Hal

174 Boxer and Cortes-Conde, “From Bonding to Biting,” 280, write, “suprasegmentals and non-verbal features of the interaction are important cues that distinguish whether the tease is one that bonds, nips or bites.”
distances himself from his former ways by insisting on his superiority, he is not utterly
 detached from his Eastcheap friends. We hear both harsh criticism and genuine affection
 in the exchanges between Hal and Falstaff, regardless of Hal’s newly established
 hegemonic goals. Hal’s teasing, at least in 1 Henry IV, generally serves to bond,
 although, as we will see, it seems to nip more starting in Act 4. Certainly, by the end of 2
 Henry IV, Hal, having fully taken on his role as king, utilizes tavernesque teasing to full
 out bite Falstaff, rather than bonding or nipping.

The prank on Falstaff in scene 2.4, catching him in his lies about his deeds at
Gadshill, plays out like most male homosocial shenanigans. However, given Hal’s
soliloquy in 1.2 and his attempts to appear in control, we are called by Hal himself to
interpret his interactions with Falstaff in 2.4 differently. Does his soliloquy provide
preemptive cover for his affection for Falstaff and his outrageous lies, or is there
something more sinister at work here? The prank results in a literal “running” joke,
which, again, could be read as an early modern version of “playing the dozens.” Yet,
these teases at Falstaff could be nips meant to correct flaws in Falstaff’s character. Hal
suggests that the “argument” (272) for the “play extempore” (271) “shall be [Falstaff’s]
running away” (272-3), and, when Falstaff asks if Hal is afraid at the news of the growing
rebellion, Hal remarks, “Not a whit, i’faith. I lack some of thy ‘instinct’” (362), turning
Falstaff’s excuse for fleeing Gadshill (“The lion will not touch the true prince; instinct is
a great matter. I was now a coward on instinct” [263-4]) against him. This could all be
good-natured ribbing, but given the framing of the rest of the plays via the soliloquy,
framed by Hal himself, Hal may attempt to differentiate himself and seek independence
from his surrogate father.
Yet, do we not see Hal’s “slumming it” with the likes of Falstaff, the knight who has seemingly traded in his gun for a bottle of sack, as running away and playing the coward with his noble responsibilities? If so, then perhaps these jokes at Falstaff’s expense allow Hal to distance himself from his past self or that part of himself that wants to flee his responsibilities as courtier and soldier. Does he chide Falstaff to improve his own reputation with himself, to make himself seem manlier by displacing his cowardice onto Falstaff, which may all too uncomfortably fit? After all, self-rationalization and shifting blame are go-to maneuvers of the men in this play, particularly his father. Perhaps adopting these self-rationalizing behaviors is how Hal most shows himself to be a man? By taking on the verbal/rhetorical characteristics of Falstaff, he gets to both diminish his father(s) and be his father(s).

In the play extempore, Hal gets to be his father(s) and to best his father(s). Falstaff, playing Henry, echoes similar sentiments revealed in Hal’s soliloquy and anticipates the father to son counsel in scene 3.2. Falstaff’s using similar metaphors for the Boar’s Head’s patrons (“This pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth defile; so doth the company thou keepest” [402-04]) suggests that the tavern-goers are familiar with the stock metaphors Henry uses to describe them and have presumably heard these from Hal himself. It should come as no surprise that Hal has heard this lecture many times.

Critics have often puzzled over why Hal “deposes” Falstaff after he says, “And tell me now, though naughty varlet, tell me, where hast thou been this month?” (418-420). The Arden 3 edition glosses “naughty varlet” as “mischievous boy,” further adding, “seemingly this strikes a nerve, since it is here that Hal insists on trading roles and
playing his father.”\textsuperscript{175} However, it seems, given Hal’s response, “Dost thou speak like a king?” (421), Hal objects to Falstaff’s turn of phrase as not Henrician or kingly enough. While meaning 2c of “varlet” in the \textit{Oxford English Dictionary} comes after the publication of the play, it seems to apply here: “Use esp. of a child, but also \textit{humorously} or \textit{depreciatively} of an adult’s behavior.”\textsuperscript{176} Couple that with “varlet,” 2a, “a person of a low, mean, or knavish disposition; a knave, rogue, rascal” but “in later use freq. without serious implication of bad qualities,”\textsuperscript{177} and this epithet seems more playful and trivial than a serious indictment of Hal’s character. Hal objects to Falstaff’s performance because it is not adequately harsh in its judgment, both because it lacks verisimilitude—Henry will be much harsher—and because part of Hal realizes that, according to the hegemonic masculinity he has chosen to exchange for his counter-masculinity, he is something worse. So, while “varlet” was also at the same time period “employed as an abusive form of address,”\textsuperscript{178} the doubleness employed by Falstaff echoes his father’s sentiment but winks too much at the play involved in the play extempore, which is supposedly preparing Hal to meet his father at court the very next day.

Hal’s “deposing” of Falstaff is notable for a couple of reasons. First, Hal sounds much more like his father than Falstaff, showing, as many critics have argued, that Hal is

\textsuperscript{175} \textit{I Henry IV}, 231, n. 419.
the consummate actor and superior to his master Falstaff.\textsuperscript{179} “Ungracious boy” (433) at once sounds much more in line with his father’s rhetoric, suggesting that Hal’s Eastcheap holiday “profane[s]”\textsuperscript{180} the stature of his bloodline through his prodigality, and minimizes him as “boy” when he desires to be considered a man.\textsuperscript{181} Second, when he does depose Falstaff, he gets to act like his father. However, this is emulation rather than mere imitation; he exceeds his father by banishing misrule, while his father’s own act of usurpation resulted in the chaos now threatening to envelop England. Hal’s virtual usurpation establishes order while his father’s real usurpation destroys it. With Falstaff as surrogate for Henry, and Henry’s usurpation causing misrule in England, Hal’s deposition and rejection of Falstaff is a psychic deposition and rejection of Henry and the misrule (and the ensuing burdens now placed on Hal) he has now come to stand for. Further, in uttering “I do; I will” (2.4.468), portending his banishment of Falstaff (later characterized as what kills Falstaff), Hal gets to both be and kill his father.\textsuperscript{182}

Lastly, we should note how much Hal, in his attempts to distance himself from Falstaff and act more Bolingbrokian, sounds like Falstaff. The extended riff on Falstaff’s stomach would certainly be too playful for Henry’s use and signals that, immediately after having critiqued Falstaff’s use of language, Hal himself falls back into the comforts

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of their tavern-speak.\textsuperscript{183} As I have argued, the use of their common language could indicate Hal’s comfort in the tavern world, his wanting to soften his animosity toward Falstaff, or his smiling criticism of this man he is resolved to reject. His appositive list of insults could at once be carnivalesque fun while also being a way for Hal to focus on what he needs to reject in the fat man.

However, the insults are not the only echoes of Falstaffian language. Hal-as-Henry upbraids Falstaff-as-Hal, calling him “ungracious boy” (433) and declaring, “Thou art violently carried away from grace” (434). As I argued above, Hal’s language, at least at the beginning of his speaking role, better echoes his father’s sentiments than Falstaff’s; “ungracious boy” seems sterner than “naughty varlet.” Yet, Falstaff earlier in the play says to Hal, “for grace thou wilt have none…No, by my troth, not so much as will serve to be prologue to an egg and butter” (1.2.16-7, 19-20). Hal has picked up language Falstaff has used in jest and has molded it into the language of political power and aristocratic outrage. This instance stands as microcosm for my reading of these plays at large: Hal earnestly seeks refuge in Eastcheap to escape his responsibilities and burdens, but, once he reconciles himself to his future role as king, instrumentalizes people and what he has learned from them to become a better king. He does not change his behavior so much as he changes its tenor. In the play extempore, he combines the rhetoric of Falstaff with his father’s worldview, seeing how much mileage he can get out of deploying in a court setting techniques learned at the tavern.

Hal, in this scene, persuades us of his control, but it is out of his desire to exert it in the first place. His feelings of masculine independence, or lack thereof, stem from his inverse relationships with his two fathers. Norman Holland summarizes these various motivations in Hal’s ambivalence toward both Falstaff and his father:

Henry IV, stained as he himself is with regicide, does not constitute a satisfactory source of moral ideas, and Hal uses other moral standards to replace him, as in his delinquency or his trying on the crown by his father’s dying body. Falstaff becomes a father substitute on whom Hal can vent his contempt for a father. Falstaff behaves like a father at the same time that he gratifies Hal’s parricidal impulses…Hal’s use of his own moral standards to abuse his father(s) turns out to be a magnificently successful defense.  

Although Hal has tried to persuade us of his separation from Falstaff in his opening soliloquy, the general plot of their interaction in 2.4 illustrates how thoroughly ambivalent Hal is about Falstaff: he mock-mocks his outrageous lies and his cowardice in running away at Gadshill, deposes him, then rejects him in the play extempore, saves him from the sheriff, and picks his pocket, laughing at the excesses of Falstaff’s lifestyle. The scene ends with Hal’s saying, “I’ll procure this fat rogue a charge of foot, and I know his death will be a march of twelvescore. The money shall be paid back again with advantage” (531-4). His provision of Falstaff with a military command could be Hal backsliding, delaying the rejection he has promised. But, if we consider that it will be of foot and not cavalry, we see at best more homosocial pranking here and at worst a malicious gesture, making Falstaff walk. He couples the statement concerning Falstaff’s future fortunes with the comment that he will pay back the money from the robbery with interest. He has already paid back Falstaff in two senses—by enlarging his purse and by making him sweat. Hal pays back his surrogate father, as he does his biological father, with a gesture of ambivalence. Just as he will both “procure this fat rogue a charge of

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foot” and pay back the money from the robbery, he pays Henry back with his retaliation and retreat to Eastcheap, which will in turn teach him techniques to be a better king and earn him the populace’s love before his accession, rather than coercing their obedience after the fact.

What are we to make of Hal by the end of this scene? Given what he has asserted in his soliloquy, he has “chosen” to “re-interpellate” himself into the myriad social entanglements his position as Prince of Wales requires of him. His “re-interpellation” benefits from his “identification” with the “good lads of Eastcheap,” those whom he sought out in rejecting his social role, and the language lessons they have provided for him; coupled with his rhetorical training and Falstaff’s masterclass in absurd self-justifying rationalization, Hal has acquired the tools to become a more effective leader. While Hal uses them to expand his repertoire, he also has genuine affection for his cronies, regardless of his condescension or his noble privilege’s asserting itself. He rationalizes his affection for Falstaff and the others as verbal and psychic violence, in part because he desires to instrumentalize them and in part because he needs to make himself superior to them to satisfy his own needs in forging an independent masculinity. This decathexis from everything Eastcheap is inversely proportional to his re-interpellation into everything court-related. Due to his “education,” Hal possibly comprehends that the forms of his utterances need not change, but only their intent. Thus, he can rationalize to himself that his violence is affection or that his affection is violence. Just as he earnestly enacted his prodigality, seeking refuge from the dependence prescribed by court relations in the independence and anonymity of lower-class living, he improvises that he will cast this former authentic self as fictional prodigal, an outward performance with no interior
reality. Just so, his hard-edged jokes that used to connote good-natured homosocial fraternizing, filled with different intent, may sound the same but now have the air of menacing authority behind them.

Yet, let me try to rehabilitate Hal. First, rather than depict Hal’s interaction with the tapsters, Shakespeare only represents Hal’s relating the episode to Poins. Given that masculinity is socially performed for other’s approval, Hal perhaps embellishes his imperious attitude toward them after the fact. To sound like a proper nobleman, Hal must use condescending terms—referring to them as “loggerheads” (4) and “a leash of drawers (6-7)—in describing his interactions with them to someone closer to his social class. Again, if this is the case, Hal gets to satisfy his need for masculine approval (what he really desires from his father) while at the same time performing his masculine independence and noble superiority, adopting the condescending attitude his father holds regarding the underclass.

Second, Hal’s “I do; I will,” while imitating and surpassing his father in rooting out rebellion, also postpones his “reformation.” Given Hal’s reorientation toward the Boar’s Head before the play starts, if he were serious about undertaking his responsibilities, he would not be there in the first place. However, he finds comfort in postponing the burdens he must undertake as Prince of Wales, gets to experience masculine bonding in a manner that grants him full independence and manhood, retaliates against his father, and distances himself from his father’s political and spiritual troubles. Hal finds value in Eastcheap, however much he has asserted his decathexis from it or its people. When he could just let his “I do” hang in the air, banishing Falstaff in the guise of his father, he hears the present tense “I do” come from his lips and softens it to the future
tense “I will,” leaving him wiggle room to enjoy his time in the tavern and with Falstaff before he finally takes his leave. Even his questioning of Francis illustrates that the gifting of sugar has affected him. Although he uses that occasion to tease Francis, if Francis’ act had not resonated or registered at all with him, he would have neglected carrying out the prank.

While my close reading has focused at length on Hal’s mixed motivations and his thoroughly ambivalent attitudes toward his father figures, it is easy to see how critics and the audience around him believe he is in control. He has no social equals in Eastcheap. His pranks against Francis and Falstaff are successes, and he even manages to diminish the man he will emulate in the future, the other double for his father, Hotspur, by portraying him as a simple-minded parrot and equating him to Francis. He becomes king and deposes the king, imitating his father in both instances. We perceive just how much of the life of Eastcheap centers around his presence and is enriched by it. If we doubt that, we only need to look at the beginning of 3.3 when Falstaff asks, “Do I not dwindle” (2) and demands the liveliness and entertainment of “a bawdy song” (13). Falstaff himself becomes embroiled in a petty squabble about bar reckonings until Hal enters and gives him the opportunity to engage in more funny business.

Hal has sounded in control of himself, others, and his environment in this scene. To all onlookers who have not taken the time to do their close reading or to interpret his actions through the lens of his soliloquy, which asserts his control and, yet, ironically, performatively contradicts the possibility of such control, he seems fully consistent, a fun-loving prince slumming it. However, when we next see him in scene 3.2, we will see

185 Berger notes a similar dynamic in the real banishment in 2 Henry IV. See “The Prince’s Dog,” 42.
how he still must earn respectability and true manhood, as his father still treats him, rightfully, as a boy.

Courting Approval

Falstaff’s telling Hal that he “must to court in the morning” (2.4.325-6, emphasis added) indicates that he will be moving from this carefree, anarchic utopian world of alternative masculinities to a highly hierarchical one in which he is doubly subservient to Henry as son and as subject. Not only that, while Hal has willfully sought out refuge in Eastcheap, he gets commanded to go to court. To be sure, not everyone is equal in Eastcheap—the drawers are after all subject to command—and Falstaff “reigns” there as the “lord of misrule.” While “the tavern is a pivotal locale in the Henry IV plays” as it is “the place of liberty and experimentation where [Hal] escapes from his princely responsibilities to fleet the time in play-acting, jokes, and revelry,” courtly performance is dependent upon playing rigid social roles and upholding the masculinities of everyone else. Hal enjoys the freedom of this fluid world of commodity and exchange where every man and woman, to some degree, rules themselves. Yet, Hal, who desires sovereignty and independence even while defining his masculinity in relation to others, can elicit a “pardon me, my lord” (2.4.493) from the Sheriff who has tracked Falstaff to the Boar’s Head; thus, while existing in a world ostensibly of equals, Hal enjoys the full perks of his class status without any of the burdens that accompany it.

As absentee prince and son Hal is doubly bound by the command to see his father. As I have argued, these subservient subject positions, plus the burden of redeeming his father, cause Hal to flee to the anarchic utopia that is Eastcheap. However, it is not only

186 Howard and Rackin, Engendering a Nation, 175.
the mere burden of Hal’s subject positions that cause him to banish himself from court, but also the elaborate game of propping up the masculinity of others in public. Henry, although clearly directing Hal’s responses in this scene, as I will show, is nevertheless not fully in control of his own masculine performance. He often allows his guilt over his usurpation and Richard’s murder to come to the surface. These fissures in Henry’s identity reveal themselves throughout the lecture to his son, particularly in his employing unfortunate figures of speech and analogies. These slips reveal Henry’s unassuageable guilt and his immense struggle to present himself in a proper kingly fashion. In presenting an alternately commanding and guilty self, Henry must have his son not only redeem his crime in the future but deliver Henry from the negative consequences of his fractured masculinity in the present. While Duncan abases himself before Macbeth ultimately to be granted continued subservience and assurance of his kingly persona, Henry performs his guilt before his heir apparent, risking Hal’s further resentment toward the burden he must carry. Henry’s unconscious acknowledgment of his guilt proves to Hal just how hard his job will be in redeeming his father and establishing his own legacy.

Henry’s first words to Hal indicate that Henry sees his son as God’s “revengement and scourge for me” (3.2.7). Henry is almost conscious of his guilt. While voicing generic fatherly disapproval of his son’s behavior, Henry has unwittingly hinted that crimes he has committed need punishing.\(^\text{187}\) Hal’s (partly) “innocent” natural teenage rebellion becomes painted as God’s punishing Henry’s crimes, which he can only obliquely refer to. I argued earlier that Lady Macbeth upbraids Macbeth, not for his guilt, but for his actions.

\[^{187}\text{Berger, Making Trifles of Terrors, xix-xx. Essentially, characters intuit that they are guilty and desire punishment. However, rather than acknowledge their guilt, they provoke others into meting out the justice they feel they need, while also allowing themselves to play the victim. See Berger’s extended discussion of the “victim’s discourse” as regards King Lear (34-49).}\]
but for letting his guilt cause him to perform masculine insecurity before others.

Similarly, Henry, in lecturing his son about appropriate kingly behavior, undermines himself by revealing his insecurity fostered by his guilt. Henry’s opening salvo illustrates that Henry’s kingliness has been compromised already.

Further, Henry’s rhetoric often subordinates Hal’s natural place as son to his inherited role as prince. The domestic affiliations between Henry and Hal, given their occupation of the throne, necessarily become politicized. Although Hal rankles at this now, he will later effectively mold his private personal self to fit his public role. While Henry conflates public and private, domestic and political, particularly in his relationship with Hal, throughout his chastisement of his son, the king fails to keep his private and his public selves unified, unwittingly illustrating how much of his seemingly political troubles stem from private issues, the troubles of his body natural disturbing the body politic.

Henry contorts Hal’s behavior as punishment for his own “mistreadings,” yet stops short of naming his crimes, as if he has no recollection of the “displeasing service” (5) he has committed. While one could argue this is the typical self-rationalizing strategy employed by all nobles and Falstaff in this play, Henry’s evasion belies itself due to the rhetoric employed, “revengement and scourge.” We should also note that his verb tenses—God will punish him in the future for unforgotten actions he committed in the past—might inspire or influence Hal’s strategy of reifying his past self as prodigal. To distance himself from his crimes, Henry places them in the past, as if his deposition and illegal assumption of the throne are a one-time act and not something he constantly lives every second he is king. Saying “I know not whether God will have it so” also places the
burden on Hal—Hal will punish Henry by being a bad king—allowing Henry to further overlook his obvious crime.

If Hal picks up on a fraction of Henry’s guilt and projection onto Hal, it clarifies Hal’s unconscious urge to retaliate against his father for the dual burdens of kingship and legitimization that arise from the deposition of Richard; yet, he also wants to retaliate against his father because of the burdens of having to prop up his father’s guilt-ridden and fragile sense of self. Further, Henry’s long and tired harangues\textsuperscript{188} against “lavish[ness] of presence” (3.2.39), while asserting his own masterful manipulation of appearance, contradict themselves; he invariably brings up Richard and so must rationalize away his responsibility in taking the crown. Hal thus has further reason to absent himself from court: Henry sounds like a “parrot” recounting yet again how he “pluck[ed] allegiance from men’s hearts” (52). Hal, as we know from his opening soliloquy, has already learned the important lesson that power is a public performance. But, Henry feels the urge to tell Hal of his return from exile, relating that “men would tell their children ‘This is he!’” (48). Hal’s adoption of his father’s strategy at the outset of the play suggests he has heard this story before, or ones similar enough to it. Hal’s hearing this lecture so many times would surely give him more motivation to continue in his “wayward” life; knowing that Henry interprets Hal’s commonness as divine retribution, Hal intuits that the best way to retaliate against the burdens he has to passively accept is to appear to be actively shunning them, making himself not only absent from court (after all, he could just become a hunting fanatic) but also by

\textsuperscript{188} Given that Hal and Falstaff have already rehearsed many of the talking points (though in far less detail) Henry goes through in chiding his son’s prodigal behavior, we can assume Hal has received this lecture several times.
ingratiating himself with the very commons Henry has so much disdain for. Thus, Hal lives up to his father’s recollections of the effeminate, deposed and murdered Richard.\textsuperscript{189}

Henry makes both filial and political claims in chiding Hal’s behavior, arguing that he has fallen off from his illustrious family line with his current behavior.\textsuperscript{190} While Hal longs to be his own person and casts himself as such in his 1.2 soliloquy, he has still been brought up to believe in his own privileged nobility, and Henry’s mode of rebuke will end up working later in the scene. Henry does not chide Hal for “sins” he has committed but rather for the tarnishing of his princely appearance.

Hal’s initial response to his father’s charges essentially rehearses what he has learned from Falstaff, which is to make excuses (although this is typical of the Lancasters and the Percys as well). He weakly admits that he has committed some actions not worthy of a prince. He continues to say he could dismiss most of the reports, inviting Henry to blame his youth for the things he has done and the sycophantic purveyors of “fake news” for the rest. His father responds, “God pardon thee!” (29), suggesting that while God might buy his weak apologies and excuse his sins, Henry will not overlook his political ones. Having been a master manipulator himself, Henry sees through Hal’s

\textsuperscript{189} While Hal pays his father back for some of the instability he feels within himself, there could be some sense of filial duty in his bad behavior. Given that Henry feels so much guilt over having taken the throne and his desire to be punished for it (Berger’s “victim’s discourse”—see note 188), he thus miseducates Hal like a stern schoolmaster in order to have the victimized Hal retaliate, alleviating his guilt and desire for punishment. Perhaps Hal intuitts that his father cannot actively confess or apologize for his crime (since he still benefits from its committal, a la Hamlet’s Claudius) and takes it upon himself to be the safety valve, releasing some of the psychic pressure his father experiences (all the while planning on also being the heir and redeemer of his father).

\textsuperscript{190} Several books advocating humanistic education for the nobility argue that shaming students for falling away from their illustrious family lines yield positive “student learning outcomes.” See in particular, Peacham, Compleat Gentleman, 17. Thomas Elyot and Roger Ascham most likely influenced Peacham’s advocacy of this policy. It should also be noted that all three authors advocate praise as the best instructional method. Perhaps a guilty Henry only rebukes his son, rather than giving him praise, because he is desirous for punishment? See the previous note.
rationalizations.\textsuperscript{191} Henry continues to chide Hal’s “affections, which do hold a wing / Quite from the flight of all thy ancestors” (30-1), continuing his pedagogically-approved shaming. While Henry has fully disrupted patrilineality in his usurpation, he still insists on notions of feudal blood allegiance to guilt trip Hal, who has also grown up with these assumptions.

Henry, not privy to Hal’s recasting prodigality as political ploy, feels it necessary to rehash what could only be a common lecture for Hal. Interestingly, Henry makes a distinction between “opinion, that did help me to the crown” (42) and “common-hackeneyed” (40) “presence” (39). Henry differentiates himself from Hal (and Richard) by arguing that his lack of visibility caused opinion to sway his way. As we know from Act 1 of \textit{Richard II}, Richard himself accuses Bolingbroke of being too popular with commoners.\textsuperscript{192} Given what we know of Richard’s temperament, it is hard to imagine that he would at any point try to ingratiate himself with the people. It seems that attributing “vile participation” to one’s royal “enemies” is a common strategy, and Henry utilizes it to distance himself from the unseemly strategy that helped him attain his guilty throne by attributing it to his son.\textsuperscript{193}

Yet, Henry cannot keep up the integrity of a consistent kingly masculinity for long. While advising his son about crafting a kingly persona, one in which he distances

\textsuperscript{191} Perhaps Hal’s answer is unsatisfactory because he accepts responsibility for \textit{some} of these unseemly actions. The other nobility in the play, as well as Falstaff, generally accept \textit{no} responsibility. In part, Henry’s undermining of his own sovereignty from the outset of the scene results from his musing on past sins rather than forgetting them altogether.
\textsuperscript{192} \textit{Richard II}, 1.4.24-25. Richard says, “Ourself and Bushy, Bagot here and Green / Observed his courtship to the common people.”
\textsuperscript{193} Henry continues that, had he not been able to snatch “loyalty” away, he would have been “left…in reputeless banishment” (44). It is worth noting that Bolingbroke gets exiled by the king, but Hal exiles himself from court, imitating his father in the exile but surpassing his father in being the agent of his exile. Hal is very much following in his father’s footsteps, but Henry, perhaps, does not want to recognize their similarities to legitimize himself to himself.
himself from Hal and asserts his superiority,\(^{194}\) he makes the misstep of comparing himself to a “comet” (47) who “stole all courtesy from heaven” (50), revealing cracks in the persona he insists must be thoroughly consistent and noble. Comets were generally thought to be bad omens, and the slippage here suggests that Henry unconsciously believes that the rebellion he faces results from his usurpation. While Henry proclaims the worth of “sun-like majesty” (79) later in his speech, he does not apply that metaphor to himself as Hal does in his opening soliloquy; this again suggests that Hal’s use of Richard’s favorite kingly metaphor for himself attempts to forestall the audience’s (including his own) dissent concerning his rightful stewardship of the English crown. Hal rewrites his paternity in his opening soliloquy because he has witnessed his father reveal his own unconscious concerns about the legitimacy of his rule.

Henry experiences these lapses in his kingly facade because of his interior, private thoughts concerning his acquisition of the throne, while in Richard II he seemed all inscrutable surface. Hal picks up on this, and the process he undertakes from here on out is to subsume his personality into his public role, although he seems to want to break out of this once his patriarchal success is guaranteed late in Act 4 of Henry V. Several critics suggest that Hal voids himself of what makes him unique as a private individual for success in a public role,\(^{195}\) but Hal figures out (eventually) how to be his “natural” self while still seeming kingly. There is a difference between adapting oneself to one’s role and merely becoming one’s role.

\(^{194}\) Does Henry sound as boastful here as Hal did in 2.4 bragging to Poins about winning over the drawers? Henry employs a strategy similar to Hal’s in distancing himself from someone he might overly identify with to claim superiority. It seems Hal is more his father’s son than he even knows.

\(^{195}\) Ruiter, “Harry’s (In)human Face,” 50, argues that Hal ends up becoming only a “character”; Claire McEachern, “Henry V and the Paradox of the Body Politic,” Shakespeare Quarterly 45, no.1 (Spring 1994), 34, quotes Rabkin, who argues that Hal/Harry ends up “trading inwardness for power”; see also Traversi, Shakespeare from, 9 or Grady, Shakespeare, Machiavelli, Montaigne. Grady’s general argument is that Hal ends up vacating his potential to practice political power.
Although I want to suggest that teenaged Hal is put off by his father’s lapsing kingliness, he is still affected by it and must respond to his father’s faltering masculinity with support. Henry slips back into maudlin father mode, declaring:

\[
\text{Not an eye} \\
\text{But is a-weary of thy common sight,} \\
\text{Save mine, which hath desired to see thee more,} \\
\text{Which now doth that I would not have it do,} \\
\text{Make blind itself with foolish tenderness. (87-91)}
\]

Yet however earnest Henry’s feelings of sadness at longing to see his son, he performs them “publicly” here, risking exposure of the theatricality of kingliness to extract an appropriate response from his son Hal. Thus, while Henry now addresses Hal domestically, Hal for a myriad of reasons, responds, “I shall hereafter, my thrice-gracious lord, / Be more myself” (92-3), emphasizing his social position as Prince of Wales.

Hal seemingly believes that a one-sentence response, “I shall hereafter, my thrice-gracious lord, / Be more myself” (3.2.92-3), seasoned with a respectful epithet for his father the king will be sufficient to satisfy his father. While Hal indicates in his response that he and his father belong to the same discourse community\(^\text{196}\) (see Henry in 1.3.5), Henry rejects Hal’s statement. Unlike his response to the Percys, Hal’s declaring to be more himself is a bald assertion with no backing. Henry, of course, has a past self (the cold and calculating Bolingbroke) that he can point to confidently, but as Hal is a youth and has been denied access to hegemonic manhood, he has no masculine self to revert to.

\[^{196}\] Berger, *Making Trifles of Terrors*, 44, argues that “[w]hen a speaker echoes the words and sentiments uttered in an episode from which he was absent…, it usually means that he is inscribed in the same discourse.”
Henry likely hears Hal’s declaration to be “more himself” to mean he will continue as the prodigal youth he has been rather than the man he intends on being.\footnote{Hal’s response also indicates his political loyalty to his king rather than filial obligation to his father and the Lancastrian line, perhaps to distance himself from the unsavoriness of usurpation. Henry’s path to the throne centered on his regaining what Richard had taken from his father. If Hal is a true aristocrat, he should respond out of feudal respect for his bloodline or lord rather than from an early modern “serve the sovereign” mentality.}

Desirous to control his wild son’s responses and direct his wayward life, knowing that Hal, however reluctantly, wants to please him, Henry ignores his son’s statement mirroring his own and compares Hal to Richard and himself to Hotspur. While Henry again is doubling and tripling down on his criticisms of Hal’s behavior by this comparison, a few (inadvertent) things also happen: for one, Henry, yet again, reveals his unconscious fears about his own illegitimacy by comparing himself to the rebel Hotspur. Two, in comparing Hal to Richard, Henry suggests that Hal’s inheriting the throne will make him legitimate in a way that Henry is not. Three, Henry further voices his admiration of Hotspur who “shake[s] the peace and safety of our throne” (117); Hal, in another register, has done the same with his own rebellion, and this may indicate Henry’s desire for his guilt to be assuaged by having to face these very crises. The political rebellion by a surrogate son and the domestic rebellion by his biological son signal that there is indeed retribution out there for his act of usurpation, which he himself needs to be scourged of. Four, in comparing himself to Hotspur, Hal further suggests that his animus toward Hotspur is also in part animus toward his father.

Despite his lack of requisite masculine self-control in managing his guilt, Henry conditions Hal’s response by insulting him. Henry claims Hal would fight for Hotspur out of “vassal fear” (124) and “dog his heels and curtsy at his frowns” (127). Hal bristles against being subservient to anybody, even his father the king. His response, the response
Henry seems to have wanted to elicit in the first place, drips with class snobbery and awareness of his family name. Hal makes his disdain for the Percys clear in calling Hotspur “this northern youth” (145), diminishing Hotspur both through his birthplace and his age. He picks up on his father’s monetary language, which describes Hotspur as “being no more in debt to years than thou” (103), and turns his father’s harsh criticism into the metaphor by which all will be made right: “Percy is but my factor” (147). Hal shall exchange his misdeeds for Hotspur’s honors whenever they chance to meet in battle. Although Hal improvises this speech, it has been coordinated by Henry and echoes sentiments of feudal filial piety, injured pride, and thirst for chivalric honor that Henry wants Hal to cherish. Henry praises his son’s rival in order to receive the proper answer, showing both grandness of heart and irritation at being slighted.

Perhaps even more important than the sense of injured nobility, filial pride, or the language of debt and reckoning is Hal’s invocation of God. Up until this point, Falstaff and Hal have invoked Scripture blasphemously. However, given Falstaff’s ability to quote biblical texts, his uncle Richard’s belief in the divine right of kings, and his father’s desire to go to the Holy Land, Hal understands that by declaring “in the name of God, I promise here / The which, if He be pleased I shall perform,/ I do beseech your majesty may salve / The long-grown wounds of my intemperance” (153-6), he can represent his performance to his father as properly princely, as Machiavelli counsels: “It is therefore the duty of princes…to uphold the foundations of the religion of their countries, for then it is easy to keep their people religious, and consequently well conducted and united.”

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198 Shepard, Meanings of Manhood, 175. Shepard summarizes the impact of and rationale behind “social derogatory insults.” Hal, it seems, denigrates the northern English as savage, rude, and uncultured. Given his own Welshness, this might be another instance of Lancastrian transference.

199 Machiavelli, Prince, 98.
From Henry’s point of view, Hal’s response has checked every box; thus he ends, “A hundred thousand rebels die in this” (160).

Hal gives the appropriate amount of true personal passion corresponding to his social self. Although he sounds measured, he is not in control. His father has controlled and elicited Hal’s responses. When Hal tried to use an “original” one, largely cribbed from his observing his father, Henry ignores it and continues berating Hal. Once Hal gives appropriate responses imbued with language from the “discourse of honor”200 and that invoke God, Henry accepts Hal’s apologetic promise of future greatness and gives him command of military forces. I want to reiterate that, while Hal becomes more Machiavellian, he makes missteps and learns on the fly.

**Reconciliation without Reduction**

The last two acts of the play illustrate two separate and contradictory movements: Hal’s aligning with his father’s values while also reconciling with Falstaff. However contradictory the ending of the play seems, the purpose is to leave Hal and his audience with the openness of his youthful masculine potential. Thus, although Hal gets closer to his father and further away from Falstaff, most evidently exemplified in his killing of Hotspur, Shakespeare portrays Hal as not only reconciling with his father and Hotspur, whom he has mocked, but also Falstaff, as though Hal recognizes and shies away from the brutality of his incipient rebellion against his father-surrogate. The play ends, as I will illustrate, with Hal’s choosing a “Bolingbrokian” masculinity, while still adopting the play and skepticism of Falstaff to have a fuller repertory of masculine maneuvers.

Hal’s reformation/reconciliation is further illustrated many times in the last two acts. He is further distanced from Falstaff in their interaction in scene 4.2 While the tone between them remains jocular and perhaps even more good-humored than in some of the earlier scenes, Hal’s distance and social superiority are evident throughout this scene, concluding with his words, “But, sirrah, make haste. Percy is already in the field” (73-4, emphasis added). While Hal and his friends use “sirrah” with each other out of familiarity, here, coupled with a command, suggests Hal speaks to Falstaff not as Falstaff’s lad but as the Prince of Wales. The further mention of Percy obviously refers to their mission at hand, but Hal might indicate some of his anxiety that Hotpsur is already in the field, but he himself is not. In order to match his rival, he needs everyone on board. This unusual imperious tone with his friend and surrogate father could be performed for Westmoreland’s sake. Even earlier in the scene, Hal’s retorts and quips at Falstaff’s expense are snappy and quickly followed up by getting to the serious business of war, unlike their interactions at the Boar’s Head which luxuriate in oneupsmanship and the play of language. Hal’s curt jabs at Falstaff and their clipped interaction in passing presage the rejection scene in 2 Henry IV, which I will argue reveals much more of the “real” Eastcheap Hal than is typically argued, particularly by those who see Hal as evacuating his authenticity and interiority to fit into the political public shell.

As if we needed to be made more conscious of Hal’s reconciliation with Henry and his moving away from the influence of Falstaff, Hal hushes Falstaff with “Peace, chewet, peace” (5.1.29) when Falstaff presumes to interject an insightful—though, given his social place, unbecoming—comment in the middle of Worcester’s meeting with Henry. Furthermore, Hal seems his coldest when he fails to respond to Falstaff’s real
concerns about battle: “Hal, if thou see me down in the battle and bestride me, so; ’tis a point of friendship” (5.121-2), responding with “Nothing but a colossus can do thee that friendship. Say thy prayers, and farewell” (123-4). Falstaff, for once in this play, seems to desire a frank, honest, earnest response, and Hal reverts to the rhetoric of tavern banter to ally himself more closely with his father. Hal’s retort, reminiscent of their teasing at the Boar’s Head, followed by the command to pray and a goodbye, suggests that there is more animosity in this utterance than we had seen from Hal in the first part of the play. Falstaff, desirous of masculine vulnerability, gets rebuffed by the coldness of Hal’s biting response. Falstaff’s fear is answered with a fat joke. The curtness of the verbal parry, followed by Hal’s ignoring of Falstaff’s concerns, suggests that Hal might potentially fully assume his hegemonic masculinity at the end of this play.

Hal further shows himself his father’s son and presages his transition to “the mirror of all Christian kings” by echoing the religious sentiment he had used to reconcile himself to Henry with in 3.2. Hal, who will follow up his promise made “in the name of God” (3.2.153) later in the act by killing Hotspur, says to Falstaff, “Why, thou owest God a death” (5.1.126), the formal second person form further developing the sermonic tone of Hal’s utterance. The distance Hal shows here in uttering a religious cliche, perhaps blended with a little smirk, provides him a useful strategy for his future dismissal of Falstaff, as Hal, upon becoming King Harry, will urge Falstaff to “Fall to thy prayers,” (2 Henry IV, 5.5.46).

Hal’s allegiance to the heroic and political values of the play’s powerbrokers, particularly his father, is seen immediately in Act 5. Henry declares, “How bloodily the sun begins to peer / Above yon bulky hill. The day looks pale / At his distemperature”

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201 Again, Hal can rationalize this as the familiar intimate “you” form.
and Hal responds, “The southern wind / Doth play the trumpet to his purposes, / And by his hollow whistling in the leaves / Foretells a tempest and a blustering day” (3-6). Hal falls into lockstep with his father in poeticizing the morning of the battle, reading into the natural scene before them messages foretelling the death and carnage that will soon take place. Hal, now of Henry’s mind, echoes his father’s rhetorical vein, even finishing his father’s half line of verse in line 3.

Hal boldly, though also in the spirit of Christian beneficence, offers to fight Hotspur in single battle, mastering the rhetoric of chivalry that so dominates the language of the noble characters, particularly in this act. While many critics argue that Henry’s deposition of Richard marks a shift from medieval, chivalric feudal values to the more contingent and practical shifting values of the early modern nation state, Henry and Hal still adopt this language for their own purposes: one, despite Henry’s severing of feudal ties and initiating a new political reality, he has still grown up with these values and ostensibly defied his banishment in defense of these values; two, this language deflects well-warranted attention from political machinations. Henry, after all, performs the role of laconic, feudal warrior well in Richard II, up until it ultimately fails him in that play when he becomes king. Thus, while Henry harbors an inscrutable, unknowable interior and should be mistrusted because he cannot be read/known to others, he performs himself as guileless and transparent, paying lip service to the old values of loyalty and integrity of the English kingdom. The self he presents to his audience is one in which

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202 Peacham, Compleat Gentleman. Peacham asserts that arms in single combat is the most noble exercise on can undertake (213). Lewis, Kingship and Masculinity. Lewis relates that Henry V challenged the Dauphin to single combat during his invasion of France (107).

203 Wells, Shakespeare on Masculinity, 11, describes the nobility’s still-pervasive attitudes toward militarism: “Originating in the Middle Ages as the code of values of a military aristocracy, chivalry placed paramount emphasis on the masculine virtues of physical courage and military prowess as the guarantors of justice and honour.”
public and private roles are interchangeable if not downright indistinguishable. As I have ventured earlier, Henry, although unsuccessfully, tries to adopt a stance that suggests his body natural is totally subsumed by the body politic. As is characteristic of Henry throughout this play, he betrays awareness of his own destruction of this old world order when he asks Worcester if he will “be no more an exhaled meteor” (5.1.19), recalling the figuration of himself as comet in 3.2, a dazzling but ill-omened portent.

While Hal comes into his own as royal prince and true man by living up to social expectations, he shows himself to be beyond the mere limitations of his future role as king of England. Hal illustrates his mastery of the “discourse of honor” in finishing Hotspur’s line—just as he does earlier with his father in Act 5—that he is food “For worms, brave Percy. Fare thee well, great heart….Adieu, and take thy praise with thee to heaven” (5.4.86, 89). Hal, who has mocked the language of chivalry and its representative Hotspur, in issuing the challenge to Hotspur and honoring him after killing him, illustrates that he is the king of chivalry and proves himself more capable of claiming to descend from the older order than his father. Hal uses the discourse of honor in a more appropriate and dignified manner. Having killed Hotspur, Hal then reflects on the limits of chivalry, trivializing it (not as cynically or comedically as Falstaff), saying:

When that this body did contain a spirit
   A kingdom for it was too small a bound,
But now two paces of the vilest earth
   Is room enough. The earth that bears thee deed
Bears not alive so stout a gentleman…
Adieu, and take thy praise with thee to heaven.
Thy ignominy sleep with thee in the grave
   But not remembered in thy epitaph. (5.4.88-92, 98-100)

While Hal performs chivalrously in his honoring of Hotspur’s reputation, he also notes that Percy’s body is food “for worms” (86). When Henry goads Hal in 3.2
respond as a proper heir to the throne, Hal declares Percy his “factor” and will exchange his misdeeds for Percy’s praises. Now that he has defeated Hotspur, he does not seem so concerned with the praises attendant upon defeat of such a great soldier. Hal, wanting to perform his masculine potential, is thus able to adopt the language of chivalry and “parrots” it more effectively than Hotspur, but, unlike his rival, he is not simply reduced to its shallow rhetoric. Hal recognizes the ignorance of blind pursuit of glory. He has defeated Hotspur, and now he defeats the limits of chivalry by seeming to disregard the praise that should be his, wishing that Percy may take his good deeds with him to heaven while his “ignominy” (99) remains in the ground with his body. Hal, seemingly, does not need this glory, so much so that he allows Falstaff to take credit for Hotspur’s dispatch.

Ironically, soon after equaling Hotspur’s discourse of honor, then transcending it, Hal illustrates that he can also be as bombastic about honor as Hotspur, as his pride in his younger brother John’s military prowess illustrates: “Full bravely hast thou fleshed / Thy maiden sword” (5.4.128-9). Hal extends the bawdy militaristic language Hotspur uses with his wife. However, there is nothing sexual at all in Hal’s words—sexuality is only a metaphor for dominant hegemonic masculine brutality. Contrary to the values of the tavern which shun military exploits for physical/sexual, Hal privileges the dominant/hegemonic discourse surrounding warfare by equating it to the sexual. Hal recognizes that, rather than being tainted with the feminine, John has directed his energies in the most aristocratically approved fashion: warfare. Coupled with his dismissal of Westmoreland’s aid, saying “God forbid a shallow scratch should drive / The Prince of Wales from such a field as this, / Where stained nobility lies trodden on / And rebels’ arms triumph in massacres” (10-13), Hal illustrates his aristocratic/royal pride and
the rejection of his vulnerability. Rather than suffering from grievous wounds that illustrate his penetrability, Hal’s wounds become a mere “scratch.” Hal, in this exchange, refers to himself as “The Prince of Wales,” foreshadowing his later embrace of his public/social role. In this way, he discounts the importance of the body over something more abstract, etherealized, and superior, such as his Lancaster name and royal title. Hal, son of Henry, might be bleeding, but although his natural body is wounded, the body politic will continue on whole. Hal is not the one penetrated, but in his role as Prince of Wales he will further continue to penetrate the rebels to restore the honor of “stained nobility.”

Interestingly, Hal’s adoption of the discourse of chivalry (if not the code itself) and his attempts to exceed it are largely grounded in Falstaffian materialism. He notes that Hotspur’s ambition exceeded England, “But now two paces of the vilest earth / Is room enough” (90-1) to hold his body. While doing courtesy to the memory of Hotspur, he seems to recognize that since all that is left in the ground is a body, striving for honor, particularly in the face of unfavorable odds, is a fool’s errand. While much has been written about Falstaff’s witnessing of Walter Blount’s death at the hands of the Douglas and his disavowal of honor as it does “not live with the living” (5.1.138), critics have ignored or failed to see how much Hal’s own thinking about honor—that it goes with its “owner” to heaven—is influenced by similar thinking.

Although Hal has distanced himself from Falstaff in the last couple of acts of 1 Henry IV, he, again, desires to be “of all humours” and illustrates that, while his manhood is not limited to battlefield honor nor the tavern and its rejection of abstract codes, he can ally himself to his father’s pragmatic worldview without necessarily rejecting the others.
Having honored Hotspur’s corpse, he then turns to honor the corpse of his “old acquaintance” (101). Before discussing whether Hal believes Falstaff dead (along with the tavernesque rhetoric used to “honor” Falstaff), I want to investigate the term “old acquaintance.” The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “acquaintance” as “2. Originally: a person with whom one is acquainted closely; a friend or companion. In later use: a person one knows slightly or on a less intimate basis than friendship. Frequently paired or contrasted with friend.” Thus, Hal could be admitting his emotional attachment to Falstaff, signifying his distance from (and superiority to) Falstaff in saying that he did not truly know him, *or doing both at the same time*. If the definition is not ambiguous enough, these very lines from *1 Henry IV* are ones cited by the OED for this definition. “Acquaintance,” coupled with “old,” which could refer to the long span of the friendship or the lapsed nature of that friendship, again illustrates the ambiguity of the expression and Hal’s ambivalence toward Falstaff.

This ambiguity of language and ambivalence of feeling only continues in Hal’s “eulogy” over the body of the “dead” Falstaff. Much has been made of whether Hal believes Falstaff is really dead. His statement to his brother John asserting that he believed Falstaff to be dead has confused many readers who try to reconcile that with the tavernesque language he lavishes upon Falstaff’s counterfeit corpse, saying “I could have better spared a better man” (103), “I should have a heavy miss of thee” (104), “Could not all this flesh / Keep in a little life?” (101-2), and “Death hath not struck so fat a deer today, / Though many dearer in this bloody fray” (106-7). I think many critics have overestimated or mischaracterized what proper language would be for a person like

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Falstaff, Hal’s tavern buddy, who has now fallen in battle. Some critics who assume Hal believes Falstaff is dead may desire Hal to use reverent tones to describe the death of “reverend Vice.” However, this would not be an appropriate honoring of Falstaff. Given that Hal and Falstaff often misquote Holy Scripture and engage each other in name-calling, what better way to honor him than to keep up that same irreverent and defiant spirit, even in death? As I have said before, if on some level Hal tries distance himself from his surrogate father, he can also excuse the fraternal language that perhaps makes him too vulnerable to Falstaff by insisting on its violence.

I suggest Hal truly believes Falstaff is dead, and, rather than mocking his friend or making jokes at his expense, uses a register of language that honors Falstaff and which Falstaff would appreciate. The teasing here is completely in the “bonding” register, but again, Hal can dismiss these feelings, if he needs to, by rationalizing to himself that they contained some bite. The sincerity of Hal’s feelings for Falstaff then would help us understand why Hal lets Falstaff have credit for killing Hotspur. Again, Hal surpasses Hotspurian chivalry by not worrying about receiving credit and showing his humility. Giving Falstaff the credit also becomes a way of pranking the “gunpowder Percy” (5.4.121), if people are to believe the cowardly knight has killed the “king of chivalry.” But, if he is truly saddened by the supposed death of Falstaff, especially considering the cold and dismissive tone Hal uses toward Falstaff immediately before and during the battle, Hal, relieved to find Falstaff still breathing, gilds Falstaff’s lie because he is happy that Falstaff is alive; Hal also achieves the double purpose of illustrating his transcendence of simplistic notions of chivalry and his ability to accommodate the antics of social inferiors, going so far as to play along with and reward them.
Thus, Hal is able to appear to us (and to himself) in his theatrical fullness, capable of adopting, utilizing, and embodying all humors at the end of this play. While aligning himself with his father’s policy, his reconciliations with two other competing and often contradictory masculine influences allow his “unfixed subjectivity” to revel in his “potentiality” rather than strain against the limits inhering in his title as prince. He rises above the interpellation into rigid strictures of behavior called for by his social role. The seeming ease with which Hal embodies different and often contradictory social roles indicate his sprezzatura, “‘an attitude of slightly superior disdain’ by which the performer indicates his easy mastery of whatever he is doing, his ‘scorn for the potential difficulty or restriction involved’ and ‘for normal, human limitations’” (emphasis added). The ease with which Hal ends the play, utilizing multiple styles of manhood, indicates his superiority over the men he emulates and his transcendence of the situations he has found himself in. To reiterate, this perspective on Hal is the one Hal himself wants to subscribe to and wants us to subscribe to. In his desire to forge an independent masculinity, he represents himself as capable of accessing a wide-range of masculine behavior and demonstrates the ease with which he can employ them. However, the next two plays, as Hugh Grady and others argue, illustrate that this ease and openness are no longer available to Hal.

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205 Grady, *Shakespeare, Machiavelli, Montaigne*. 162. This is my take more so than it is a summary of Grady, although I more or less agree with his summary assessment of *1 Henry IV*.

CHAPTER 2

“SO TROUBLESOME A BEDFELLOW”: 2 HENRY IV AND THE BURDENS OF KINGSHIP

“That roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in it”

The relative dearth of criticism on 2 Henry IV should not be surprising. Its location in a suite of plays now dubbed “the Second Tetralogy” largely figures in its diminution. Hence, scholars have tended to pay more attention to the other three plays, which seem more important: Richard II, about the usurpation that disrupts the logic of patrilineal inheritance, severs the king’s two bodies, and leads to the Wars of the Roses; 1 Henry IV, on Hal’s prodigality, reformation, and heroism at Shrewsbury; and Henry V, on the English victory over the French and its presentation of Harry as “the mirror of all Christian kings.” If not ignored due to the greater thematic concerns of its sibling plays, 2 Henry IV has been accused by critics of lacking Shakespeare’s typical artistry. The Arden 3 edition summarizes these positions, saying 2 Henry IV is “more digressive,” and “its mingling of kings and clowns seems less purposeful” than its predecessor.207 This critical neglect, however, has contributing factors other than its flabbiness or its placement within a family of plays; its title and tone also contribute.

Critics have long debated whether Shakespeare had envisioned this play as a sequel to *1 Henry IV* before setting out to write the Henry IV plays, or whether Shakespeare, in the middle of writing *1 Henry IV*, realized he had too much comic material, and so, wrote another play. Because the play has been handed down to us as a sequel, we must reckon with its relationship to the first play, especially as it rehashes much of *1 Henry IV*’s narrative arc. Harold Jenkins’ view, the dominant critical opinion for so long, led generations of critics to deal with his formulation that this play is both dependent and independent of *1 Henry IV*, that the reader or spectator must at times recall the first play but at others must forget its existence and treat *2 Henry IV* as a remix of the same material. Although Jenkins’ palimpsestic view on the relationship of the two plays with each other is compelling, it leads him to believe, as Sherman Hawkins describes, that “there are not two princely reformations in *Henry IV* but two versions of a single reformation, and they are mutually exclusive.” If *2 Henry IV* essentially revises its companion play, its father and son reconciliation replaces and updates the reconciliation in the first play. This interpretation resolves the peculiarity of Hal’s redeeming himself and then having to redeem himself again, but critics who follow Jenkins assume “that conversion is a single, unique, and irreversible event.” Why would the prince, who has spent so much time in Eastcheap, suddenly decide to abandon it after achieving military glory and enjoying some favor with his father? Masculinities, both those styled good and those “breaking bad,” are never achieved by a single act but must be performed by

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208 *2 Henry IV*, 4. Bulman summarizes the most important critical perspectives on the reason for this play’s composition.

209 Sherman Hawkins, “Henry IV: The Structural Problem Revisited,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 33, no.3 (Autumn 1982): 289. The preceding summary of Jenkins’s take on *2 Henry IV* has also been derived from Hawkins.

210 Hawkins, 296.
discrete actions over and over again. Although Hal has announced his “re-interpellation” into the various discourses of courtly masculinity and has made strides in performing his princeliness, like Hawkins, I believe that “despite his virtuous resolutions for the future, Hal is not ready to abandon Falstaff,”211 that his “conversion” to hegemonic masculinity is not linear nor irreversible.

The “double reformation” structure of the Henry IV plays supports my earlier arguments about Hal’s ambivalence. Although readers of the Henry IV plays may find Hal’s pattern of redemption and reconciliation to be repetitive and pointless,212 his move toward reconciliation with his father does not mean that it is uncomplicated, assured, or inevitable. Characters, like human beings, can backslide, falling back into bad habits or comfortable routines. Hal both wants to assume the responsibilities left to him by his father and desires at the same time to run away from them, not having fully reconciled himself to his future social role. Still a teenager who had found solace and relative peace in Eastcheap, Hal understandably returns to his old haunts. Despite his proving himself Hotspur’s equal at Shrewsbury, he is not ready to return to court and have his social performance prescribed by a narrow set of expectations.

Not only must he forge a consistent masculinity while juggling the conflicting value systems of tavern vs. court, feudal loyalty vs. “affective individualism,” and youthful, counter-masculinity vs. proper manhood, but he likely feels as if he has to make his choice sooner than he is ready—he is a teenager, after all, and would have, before his father’s usurpation, been navigating the transition from childhood to youth. After his

211 Hawkins, 287.
212 Hawkins, “Structural Problem Revisited,” 290-92, effectively illustrates that the “double conversion” occurs in Shakespeare’s source material. He further goes on to argue that Shakespeare adapts his source material for greater affect.
brave showing at Shrewsbury, one might expect him to stay at court and live up to and off of his reputation as warrior and Prince of Wales. However, he is reluctant to grow up because he would have to define himself, and definition (by definition) is limitation; even though he will soon be king, he will be defined by the narrow constraints of what define good kingship. At the end of 1 Henry IV, Hal is able to persuade himself of his ability to perform multiple masculinities. However, by the start of 2 Henry IV, Hal realizes that “the days of [his] multiple identities are now ending;” “the two Harrys that cannot keep their motion in one sphere’ are not Hotspur or Henry and himself, but the Harrys of tavern and court respectively.”

Hal resorts to old habits, seemingly retaliating against the impending limitations he will face when he assumes his social role; Hal reverts to the old world he knew in which his potential has no limits, a world in which he had acted out several masculinities, including versions of Hotspur and his two fathers.

Hal’s absence from court in both plays comes as no surprise—we know of his “expectations strategy”—and this has largely been the explanation for Hal’s absence at court. However, we should think twice about uncritically accepting Hal’s explanations for his actions. After having reconciled himself with Hal in 1 Henry IV, it seems peculiar that Henry reverts to believing his son has devolved back into a rascal. Henry’s assumptions about Hal’s backsliding seem based solely on Hal’s absence from court. However, as we know, Hal’s absence from court is not because of his prodigality—he has also kept away from Falstaff and his friends at the Boar’s Head. I argue that Hal’s absence from court and seeming return to prodigality stems from his discomfort at seeing his father ill, for both personal and political reasons. One, his prior behavior seems to

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213 Grady, Shakespeare, Machiavelli, and Montaigne, 192.
214 Spiekerman, ”The Education of Hal,” 121.
have contributed to his father’s illness. Following the logic of the “sinner’s discourse,” Hal recognizes that he sins more than he is sinned against and wants both to be punished and to cast himself as victim; this tension results in his desire to avenge himself against the retributive agent he himself has picked. As a teenage son rebelling against his father, Hal chooses his own father to distribute that justice; in retaliating against Henry as retributive agent, Hal further absents himself and wallows more in the guilt we see him reveal to Poins in 2.2. He thereby punishes himself by feeling guilt over his mistreatment of his father, punishing the very figure from whom he desires punishment (for his absence) with continued absence, in a vicious circle of psychic retaliation, self-flagellation, and self-evasion.

Politically, Hal desires to forget how soon he must ascend the throne. Having originally fled to Eastcheap unable to deal with his position as Prince of Wales and the burden at being the redemptive agent for his father, he returns to Eastcheap to recapture the limitless masculine potential he once experienced in his controlling of the tavern’s patrons, his relation to them but independence from them, and his extensive role-playing. Yet, because he has changed (perhaps by virtue of getting older) and has “agreed” to carry the Lancastrian torch, he does not, or perhaps cannot, enjoy himself at the Boar’s Head. “His half-hearted role-playing” and “temporary backsliding among the riffraff” could be read as both evidence of his growing maturity and psychic retaliation against his

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216 It should be also suggested that Hal’s absence from Eastcheap might itself be the result of not wanting to see his surrogate father Falstaff ill (and for similar if not the exact same reasons Hal absents himself from court).

217 Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, 53 and 121. An extremely simplified take on these plays might suggest that Hal reforms because he has reached the age of discretion, which Griffiths writes was conceived as attained by a male between the ages of fourteen and sixteen.

own retaliation against his father: *you might go back to your old haunts and habits, but you will derive no pleasure from them.*

Hal’s attitude has certainly changed from part one to part two, although many of the scenes and much of the action is “repeated.” Hal seems to realize that he wastes time engaging in behavior that no longer resonates with him. His dissatisfaction matches the tonal problem of the play. While *1 Henry IV* is fun, festive, and ends with the promise of Hal’s endless potential, *2 Henry IV* is defined by sickness, death, and limitation. The very form of the play, though largely mirroring *1 Henry IV*, seems like the flabby uselessness of Falstaffian old age. While some critics have wondered why Shakespeare would have (re)written a Henry IV play to result in an oftentimes depressing superfluity, I argue that those “flaws” contribute to the play’s affect. A.C. Bradley argues that Shakespeare would have us root for Hal despite his flaws, and that Falstaff, through his liveliness of character, accidentally undermines Shakespeare’s ostensible moral; 219 however, this is precisely the opposite of what the play does. Hal’s impending assumption of responsibility and the play-wide acknowledgment of time’s passing contribute to the affective goal of the play; the play intends to feel like loss. While Hal ended *1 Henry IV* believing he could be anything, his imminent crowning places a heavy burden on his head. The rejection of Falstaff and the cheerlessness required to make that choice are the culminations of Hal’s choice to become King Harry.

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Distance, Decathexis, and Disa“Poin”tment

Hal, at the end of 1 Henry IV, embraces the worlds of both the underclass and the aristocracy, believing that he can straddle their divide and have a foot in each world. Hal has largely come to define himself by his performance in relation to others: his verbal competition with Falstaff, his martial one with Hotspur, and his newfound loyalty to his father and courtly values. When he first enters 2 Henry IV, Hal seems incapable of resolving this conflict between competing value systems that he had seemingly integrated in the previous play. Rather than demonstrating his manhood by performing counter-masculinity for members of his youth group (including Falstaff), he instead chooses to adopt the patriarchal masculinity he once shunned, attempting to display the integrity of his masculinity by reducing himself to the princely role he plays. In 2 Henry IV, before his accession, Hal insists on his individuality and separation from his social milieu, not just his superiority to it. Rather than participate in relationships with others, he is absent for most of the play, as though he needs to define princely manhood on his own terms. As a ruler stands above the rest of his subjects and imposes his will upon them, Hal absents himself to forge a masculine self independent from others. However, he might also absent himself because the burden of what he is to become might be too much for him. He seems to recognize the pain in subsuming his body natural to the body politic, and John Blanpied concisely sums up this dynamic, writing that Hal “shrinks from the office as a kind of self-destruction.”220 However, while criticism often supposes the personal Hal disappears on his becoming Henry V, I argue that, when he reappears in Act 4, he seems to have figured out that, regardless of what he does, his body natural can be

accommodated by the roominess of the large robes of the body politic, able to perform as king once he learns how to give the office his own personal stamp.

Yet, figuring out how to keep his body natural from suffocating under the burden of bearing the body politic is a learning experience and takes time. However much Hal at the play’s start allies himself with the values of aristocratic manhood or effectively performs of his masculinity to others, he experiences the same fissures in his persona as in 1 Henry IV but suffers them more acutely than he had in the previous play. Perhaps due to establishing good terms with both of his fathers at the close of 1 Henry IV, Hal still has not ultimately resolved his ambivalence toward them, demonstrably suffering in scene 2.2 because of it. Henry and Falstaff’s continued coexistence as viable father figures illustrates the interior conflict Hal faces. Being so conflicted, he goes back to his old habits of absenting himself from court, but, rather than immerse himself in the culture of the Boar’s head, he mistreats Falstaff with joyless insults and occasional physical violence.

While the darker tone of 2 Henry IV pervades every scene, it is surely well-established with Hal’s first appearance in scene 2.2. Hal’s decathexis from Falstaff, which begins in 1 Henry IV but seems to pause at Falstaff’s resurrection, resumes in earnest with Hal’s distancing himself from Poins. His primary impulse in speaking to Poins is to confess himself to a trusted “friend,” one close enough in social class but still below him, thus softening whatever judgment Poins may have to pass. However, because Hal risks over-familiarity with Poins in sharing his dilemma, he overcompensates with aristocratic condescension and crude jokes to reassert social boundaries and protect himself from too much fellow feeling, since, according to recent work by social
historians, “emotional expression can jeopardise manly self-control.” Given that masculinity and kingship were judged by similar criteria, and that the standard for each was self-control, Hal must regulate his vulnerability to anyone, particularly a social inferior.

While Hal in 1 Henry IV defines himself in relation to others, he now attempts to separate himself from those relations to achieve his proper station. Because he desires to establish a masculine identity informed by others but also independent from them, Hal’s need to transcend his former life is responsible for his harsh and demeaning words to Poins, which are a rehearsal of his rejection of Falstaff. Hal tries to forge an independent self because he intuits that a self defined by one’s social role is necessarily inauthentic. Derek Neal, whose work illustrates that myriad social relationships affected men and in fact defined them as men, writes, “In such a world, maintaining a sense of self that was a self—keeping any sense of anything being one’s own—was no small feat for anyone; having a social self meant being pulled in many directions at once, as if in danger of coming apart; yet one could not be a man without that experience. No wonder, then, that the idealized self of literary fantasy denied relation, connection, need, and desire.” Hal, of course, is a literary fantasy, and one that often gets read as devoid of fellow feeling or human connection of any sort. However, Hal cannot be understood as a model of hegemonic masculinity at this point in his development; were he comfortable enough to perform his vulnerability so boldly, he might reformulate some words uttered by his

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221 Foyster, Manhood in Early Modern England, 139.
222 Neal, Masculine Self, 247.
223 I am thinking largely of Jonathan Goldberg and other “Machiavellian instrumentalizer” readings of Hal.
uncle Richard: “I live with bread like you, feel want, / Taste grief, need friends. 
Subjected thus, / How can you say to me I am a [man]?” (Richard II, 3.2.175-77).

Despite often being regarded as an “ego ideal,”¹²²⁴ Hal must force his separation from his former companions, and this separation pains him.¹²²⁵ Hal, like his father, attempts to rewrite and re-narrativize his past and himself into a literary fantasy, as this depersonalization will contribute to his successful performance of kingship. While in scene 1.2 of 1 Henry IV Hal casts himself as superior to his lowly surroundings, “participating” for mere show to make his staged reformation the more dazzling, his words to Poins in 2 Henry IV reveal that this show of prodigality is less an act than Hal might like us or himself to think. Although Hal has styled his attachment to his Eastcheap cronies as “his political education” for his audience’s sake—“I am now of all humours”—he asserts his agency defensively in this scene to decathect from them and to elevate his nobility above their commonness.

No critic has better summarized the tensions between Hal’s public and private selves, particularly in relation to this specific scene and interaction with Poins, than Derek Traversi, whom I will quote at length before offering my own reading of their conversation:

This remoteness, though Hal in his public, political character is called upon to accept it, none the less leads him to certain ‘humble considerations’ which make him ‘out of love’ with his greatness. The phrase, with its sense of an unexpressed burden lying close to the speaker’s heart, is one which he will hardly utter again so clearly. The political vocation will shortly prevail in him, bringing together with success a certain detachment, a touch of necessary inhumanity which his exalted position will at times impose; but in the ambiguous tension of certain

¹²²⁵ Derek Traversi, Shakespeare from, 125, likewise sees Hal’s interaction with Poins as a means “to be weaned from the influence of such as Poins” “in view of his approaching choice.”
brief utterances, especially frequent at this point, the imminence of his father’s death brings out a submerged note of reflection (emphasis added).226

The “unexpressed burden” Hal experiences is the assumption of a throne he has not been prepared to take, and, in so doing, to both live up to his father’s example and to sanctify his father’s crimes. Further, he must somehow achieve proper manhood (as king), defined by prudence, temperance, reason, as well as physical prowess and stout courage, while he should be navigating the prior transition from childhood to youth. His father’s impending death, an external conflict, brings this “submerged” note of reflection to the surface, the result of his interior conflict between choosing to accept his father’s burden while also having no choice but to accept his father’s burden. This confusion leads Hal to publicize to Poins the insecurity he feels in performing a consistent and integrated masculinity; yet, Hal, in voicing the instability in his identity, tries to establish it in the haughty tone he takes with his friend.

His statement, “Before God, I am exceeding weary” (2 Henry IV, 2.2.1), echoes his father’s sentiment at the beginning of 1 Henry IV, showing him to be his father’s son by participation in the same “discourse community.” However, this statement also indicates the real, human cost of Hal’s aligning himself to the political role he chooses to play. The introductory phrase, “Before God,” however much it reveals genuine religious feeling in Hal, is ultimately concerned with the tensions Hal experiences in performing his social identity. Meaning II.4.a. in the OED defines the phrase, “With the full knowledge of, under the observation or attention of. Hence: in oaths and asseverations, as before God!” While this seems a throwaway, Hal’s earnest declaration of his internal state, or what he claims as earnest, should be taken seriously. Hal has confessed to his

226 Traversi, Shakespeare from, 126.
role-playing all the way back in the Henriad’s first soliloquy. While Hal never explicitly states what troubles him, his conversation with Poins suggests that his weariness stems from the necessity to constantly present a public persona at the expense of his own personal desires. Regardless of his true feelings, Hal has taken it upon himself to feign one persona while being something else. If (gendered) identity is a performance, only God himself can see the struggle Hal goes through. Although he voices popular discourse about the inner, private self versus the public self, as nobleman and youth, Hal is doubly bound to conceal his vulnerability, having always to be in control of his social performance. As a mere human being, Hal can admit the weariness he experiences to God, the weariness Traversi attributes to his failure to accommodate his public and private personas. Yet in desiring to come clean, Hal performatively contradicts this statement in uttering it before Poins, both revealing his inner turmoil but performing his noble detachment for Poins. Although revealing his vulnerability to Poins, the statement “Before God” suggests that 1) only God can truly see what bothers Hal, and 2) Hal’s utterance is directed toward God and not necessarily for Poins’ ears, despite his being the only interlocutor, suggesting that God is the only peer for someone of Hal’s stature.

While Henry proclaims his weariness in 1 Henry IV, being “wan with care” due to the rebellion in his kingdom, Hal, as Prince of Wales, worries about the “rebellion” he feels in his appetites, perhaps having also internalized the conflicts his father faces. He admits his “desire” for “small beer” (6) when it would be expected of him to “prefer strong drink and manly pursuits.” His affection for weak ale indicates his affection for

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227 Maus, Inwardness and Theater, 10 and 11. Maus writes, “[t]he inwardness of persons is constituted by the disparity between what a limited, fallible human observer can see and what is available to the hypostasized divine observer.”

228 2 Henry IV, 230, n.6.
the tavern world, a counter-masculine world predicated upon festivity, fleshly desires, and playing of roles, as opposed to the regimented and patriarchal world of court, the world of “manly pursuits.” Hal, in this moment, is remarkably frank and vulnerable to Poins, expressing the pain of having to give up his lower-class pleasures. In remarking upon his unseemly fondness for weak drink rather than strong, Hal suggests that he must forego his camaraderie with social inferiors to exchange it for the formal bonds of court when he becomes king.

Hal, while divulging his closest secrets, recognizes that his closeness to Poins negatively reflects on his royal persona. He seems earnest in saying:

> these humble considerations make me out of love with my greatness. What a disgrace is it to me to remember thy name, or to know thy face tomorrow! Or to take note how many pair of silk stockings thou hast, with these and those that were thy peach-coloured once; or to bear the inventory of thy shirts, as: one for superfluity and another for use. (11-18)

This Hal, unlike the one we have seen in the previous play, notes the indecorousness of his intimacy with a social inferior, here represented as familiarity with his friend’s wardrobe. This version of Hal, though more forthcoming with his emotions, or perhaps because of his forthrightness, is more openly condescending; once Hal admits to Poins how his own noble garments pinch him, he recognizes that he has made himself too vulnerable to Poins. Hal attempts, in the remainder of the scene, to dissemble from Poins, from Eastcheap, and from his own personal desire to pursue his whims, reconciling himself to limits of sovereignty. Although he vacillates between closeness and distance, oftentimes from one sentence to the next, Hal ultimately prioritizes his nobility and independence over his sharing his anxieties with his friend. He can do both by a condescending reassertion of his distance from Poins after divulging personal
information to him. He makes crass venereal disease jokes worthy of Lucio, to which Poins objects because the jokes are too labored, exclaiming, “how ill it follows…you should talk so idly!” (28-9).²²⁹ Hal’s language does not become a prince and should have more pith and gravitas. Hal feels the need to make jokes at Poins’ expense because he is about to reveal real feelings about his father and his father’s illness; thus, he reestablishes the distance between them before he can make himself vulnerable.

Furthermore, Hal not only distances himself from Poins, but also diminishes Poins’ individuality, lumping him together with commoners and the likes of the degenerates Falstaff and Bardolph. In 1 Henry IV, Hal and Poins bond with each other through their teasing of and joking about Falstaff, their language regarding Falstaff essentially making them an exclusive in-group within the rest of Hal’s Eastcheap clique.²³⁰ This type of bonding also suggests that they can “become a unit without having to define what [they] are for each other,”²³¹ allowing Hal the close bonds of homosocial camaraderie without worrying over vulnerability or responsibility to Poins. However, in attempting to dissever and decathect from his former friends and way of life, Hal targets Poins, the one he has spared from his jokes, to be the butt of his insults. When Poins desires to hear “an excellent good thing” (33), Hal responds, “It shall serve among wits of no higher breeding than thine” (34-5). Hal, as is typical of their dialogue before Bardolph and the Page enter, resorts to the kind of language he had previously reserved for Falstaff, although in this context, it lacks mirth, seeming only to nip or bite.

²²⁹ I should also point out that Hal makes further class distinctions between Poins and himself by referring to the tennis court keeper. His use of tennis to distance himself from Poins and lower-class considerations might be part of his wrathful response to the Dauphin’s gift of tennis balls in scene 1.2 of Henry V.


²³¹ Boxer and Cortez-Conde, 281.
As I have argued earlier, Hal perhaps relates to Poins more easily than the others due to their closer proximity in class status (excepting Sir John Falstaff), and their similar age and educational background. Here, however, Hal demeans Poins’ gentlemanliness. While Falstaff actively retaliates against Hal’s verbal assaults, Poins only resists Hal’s denigrations of him. Hal claims he calls Poins “my friend” “for fault of a better” (40-1), blaming inadequate vocabulary for his past warmness to Poins. The Hal from *Henry IV* would hardly mean this, but the Hal of *2 Henry IV*, who is almost exclusively called Harry (signifying further acceptance of his public role and his distancing from the past Hal), conscious of the imminent “change that I have purposed” (4.3.284), attempts to distance himself from the counter-manhood of the tavern and insulates himself from his vulnerability. His distance from Eastcheap and its crowd is inversely proportional to his embrace of the dominant manhood of court. If Hal has not already angered Poins with his earlier comments, he finally equates Poins with Falstaff, saying, “thou thinkest me as far in the devil’s book as thou and Falstaff for obduracy and persistency” (43-5). Going still further, when Poins remarks that Hal has “been so lewd and so much engraffed to Falstaff” (59-60), Hal responds, “And to thee” (61). Poins rejects the comparison, “I am well spoke on” (62) and insists on his own class status, “The worst that they can say of me is that I am a second brother and that I am a proper fellow of my hands” (63-4).

Hal, ignoring Poins’ individuality, casts him as one whose “thought…keeps the roadway”

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232 For discussions of youthful alternative masculinity and illumination on this point, see Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, as well, Neal, *Masculine Self*, Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England*, and Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*. Hal, in order to detach from a social group that is largely responsible for conferring masculinity onto him, must reassert his independence by defining their relationship as being one of “comradeship” rather than that of “intimate friendship” (Shepard 125).

233 Performances often depict Poins good humoredly taking Hal’s jokes up until this point, such as the Royal Shakespeare Company’s live version of *Henry IV Part II* (2014). I argue that, while Poins finally rejects Hal’s descriptions of him most vocally when being equated with Falstaff, he chides the prince for “talk[ing] so idly” (2.2.29).
Rather than being “sweet Ned” (*1 Henry IV*, 2.4.20), Hal reduces him to being both an everyman and a “corrupter” like Falstaff. Hal ignores Poins’ objections to his characterizations of him, needing to reduce his individuality to support his own needs for superiority. Once sufficiently distant from Poins, Hal can cut himself off emotionally and states that he only values Ned insomuch as he shares the opinions of the average joe.

Their relationship, or maybe just Hal’s valuing of it, has fallen in the interim between the two plays, and continues its downward trajectory during the course of this conversation, once Hal recognizes how much he has revealed to Poins. When Hal suggests they play a prank on Falstaff, Poins responds, “I am your shadow, my lord I’ll follow you” (*2 Henry V*, 2.2.156). As opposed to the earlier Gadshill prank when Hal “allows” Poins to convince him into playing the trick on Falstaff and plays “second” to Poins, here Poins perfunctorily obliges to participate in this prank. Poins recognizes how much his agency has been reduced by Hal, mock-agreeing with Hal’s diminishment of him into a non-agential partner by referring to himself as a “shadow.” Furthermore, while Poins explains the purpose of the Gadshill prank as being to hear the lies “this same fat rogue” will tell, and Hal, however mysteriously and unsatisfactorily, explains his prank on Francis as his “being of all humours,” no justification is offered for this last Eastcheap prank.

Regardless of his tone when declaring that his transformation “From a prince to a prentice” (171) is a “heavy descension” (170), Hal, who did not complain about wearing “buckram,” reveals the indignity such a “transformation” (172) causes his nobility, even if he utters this in mock-humiliation. Hal seems to target this utterance at the audience he has internalized (his father, brothers, or the other nobles at court) rather than his
immediate audience, Poins. Poins is so reduced here that Hal addresses a “non-present” audience and ignores Poins, much as he did at the beginning of the scene when he asseverates, “Before God.” Hal then commands him, “Follow me, Ned” (173) at the end of the scene. While he issues commands to Poins in scene 1.2 of 1 Henry IV after they agree to the Gadshill prank, it seems in that instance that Hal’s tone mocks the imperiousness with which he is expected to act; Poins also has the agency to “provide us all things necessary” (1 Henry IV, 1.2.181-2) and to meet Hal at the appointed time. In this case, Poins is merely to follow, like the dog he describes Falstaff as being earlier in the scene.

This distancing from and diminishment of Poins, in large part, is due to Hal’s desire to decathect from Eastcheap and his former self, to continue in his development as Prince of Wales. However, Hal’s rudeness to Poins should not be shocking, given that Hal reveals to him his feelings about his father:

Marry, I tell thee it is not meet that I should be sad now my father is sick, albeit I could tell to thee, as to one it pleases me for fault of a better to call my friend, I could be sad, and sad indeed, too. (2.2.38-41)

Hal does not want to be seen as a “princely hypocrite” (52) by the commoners, given that he had “played the prodigal” so convincingly that showing devotion to his father now would seem an insincere act. Hal recognizes that his need to put on a consistent masculine performance for others results in the disjunction between “I could be sad” in appearance versus “sad indeed” in reality. He sacrifices performing his true grief for the sake of keeping up appearances before the commoners. Hal seems torn by this, yet Henry finally approves of Hal in scene 4.3, not for the reformation of some essential inner psychic state but for how well he can rationalize his actions and put on a good face.
Hal’s lack of outward emotion gets rationalized by him as playing to the crowd, which, given how conscious Hal is of public opinion, is certainly part of it.\(^{234}\) However, his ambivalence towards his father must also be a contributing factor. Hal cannot grieve outwardly because he resents the burdens he must face because of his father’s usurpation; Hal also inwardly grieving or insulates himself from grieving due to his intuition that his father’s sickness is partly a result of his own “rebellion.”

Hal attributes the reasons for his not outwardly grieving to his concern over the public response. Tim Spiekerman writes, “Hal thinks he would appear unconvincing if he should show his father respect and affection only now that he nears death and as Hal nears the throne. Hal is so distressed by the uncaring image he presents to the world that he is compelled to tell Poins that he is not really like that. But he confides to Poins and not his father.”\(^{235}\) While this is most certainly true, Hal lies to himself in attributing his lack of public grief only to his social performance. Spiekerman is correct in pointing out that Hal could relate his feelings to his father. But then, he would make himself vulnerable to the father he must both psychically kill and emulate. Given that his weariness stems from his inability to reconcile his private and public selves, Hal asserts that his lack of grief is politically calculated in bad faith. Hal lies to himself about his conflicted feelings towards his father, stating that he inwardly bleeds, not wanting to admit that part of his psyche cannot bleed because of his resentment. He publicizes grief over his father to Poins to make him seem to himself a better son, needing to hide his patricidal animosity and to acquit himself better in the sight of an audience who both

\(^{234}\) Traversi, *Shakespeare from*, 57-58, argues that living for “public effect” is a family trait of the Lancastrians.

\(^{235}\) Spiekerman, “The Education of Hal,” 111.
demands manly stoicism from him but also desires that he perform the proper duties of a son.

“Goodnight Falstaff”: Disillusionment with Dissolution

Although Hal has reconciled himself with his two fathers at the end of *I Henry IV*, the inverse proportionality governing Hal’s relationships with the worlds of court and Eastcheap mirrors his relationships with his father figures. Hal’s increasing allegiance to his father and noble values increasingly alienates him from Falstaff. Hal derides Poins to mask his vulnerability; this vulnerability stems from Hal’s ambivalence to his father, the role he will assume, and the responsibilities that role will entail, namely sacrificing his private person for his public persona, his body natural subsumed by the body politic. Although Hal has resigned himself to imitating his father and rejecting Falstaff, he still needs to assert his independence from his father. Thus, he retaliates through his absence from court, creating not just psychic but literal physical distance between himself and his father. Thus, Norman Rabkin is correct to say, “At the end of *Henry IV*, Part One, Hal seemed able to accommodate all of England into his family as he moved towards its symbolic fatherhood. By the end of Part Two, in order to become King of England he has reached out to murder both his fathers.”  

Thus, the prank on Falstaff in scene 2.4, which promises to be a romp, as it recalls the Gadshill prank and the ensuing hilarity at the Boar’s Head, is motivated by Hal’s ambivalence toward both his fathers, and, as a result, ends devoid of mirth. On the one hand, Hal desires to follow in his father’s footsteps, and berating the old man is one way to perform his newly-accepted aristocratic responsibility. As I argued in the last

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236 Norman Rabkin, “Rabbits, Ducks, and *Henry V*,” 284.
chapter, Hal’s “I do; I will” banishes the riot his father is incapable of vanquishing. His mockery of Falstaff here also sets the stage for the final rejection at the end of the play. However, Hal remains ambivalent toward his established goals, and much of the reason he partakes in verbal repartee with Falstaff is due to its conflation of violence and affection; in pranking Falstaff, Hal can perform his counter-masculinity and persuade himself that he is not some monster, that his verbal violence is his performance of friendship, that he is still himself.

Despite Hal’s attempt to have his cake and eat it, his last romp in Eastcheap and last interaction with Falstaff before the infamous rejection, ends not with a bang but Hal’s disgusted impatience with himself. As I have already stated, there is no voiced justification as to why this prank is “necessary,” and, while it seems counter-intuitive that a prank, a game, should need rationalization for its existence, we have received reasons in the earlier play for such larks. The absence of any stated reason for tricking Falstaff here, thus, should be of note. It seems that Shakespeare highlights Hal’s burgeoning maturity and acceptance of his social role by staging a pointless prank that Hal easily leaves aside, “By heaven, Poins, I feel me much to blame / So idly to profane the precious time” (366-7). While in 1 Henry IV, Hal receives news of rebels endangering his father’s kingdom and waits until the morrow to visit his father, idling the time with a play extempore until the arrival of the Sheriff, Hal in 2 Henry IV immediately leaves the Boar’s Head after switching from prose to verse, invoking the religious language (“by heaven,” “profane”) that he will later master in his performance as the reformed Henry V. Instead of “uphold[ing] the unyoked humour of…idleness,” he chides himself for being idle. His “Falstaff, good night” (371) is also direct, serious, and perfunctory, free of the playful
insults that had previously defined their relationship, seemingly uttered out of a sense of obligation, recognizing for the final time his surrogate father.

The very nature of their interaction has deteriorated from mutual masculine repartee to a debased version of itself. Hal goes through the motions, having mostly decathcted from his friends in Eastcheap, yet unwilling or unable to install himself at court. The interaction between Poins, Hal, and Falstaff in this scene lasts only about seventy prose lines, and Hal can only muster “You whoreson candle-mine, you” (2.4.304), whereas their name-calling in _1 Henry IV_ was far more fertile. Given that he has spent so much of his recent time in Eastcheap with Falstaff and the others, he feels comfortable there, despite its decreasing benefits to him. Although Hal has stated his discomfort at continuing to play the uncaring son, he still does so to forestall the guilt and pain in seeing his father sickly and to avoid the fact of his imminent accession. Hal returns to Eastcheap in lieu of frequenting court because he does not know what else to do with himself. He can still be in the dominant position at the Boar’s Head, while his attendance at court would require his subservience.

Falstaff, rather than pretending to know the true prince in disguise, as Hal suggests or prompts, as though trying to relive the “carefree” days of _1 Henry IV_, admits not knowing Hal and Poins were within hearing. However, just as Hal has become more focused on the practical matter of his eventual succession, Falstaff seems to have become of Hal’s mind, either intuiting this change in Hal or having heard Hal express his new goals in conversation, telling Poins

No abuse, Ned, i’th’world! Honest Ned, none. I dispraised him before the wicked, [to Prince] that the wicked might not fall in love with thee—in which doing I have done the part of a careful friend and a true subject, and thy father is to give me thanks for it. No abuse, Hal; none, Ned, none. No, faith, boys, none. (322-28)
Falstaff’s rationalizations now seem to have royal sanction—Henry does want Hal to be distant from the commoners. Falstaff’s answer, rather than being outlandish and absurd, as had been characteristic, is practical and thoroughly Henrician. While Falstaff’s prior explanations for his criticism of the prince and his family were presented as outrageous and playful, he has latched onto their logic of superiority over the lower-classes. Falstaff, though using Puritanical language, picks up on their aristocratic bias, and mixes it with his own base instinct for advancement at any cost, which, while latent in the previous play, is on full, cynical display in 2 Henry IV. Falstaff’s desire for remuneration for having “dispraised” Hal “before the wicked” mirrors Hal’s desire for political advancement and to impress his audience with an unforeseen reformation. Hal and Falstaff lack their accustomed gusto in pranking and getting pranked, in grilling the offending party and the offending party’s exoneration of itself. They are instead preoccupied with other issues: Falstaff’s desire for money and Hal’s consolidation of his hegemonic masculinity. It seems that Hal and Falstaff, both round characters in the previous play, now reduce themselves to one-dimensional caricatures of themselves in an attempt to achieve their goals.

If their joyless exchange has not signaled to the audience that the relationship between the sow and its yet living farrow has “dwindled,” we learn earlier that the Prince has broken Falstaff’s head for an insult leveled at Henry, one that would have some political resonance. This signifies Hal’s further acceptance of patriarchal imperatives between 1 and 2 Henry IV. While Falstaff has the audacity to say, “Depose me?” (1 Henry IV, 2.4.423) in the play extempore, making a marked reference to his father’s

237 2 Henry IV, 222, n. 89.
crime,\textsuperscript{238} Hal has struck Falstaff in the interim for making a joke about a plot to depose Henry.\textsuperscript{239} Although neither character brings this up themselves—Mistress Quickly reveals this detail—it seems to lie in the background, whether or not Hal or Falstaff remember or put much stock into the incident. Hal has shifted from lashing out at his father’s lawful surrogate in the figure of the Lord Chief Justice to striking the figure of misrule and anarchy, his surrogate father in Eastcheap.

Yet, despite the increasing distance between Hal and Falstaff, we should note that Hal still desires to play a prank on Falstaff. Although Hal seems to have learned all he can from Falstaff, “there must be more than political utility that draws Hal to Falstaff,”\textsuperscript{240} perhaps Falstaff’s independence from the demands of the courtly world, which suggests why, at this point in his father’s sickness, Hal still feels compelled to idle the time with Falstaff. Despite his rejecting what Falstaff stands for, Hal must be attracted to him. After all, Falstaff is a knight, but the thoroughness of his anti-chivalric disposition suggests that, while having played the social game for some time, he has decided to drop out. In a sense, Falstaff is what Hal could grow up to be, were Hal to do what he suggests to Francis in \textit{1 Henry IV}, to play the coward and show his apprenticeship “a fair pair of heels” (\textit{1 Henry IV}, 2.4.46-7). Soon to be limited to a public role and performing his political body, Hal wants to assert the body natural that will surely shrink after his coronation. Although Hal rejects him as a model and later as an individual, Falstaff still offers, very much in a literal sense, the fullest version of the body natural Hal can

\textsuperscript{238} Hal himself seems to acknowledge his father’s crime in \textit{1 Henry IV} in order to distance himself from it, particularly in his response to the taking of purses (“Who? I rob? I a thief? Not I, by my faith” (1.2.131), wanting to put that solely on his father’s shoulders. Despite his father’s criminality, his own legitimacy is not in question. Of course, he acknowledges the burden placed on him in his soliloquy, but as far an externalized audience is concerned, he is unconcerned with it.

\textsuperscript{239} \textit{2 Henry IV}, 222, n. 89. The gist of Falstaff’s joke is equating Henry with John Magdalen, a priest who impersonated Richard II and participated in a conspiracy to apprehend King Henry.

\textsuperscript{240} Spiekerman, “The Education of Hal,” 114.
achieve. Falstaff has successfully divorced himself from social responsibility to lead a life of pleasure and role-playing, his career the inverse of Hal’s.

Falstaff’s page, on the other hand, has a career that matches Hal’s.\(^{241}\) He must follow the orders of a “father” he does not entirely respect, mirroring Hal’s relationship to both Falstaff and Henry. The page, too, quickly realizes that the men of Eastcheap, “though they would serve me, could not be man to me, for indeed three such antics [Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph] do not amount to a man” (*Henry V*, 3.2.30-1); he declares that he must “seek some better service” (51-2) if he himself wants to become a proper man because it “makes much against my manhood if I should take from another’s pocket to put into mine” (49-50). The page, like Hal, both wants to distance himself from the taint of theft and desires more honorable masculine models than those from the Boar’s Head. Given Hal’s gift of the page to Falstaff and the parallels between the page and Hal (*2 Henry IV*, 2.2.67), we should perhaps read the page as a Hal-surrogate. Regardless of whether Hal’s assigning the boy to Falstaff occurs before or after he breaks Falstaff’s head, his giving Falstaff a page signals Hal’s favor to Falstaff. Of course, this gift coming from Hal, much like the “charge of foot,” is both a favor and a friendly jab. Falstaff must seem more like a war hero with the page in his service, yet he tells the page, “If the Prince put thee into my service for any other reason than to set me off, why then I have no judgment” (1.2.12-4). Falstaff correctly deduces that Hal assigns him the page, in part, for the visual joke their size and age disparities elicit. Although Hal has absented himself from Falstaff, installing the page in Falstaff’s service, whose wit matches Hal’s as is evidenced by his jokes at Bardolph’s expense in 2.2 and his smart remarks to Falstaff at

the play’s opening,\textsuperscript{242} seems a way for Hal to both distance himself from Falstaff and to reinstall himself by his side. Hal \textit{has} changed, however, and, in lieu of himself, places a surrogate at Falstaff’s side because the role no longer fits.

\textbf{Courting Approval 2.0: Independence through Improvisation}\textsuperscript{243}

By scene 4.3, the audience, much like Henry, wonders about the whereabouts of Hal. We have only seen him in two scenes at this point, yet Henry’s illness suggests that the absent son will soon be king. Soon Hal returns, takes his father’s crown after mistaking him for dead, receives yet another fatherly tongue-lashing, reconciles with his father, and receives the dying king’s “very latest counsel (4.3.311).” Perhaps his absence stems from Shakespeare’s artistry; as have I mentioned, Harold Jenkins and the many critics he influenced, believing that \textit{2 Henry IV} was an afterthought, argue that Shakespeare absents his reformed Hal in the sequel as long as possible to avoid rehashing the reformation arc that had already been covered in the first play. While there might be some truth in that perspective, given my argument that the Henriad (and other Shakespearean plays) illustrate \textit{good} men breaking bad in order to be \textit{good} men, Hal \textit{has} to absent himself, as manliness was predicated upon independence, self-control, and strength. Hal, grieving over his father’s illness in \textit{2 Henry IV} and, seemingly, also, his diminished potential, cannot convince himself of possessing these traits signifying an adult masculinity if he must pay homage to his king/father. Only when his father is on the edge of death can Hal return to court without being diminished in the manner his father

\textsuperscript{242} Sasser, “The Boy That I Gave Falstaff,” 152, points outs that “[t]he first words spoken by Hal in \textit{1 Henry IV} and the Page in \textit{2 Henry IV} are similar in that Shakespeare introduces both characters through their aptitude for insulting Falstaff.”

\textsuperscript{243} Lewis, \textit{Kingship and Masculinity}, 78, describes that this episode is based on a real meeting between Hal and his father.
had diminished him by dictating his responses in scene 3.2 of *1 Henry IV*. While Henry once again lectures his son about maintaining the royal persona and the political maneuvering required to solidify the kingdom, Hal is able to improvise the appropriate answers immediately. It seems that in his absence during Act 3, Hal he has come to terms with his impending social role, particularly how performing subservience does not necessarily put one in an inferior role. After all, to be a good king, one must conform to the gendered expectations of a good ruler. Thus, as Katherine Lewis writes of the historical Henry V, his “virtuous manhood was one of the means by which he could meet the expectations of his subjects and assure them that his interests were their interests.”

By adhering to the social expectations of others, the historical personage or the Prince Hal of Shakespeare’s imagination can achieve his own objectives by persuading the other interested parties that they have the same goals. Hal spent the bulk of *1 Henry IV* illustrating to his audience that he was superior to all other parties but now realizes that, to attain an untroubled kingliness, he must also perform subservience. The shows of subservience to his father, however earnest, are still performances, and his father approves. In their interaction in this scene, Hal effectively performs both subservience to his father and his future mastery over others in his ability to spin potential mistakes into politically persuasive answers.

If the audience is unprepared for this transformation in Hal, Henry surely is not prepared for the Hal who will responsibly rationalize his stealing of Henry’s crown. Henry has seen so little of Hal the last several years, ones especially important in defining the kind of man Hal will grow up to be, that he cannot possibly have any idea what kind

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244 Lewis, 96
245 Lewis argues throughout the first half of *Kingship and Masculinity* that Henry V was extremely aware of the self-image he created and cultivated his masculine persona for effect.
of man his son is. Yet, Henry, in advising Clarence to “mediate” (25) on behalf of his brothers when Hal assumes the throne, describes Hal by asserting “For he is gracious, if he be observed” (30) and calls him “charitable” (32); however, once angry, his passion is not easily mitigated; and the king advises Clarence to “chide him…reverently” (37). While Bert O. States takes Henry’s “word portrait” as an accurate description of the variability of Hal’s moods (and offers a way to play him), it seems that Henry merely recycles stereotypical descriptions of nobility. He offers received discourse about proper noble masculinity as summary, criticism, and potential silver lining regarding his son’s behavior, seeming to draw from Castiglione, who balances the courtier’s humanistic education with idealized medieval aristocratic values of liberality and the defense of one’s honor. Thus, while the nobleman should be open to counsel, he should also, when moved, act quickly, sternly, and strongly.

Henry, perhaps unnervingly, sees too much of himself in his rebellious son, as Henry’s criticism of Hal’s youthful behavior, coupled with his advice to Clarence, stressing temperance and prudence in using Hal’s favor toward him to mediate for his brothers, illustrates his desire to distance himself from his own past behavior. Not wanting to recognize his own “wildness” in acting in unchristian and destructive ways, Henry, the same man who violated the terms of his banishment under King Richard to defend his inheritance and honor, paints his son as the epitome of such behavior. This stereotypical portrayal of Hal, “the noble image of my youth” (4.3.55, emphasis added), while perhaps including some truths about Hal’s character, is presented by Henry, whose guilt continually causes him both to face and to evade his own crimes and guilt. Thus, on

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247 Castiglione, Courtier, 28.
the verge of recognizing similarity between his son’s behavior and his past behavior, Henry resorts to stereotypical discourses about noble behavior, defending himself from his own crimes by adopting a position of ignorance.

Regardless of the self-evasions involved in Henry’s description of his son, he is reasonably aggrieved here. Conduct books underscored the father’s role in securing a legacy through his son: “A godly father can leave behind him no monument more excellent that his sonne, the very lively Image of his maners, vertues, constancie, wisdome, and godlinesse” (emphasis added), Bartholomew Batty writes in *The Christian Man’s Closet*. Henry’s position as King only intensifies the imperative, particularly as he himself has not inherited the throne. Lewis’ claims about the historical figures Shakespeare represents are especially pertinent here: “Given the circumstances in which Henry IV had come to the throne, and the unprecedented rupture of the direct line of succession, it was all the more important for both him and his son to prove that, by their conduct, as much as their claim, they were rightful ruler and successor.”

Hal’s perceived failures as a prince, then, become proof of Henry’s illegitimacy as ruler. Henry is not concerned with the state of Hal’s soul but Hal’s ability to maintain and propagate his legacy. If Hal fails to become this “monument,” Henry intuits that he might not be such a "godly" father, and God's displeasure with Henry is demonstrated and fulfilled by his son’s riot. Henry’s inability to keep his son in control also shows him to be an ineffective householder, and, if one were unable to keep one’s house in order, by analogy, if one were unable to keep one’s house in order, by analogy,

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249 Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 68.

250 See my discussion in the previous chapter on Henry’s address to Hal in scene 3.2 of *1 Henry IV*. Henry himself conjectures that Hal’s misbehavior is divine punishment.
that person would also be an ineffective governor.\textsuperscript{251} Hal’s riot speaks more about Henry’s ability, and perhaps \textit{right}, to rule than it does about his own fitness to govern.

Henry, though playing the victim, acknowledges his and Hal’s similarity in the phrase “the noble image of my youth,” perhaps desiring punishment for having driven Hal away with his sternness. Those concerned with educating the nobility during the Tudor period believed with Roger Ascham that “the matter lieth not so much in the disposition of them that be young as in the order and manner of bringing-up by them that be old”\textsuperscript{252} and that a stumbling student should be “monish[ed]…gently, which shall make him both willing to amend and glad to go forward in love and hope of learning.”\textsuperscript{253} Henry intuits on some level that his stern schoolmastering to Hal, rather than effectively correcting Hal’s misbehaviors, has caused him to give up attempting to learn from his father altogether.

However, Henry, perhaps to protect himself, does not implicate himself as the problem for very long. Rather than blame his bad parenting, Henry ascribes all the ills to Hal himself; Hal’s “headstrong riot [that] hath no curb” (62) and being counselled by his “rage and hot blood” (63) suggest that Hal’s ills are based primarily on his youth. Henry becomes the hopeless parent Peacham rebukes: “if they perceive any wildnesse or unstayednesse in their children, are presently in despaire, and out of all hope of them for ever prooving Schollers, or fit for any thing else; neither consider the nature of youth, nor the effect of time, \textit{the Physitian of all}.”\textsuperscript{254} Thus, Henry dismisses Warwick’s words summarizing Hal’s “expectations strategy,” predicated upon the passage of time—“The

\begin{footnotes}
\item[251] Neal, \textit{Masculine Self}, 9, and Shepard, \textit{Meanings of Manhood}, 70.
\item[252] Ascham, \textit{The Schoolmaster}, 34.
\item[253] Ascham, \textit{The Schoolmaster}, 20. Elyot expresses similar views prior to Ascham.
\item[254] Peacham, \textit{Compleat Gentleman}, 33.
\end{footnotes}
Prince but studies his companions / Like a strange tongue” (68-69), “So, like gross terms, / The Prince will in the perfectness of time / Cast off his followers” (73-75)—with acerbic, sententious dismissal: “’Tis seldom when the bee doth leave her comb / In the dead carrion,” (78-79). Henry transforms the sweetness of nobility that Warwick ascribes to Hal into the stench of corruption.

While Henry underestimates Hal, he also fears recognition that people can be other than they appear, a defense mechanism to avoid that same insight into his own character. After all, as many critics argue, Henry inaugurates a new pragmatic political system in the course of these plays, supplanting the feudal loyalty represented by Richard.255 While Richard’s uncles in Richard II pay supreme reverence to the office of the king, even when the king does not deserve the loyalty he receives, they believe in his divine right and their place in the social/divine hierarchy as natural order; without them, chaos.256 Bolingbroke, on the other hand, exhibiting an early form of affective individualism,257 comes back to take what is rightfully his, at once claiming feudal values but presaging a new order in defying the king’s authority and seeking personal “gain.” He states that he only comes for his own but later deposes Richard. Bolingbroke’s reticence in the first several acts of Richard II, combined with his ascension to the throne, clearly indicates a self that does not correspond to his dutiful son persona. Unlike Hal’s

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255 See Traversi, Shakespeare from, 49, and Howard and Rackin, Engendering a Nation, particularly the chapters on Richard II and 1 Henry IV.
256 Elyot, The Gouernour Book 1, 3.
257 Stone, The Family, Sex, and Marriage, 22. While Stone argues that the development and overall emergence of this view of the individual was largely driven by an educated middle- and upper-class, growing secularism, and that it focuses on the individual’s right to privacy and leisure, which does not correspond to Bolingbroke’s return to England or even to Shakespeare’s day. I want to argue, however, that Stone’s argument that “affective individualism” and the nuclear family emerge when kinship bonds and peerage decline, seems to correspond to the action of Richard II, not to mention the more obvious fact that Bolingbroke ignores the commands of the king, counter to what medieval feudalism would have preached about loyalty to one’s king and cousin, in order to take what is his, left to him by his father.
rebellion, Henry’s *results from (or is legitimized by)* his playing the dutiful son, although it ultimately transforms into something acquisitive, not mere filial loyalty. Henry’s quick and biting aphoristic dismissal of Warwick’s justification of Hal’s actions rejects the possibility that “these are actions that a man might play.” Henry insists inside equals outside because he, as he is wont to do, denies his own crimes and guilt in order to hold onto the fiction that he was merely “compelled to kiss” “greatness” (3.2.74). His insistence on transparency also reveals his understanding of how much his very person, his body natural and the actions he undertook to become king, have marred the office irrevocably. By denying the past faults of his body natural, Henry attempts to reconnect the king’s two bodies—his divine kingliness would also erase his sin.

Warwick’s remarks about Hal’s behavior seem strangely insightful, but Warwick and Hal—and, if he is honest with himself, Henry—are part of the same “discourse community” and would be aware of this strategy. Machiavelli, eighty years before this play was written, advocates the strategy of playing the fox, or prudent liar, over the lion, or honest man of power, as the better policy.258 Thus, while we often regard Hal as being the consummate politician and his playing prodigal as being some particularly unique strategy of advancement and preemptive diversion from the real crimes he will commit as king, pretending to break good while in fact breaking bad,259 manipulating others through

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259 This strategy, articulated by Prince Hal in his *1 Henry IV* soliloquy, is also adapted from Machiavelli’s *Prince*. Although Hal rationalizes away his real prodigality, he spins the narrative and casts his prodigality as a way to dazzle men’s eyes. Machiavelli writes, “Since a prince by birth has fewer reasons and less need to offend his subjects, it follows that he should be better liked; if he has no extravagant vices to make him hateful, it is only natural that he should be popular with his own people” (5). Hal presumably understands, even this early, that he will reign more easily than his father in having inherited the throne. However, because he stages a reformation, the vices he was seen to have prior to his reformation are now erased, and the new self he presents is seen as thoroughly redeemed, further legitimizing himself as fit ruler. Lewis in *Kingship and Masculinity* suggests the possibility that the prodigality narrative surrounding the prince’s earlier life originated in Henry V’s own reign (88–89).
one’s appearance was a widely known strategy and even one Henry offers to Hal when giving his fatherly political lectures. While Hal himself has, though not consistently, aligned himself with this very project sponsored by his father for the better part of two plays, Henry, perhaps due to his guilt and his projection of his own faults onto his son, cannot see Hal for the political performer he is. Perhaps the real lesson of this scene or other interactions between Henry and Hal are how one’s guilt over the past negatively affects the way one perceives others, reads their motives, detrimentally effecting one’s outlooks on the future. This is a necessary lesson for Hal to learn, as, if he is to legitimize and surpass his father, he has to consign away his guilt. If Hal can void enough of his body natural and employ the aristocrats’ favored strategy of eschewing responsibility, he will be on the road to success and achieve things his father was incapable of.

Of course, Hal’s playing holiday is not only a political strategy but psychological retaliation against the burden his father has placed on him, his attempts to assert his independence over his father. When offered differing answers about Hal’s whereabouts and finally being answered, “With Poins and other his continual followers” (53), Henry states, “my grief / Stretches itself beyond the hour of death” (56-7) in thinking about his legacy. Hal, through his rebellion, turns Henry’s patriarchy against itself. Hal violates his father’s expectations, transforming himself into the emasculating pain that unmans Henry, rather than the dutiful heir who will consolidate his masculine legacy. Hal, at some point, has discovered that his absence is the most potent weapon in asserting his masculine independence from his father, in part because he does not want to be submerged by his father’s superior role as patriarch and king. Because Henry

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260 See above for my discussion about Henry’s verb tense use in his initial comments to Hal in I Henry IV 3.2.
misconstrues Hal’s absence and believes him unfit to succeed him as king, Henry urges Clarence at the beginning of the scene to maintain the peace between the Hal and his brothers, as if securing their fraternal bonds will be the tempering influence on Hal’s perceived wildness. Hal’s riot also causes Henry to revisit the burden of his usurpation, which his unstable position as king, resulting from the very masculine act that installs him in the throne, prevents him from successfully bearing. Although he imagines the “rotten times that you shall look upon / When I am sleeping with my ancestors” (60-61) when advising Clarence, he avoids his own complicity, seeming to forget that his own reign, characterized by these plays, has been a continuous extinguishing of rebellion. He places the decay of the kingdom into the future, further burdening Hal, while he finally gets his long-awaited sleep.

However much Hal has desired to demonstrate his control throughout these plays, his love for his father and guilt for harming Henry place him in a subordinate position. As I argued earlier, the following father and son interaction, though, suggests that Hal has finally come to terms with performing his subordination, finally realizing how effective it can be in receiving, maintaining, and exerting control over others.

Hal’s entrance in scene 4.3 is notable for his excitement over his brother John’s success at foiling the rebels at Gaultree. He asks if anyone has seen his brother, and then seems surprised that Clarence is sad, remarking, “How now, rain within doors and none abroad?” (141). Upon hearing that his father is “Exceedingly ill” (142), he suggests

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261 It seems Shakespeare forgoes the sibling rivalry between Thomas and Hal. Lewis writes in *Kingship and Masculinity* that Clarence might have been responsible for the tales of Hal’s prodigality and that Henry himself spurred on this rivalry to weaken Hal’s position, as Hal essentially ruled England from 1409-11 while Henry was sick (69-75). Although, we should note Clarence is the one who offers that Hal has been at Eastcheap having dinner with his usual friends, perhaps trying to disqualify Hal from his inheritance of the throne.
that hearing the news of the victory will hearten his father. It seems Hal, who has dropped everything as soon as Peto brings him news from court in scene 2.4, rushes to court to see his father and learns of Lancaster’s success on his way. Hal, no doubt happy to hear the news, nevertheless performs his excitement to demonstrate his eagerness to play the good son and prince. Hal illustrates that he shares the same values as the rest of his family, despite where he might have been earlier that day.

Hal’s description of the crown as a “troublesome…bedfellow” (153) indicates his fitness for the crown he will soon inherit and echoes the sentiments his father had expressed in scene 3.1. While father and son have yet to be fully reconciled, they share the same assumptions about nobility and rule. Hal presumes his father dead from the audacious reasoning that, while a person is king and “wearing the crown,” one cannot possibly rest easily, part of the trademark Lancastrian spinning of privilege as burden. After he assumes his father has died, he states in some contested lines,


Thy due from me
Is tears and heavy sorrows of the blood,
Which nature, love and filial tenderness
Shall, O dear father, pay thee plenteously.
My due from thee is this imperial crown,
Which, as immediate from thy place and blood,
Derives itself to me. (168-73)

Hal speaks of death and succession in his accustomed terms of monetary transaction, but his measured tone seems odd. A loyal son of a recently deceased father would presumably show more emotion, rather than declare he will pay the due he owes his father in the future as “nature, love and filial tenderness” “shall pay plenteously”

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262 Derek Traversi, *Shakespeare from*. Traversi’s treatment of these history plays repeatedly insists on seeing the traits exhibited in Hal as those inherited from his father and past forebears. Traversi writes that Hal “is presented to our consideration, not merely as an individual, but as the member of a family, whose qualities and defects he shares” (5).
(emphasis added) back. However, his due from his father “derives itself” to him no sooner than his father passes on. These lines ostensibly focus on (and, in a way, reinstate the logic of) patrilineal succession, which Hal reinstitutes through verbalization and his presumed accession, painting his father as the root of the very plant he uprooted. However, Hal promises his father his due feeling in the future while he receives his due immediately, right after his father dies, as he is “immediate,” meaning next in succession. Henry pays Hal now, while Hal will pay Henry back in the future. Perhaps the shock of his father’s death or the immense responsibility of kingship now placed on Hal has resulted in his verbal deferral of mourning, but this also suggests that Hal is not entirely saddened by his father’s death due to his ambivalence.

Some critics have puzzled why Hal, upon believing his father dead, immediately snatches the crown and “contends” with it. However, given that this is the burden Hal has run away from, going so far as fleeing to Eastcheap and forging a counter-masculinity in opposition to that required of him as Prince of Wales, after almost two full plays of preparing himself for the responsibility, he believes the moment has come and needs to reconcile himself to his burden. Hal, wrestling with his father’s tainted crown, says as he puts it on,

Lo, where it sits,  
Which God shall guard; and put the world’s whole strength  
Into one giant arm, it shall not force  
This lineal honour from me. This from thee  
Will I to mine leave, as ’tis left to me (174-8).

Hal, believing he now possesses the crown, insists upon the naturalness of its deriving itself to him based on the lineal succession that his father disrupted. Hal promises that he will leave the crown to his own issue just as he received it, further erasing the past by
proclaiming “God shall guard” him. Hal seemingly forgets the deposition and death of Richard by assuming that God will protect him. However, he likely makes this statement to present himself to his audience—most specifically, any current or future skeptics, including himself—as a legitimate ruler due to his inheritance. He also passes over his riot, which would recall his earlier efforts to dissociate himself from usurpation and regicide. Here, when he believes his father dead, and afterwards in dialogue with Henry, Hal neglects recollection of how the Lancasters came to power. Yet, as the Arden 3 points out, Hal ironically seizes the crown before it is his to take, in a sense imitating his father, and, in that very imitation, shows his fitness to rule; however, he also contradicts the very arguments supporting his own legitimacy by becoming a “usurper” himself. His acting the usurper illustrates both his emulation of his father and his unconscious desire for his father’s death.

While Henry’s first speech to Hal in 1 Henry IV, concerning Hal’s riot and seeming unconcern for his father’s life, seems to be further evidence of a father’s misjudging the “true nature” of his son, here the King’s response to Hal’s “I never thought to hear you speak again” (221) is more astute: “Thy wish was father, Harry to that thought” (222). Henry points at what might be the most significant motivation for Hal’s playing prodigal. As we know, Henry underestimates Hal’s political acumen, as he iterates and reiterates to his son his success in “meeting” the crown, seeing Hal’s “vile participation” as clearly antithetical to his own methods, while we know Hal precisely holds the same values and tarnishes his reputation so that he can varnish it in the

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future. Thus, while Henry correctly believes Hal’s misbehavior is directed towards him, he is mistaken that his son does not love him. His son’s behavior is instead motivated by ambivalence, refusing the double burden he inherits to both exonerate and emulate his father’s crime. Henry’s statement that Hal’s wish was “father” to Hal’s thought, though explicitly referring to the ambition he believes his son has, suggests that Hal’s true father is not Falstaff or Henry so much as it is the responsibility he inherits. Because Hal has been so encumbered by having to legitimize his father’s legacy and showing himself the proper heir of Edward III, it should come as no surprise that, when his father seems dead, he would already be grappling with the responsibility left to him. Despite Henry’s assumption that the upbringing he has provided for Hal has had no effect, it, in fact, is the animus for his actions. Like Henry, Hal sees the crown both as desirable and as unenviably burdensome.

Hal allows Henry to harangue his behavior once again despite his now full allegiance to his father and his acceptance of hegemonic masculinity. Hal explains that his tears keep him from “forestall[ing] this dear and deep rebuke” (270), wanting to perform the proper place of a son. He perhaps also wants to hear what others of his father’s opinion seem to think of him, enjoying just how well his fiction has succeeded and the pain his father suffers in rehearsing these mischaracterizations. We should also consider that Hal, or part of him, might be truly pained that his father still has such a low

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264 Traversi, *Shakespeare from*. Traversi writes of Henry’s “use of modesty to arrive at a position of pride” (83) and that Hal learns this. Traversi also writes that the Lancastrians “live for public effect” as they “subordin[ate]…personality to the public function” (58).

265 Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 72, writes, “Prince Henry certainly fits the stereotype of an ambitious young man, refusing to wait his turn for power within the patriarchal hierarchy patiently and submissively.” Shakespeare, though more interested in depicting a Hal who runs from his burden, occasionally gives hints that his father worries about his usurping the throne—he dismisses his attendant lords but asks them to stay close at hand (Holinhed reports these rumors of usurpation *1 Henry IV*, 257, n.2). Hal also utters a bizarre remark to his father after saving him from the Douglas. Of course, the historical Hal is a much more accomplished soldier and had his own faction of supporters.
opinion of him, and Henry’s words are punishment for the sins against his father Hal feels he has committed, intuiting that he is more sinning than sinned against.

The reconciliation that occurs in their interaction here is not so much private and domestic as it is public and political, particularly since Henry’s “very latest counsel” (309) follows it, which consists of political advice rather than fatherly wisdom. This scene of mutual acknowledgment between father and son lacks warm emotion; the most we see is in Hal’s “O dear father”—this being the only time in the two plays that Hal calls Henry by his domestic title. Just when Hal seems to be on the verge of expressing deep feeling for his father or acknowledging their biological connection, he brings up political matters (272, 282, 287). Hal almost always treats his father as a public figure, distancing their kinship, because claiming kinship would taint his own succession. He kneels in abasement and apology, but rather than addressing his father, he addresses “my liege” (268). While we cannot know exactly what goes on in Hal’s heart, there are multiple motives guiding his responses to his father. Showing Henry that he has learned his lessons, Hal tries on his impending social role, illustrating that he has collapsed the inner and outer worlds, saying of his taking the crown,

If I affect it more
Than as your honour and as your renown,
Let me no more from this obedience rise,
Which my most inward, true and duteous spirit
Teacheth this prostrate and exterior bending. (274-8)

Hal declares that he values the crown insomuch as it belongs to his father, playing the obedient role he has avoided or uncomfortably played for one and a half plays. Hal’s asserting the unity of interior and exterior, in its very utterance, acknowledges that these

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266 Traversi, *Shakespeare from_, 125-6, describes the Lancastrians’ inability to divorce inner sentiment from public performance.
two are often at odds; he feels compelled to explain that his outward obedience, reflected in his prostration before his father, demonstrates his inner being. He follows this with, “God witness with me” (279), invoking God (as he constantly does in Henry V) as justification for his actions and because God, who sees into the hearts of all people, can accurately judge Hal’s character. Having been invoked, God’s “presence” at the scene can attest to the sincerity of Hal’s actions, which could be seen as disingenuous by outside, human observers. Hal pleads, “If I do feign, / O let me in my present wildness die / And never live to show th’incredulous world / The noble change that I have purposed” (281-4). He does feign, as he performs for his father’s sake, regardless of how representative it is of his true feelings. However, if Hal fails to convince his father of the “congruence between outward appearance and inner selfhood,” his response to his father’s harsh words, and, in general, the rest of his words to his father in this scene, demonstrates masculine “governance of one’s desire rather than enslavement to it.” Regardless of whether Hal’s inner and outer worlds are congruent, the only thing that matters is his ability to convincingly perform their congruence for other people and to demonstrate that he is not controlled by his desires but controls his desires. When he discusses his “present wildness,” he refers only to his actions as they are perceived by people external to himself. While he seemingly admits his own idle behavior, he balances that acknowledgment by invoking “the noble change that I have purposed,” indicating that his “wildness” is an artful deception, installing him in a position of control. While his father can never get beyond his guilt when rationalizing his actions, Hal is more

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267 See also the discussion of “Before God” in scene 2.2 in the previous section.
successful in dictating how others perceive him, spinning himself as being in control even when he seems most out of control.

Hal’s rendition of his words to the crown is not an accurate portrayal of what happens and should be interpreted skeptically. Contemporary Hal criticism tends to interpret his words wholly as lies, but, then, why does Henry so willingly acknowledge them as truth, given that the absurdity of Hal’s description recalls Falstaff’s most outlandish evasions? Are we to believe that that the shrewd, manipulative Henry has become naïve suddenly? Henry’s age and sickness, despite his pronounced criticisms of Hal, perhaps contribute to his wanting to believe the best of his son. More likely, however, Henry knows Hal sells him a fiction, but the lies are appropriate to the justifications he will need to utter once king, and Henry appreciates the performance. Henry does not typically heap praise upon his son, but, if he seems too easily convinced here, it is because Hal has learned the appropriate rhetorical strategies.

Henry recognizes, perhaps more so than Hal himself, his son’s desire for the crown and admires the ways in which Hal improvises this noble spin on the dubious act of stealing away with the crown. Henry, having ascended to the throne largely due to the performance of his public persona, knows, as Machiavelli did, that “men in general judge more by the sense of sight than by the sense of touch, because everyone can see but only a few can test by feeling. Everyone sees what you seem to be, few know what you really are.” Thus, as Jamey Graham argues, “Whether Hal’s self-portrayals are sincere is unknowable and, with respect to their success, irrelevant…as long as Hal controls his appearance there is no privileged position from which a spectator may see his

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270 Machiavelli, Prince, 49.
motives.” Henry, knowing that a king’s performance of transparency ultimately matters, approves of Hal’s performance, worthy of a king (and fitting the son of a usurper), continues to gild, “God put in thy mind to take it hence, / That thou mightst win the more thy father’s love, / Pleading so wisely in excuse of it” (307-9). Henry’s echo of Hal’s language gives further precedent to use religious language to color one’s deeds. Henry’s awareness that Hal’s response is a fiction is evident when he says, “Pleading so wisely in excuse of it,” implying Henry knows Hal has improvised a response but that he approves of Hal’s answer and his fitness to wear the crown. Having earlier mistaken his son as a “foolish youth” (4.3.226), Henry recognizes that Hal understands that effective kingly (and masculine) performance depends not so much on independence and self-sufficiency but the ability to rationalize one’s actions as practical. Hal takes his father’s crown because he thinks his father’s dead but is able to spin the theft in a way to make himself sound noble. Henry knows from this example that when Hal commits ignoble deeds as king, Hal will be capable of improvising and rationalizing to present them in the best light. Henry loves his son more, not because of the content of Hal’s answer but because Hal has the wherewithal to deliver it.

Henry’s recognition of Hal’s fitness to rule Hal allows him to be honest in his final counsel about the political machinations that motivated his actions as king. His final counsel consists of two competing impulses, both of which combine into wonderful advice for Hal. Henry rationalizes away his guilt over his usurpation, but, as much as he tries to evade his consciousness over his deviousness, he betrays himself in his language, saying, “God knows, my son, / By what bypaths and indirect, crook’d ways / I met this

crown” (312-4), then yoking that admission together with his recognition of “How troublesome it sat upon my head” (315). The lesson Hal learns from his father’s apparent conflict is that the powerful can rationalize away their crimes even while admitting guilt. Henry knows he stole the crown, and he knows Hal knows he stole it, but he performs the kind of rhetoric fitting a king for Hal’s sake and his own. One can have one’s exculpatory cake and have someone else eat it, too. Henry implicates himself by mentioning the “bypaths” and “crook’d ways” he took in his ascension, yet he only “met” the crown—as if like Worcester, he found rebellion in his path—as he “gain[ed]…it by” the “assistances” (322) of his friends. In the moment of being most honest with himself and his son, Henry finds a way to evade the real knowledge of himself and his crime. While they may not have served Henry well in his own reign, these mental gymnastics will help Hal justify his future actions.

Henry acknowledges that succession will be “quieter” for Hal as he will inherit the throne and that “all the soil of the achievement goes / With me into the earth” (318-19). This statement later provides Hal a template with which to convince his brothers and the Lord Chief Justice of his reformation: “My father is gone wild into his grave / For in his tomb lie my affections” (5.2.122-23). His father’s achievement of the throne, described in Hotspurian terms—“It seemed in me / But as an honour snatched with boist’rous hand” (4.3.319-20)—is his “wildness,” which Hal upon succession, swaps with his dead father. Henry, earlier in this scene, refuses to recognize the disjunction between inward feeling and outward behavior, but here at his most honest (though still

273 Machiavelli, *Prince*, 4, asserts that “hereditary states which have grown used to the family of their ruler are much less trouble to keep in hand than new ones are.”

274 Crewe, “Reforming Prince Hal,” 236, argues that Henry and Hal “consensually” agree to have Hal’s wildness transfer to his dead father, thereby creating a reformed and legitimate king in the person of Henry V.
self-evasive), finally admits, “For all my reign hath been but as a scene” (326). Henry admits the inherent theatricality involved in playing the king. No king can, as Henry had asserted in 1 Henry IV, “be myself” (1.3.5). The job of a king is to present oneself as acting as if there were no distinction between inner and outer, as if one’s masculinity were fully consistent and integrated, and as if somehow this masculinity were able to accommodate temperance, prudence, justice, physical might and military valor. Because kingliness is also judged on gendered terms, one’s performance of a masculine body natural would necessarily parlay itself into effective performance of an appropriately kingly body politic. The “argument” Henry acted in his reign had been his assertion of independence from those, like the Percys, who helped him to the throne. Henry admits that, despite his position as king, the pinnacle of independent masculinity, he still could not assume independence because of the way he came by the crown. While lineal inheritance suggests one’s dependence on circumstance (or birth) for one’s privileges, it is seen as natural, as opposed to the acquisitive way in which Henry assumes the throne. Henry, however, is shrewd and self-evasive enough to attribute his reign to his friends’ help, “By whose fell working I was first advanced” (4.3.335). Henry, who has had to fight to assert his freedom, casts himself as dependent on those very figures he has sought independence from in order to hide his crime from himself; acknowledging his freedom threatens his own self-image as an honorable man by implicating him as greedy usurper. Attributing one’s committal of questionable deeds to outside forces greater than the king will become Henry V’s default rhetorical move.

275 Machiavelli, Prince, 5, writes, “[y]ou cannot stay friends with those who put you in power, because you can never satisfy them as they expected. Nor can you use strong medicines against them, because you are under obligations to them.”
Henry ends his counsel by giving the sagest advice to his son, revealing to Hal the motivation behind the quest to crusade had been “to busy giddy minds / With foreign quarrels” (342-3). Perhaps Henry has forgotten he originally intended going to the Holy Land to cleanse himself of Richard’s murder. Perhaps he has realized that he is forever implicated in his cousin’s death and so focuses on the crusade’s political, rather than spiritual, import. Or maybe, Henry desires to distance himself from Richard’s murder and spins crusading as a purely political ploy. Hal, a good son who has absorbed his father’s own self-deception, responds after hearing of his father’s crooked course,

    You won it, wore it, kept it, gave it me;
    Then plain and right must my possession be,
    Which I with more than with a common pain
    ’Gainst all the world will rightfully maintain. (349-52)

Hal follows his father in erasing the Lancastrian original sin, even using a form of “right” twice in four lines. Although his father “won” the crown—suggesting that while his father stole a crown, he deserved to wear it—his having retained control of the kingdom and passing the monarchy to his son is all legitimate rule requires. However, Hal—autonomically retaliating against his father—admits that it will take more than common effort to retain the crown in the face of the hostile world. Hal might be acknowledging his father’s sins and the inability to truly eschew responsibility for one’s crimes, but he might also be trying his best to psyche himself into accepting the burden of his questionable kingship, thus casting himself, and his father retroactively, as besieged victims, as men more sinned against than sinning.
“And yet in faith, thou bearest thee like a king”: King Harry’s Utilization of the
Reformed Prodigal Narrative

Hal has blended Falstaffian fiction and aristocratic self-evasion into his princely performance, and his father has approved it in scene 4.3. He assumes it “naturally” in Act 5 as King Harry. Yet, although he is at home in the discourse of kingliness, upon appearing in scene 5.2, seeing the sad and worried faces of his brothers and the Lord Chief Justice, Hal puts on a garb not so much of majesty but modesty:

This new and gorgeous garment, majesty,
  Sits not so easy on me as you think.
Brothers, you mix your sadness with some fear.
This is the English, not the Turkish, court:
  Not Amurath an Amurath succeeds,
But Harry, Harry. (5.2.44-49)

Hal responds to his audience’s fears regarding his fitness to rule with modest yet regal rhetoric, attempting to put his brothers and the Lord Chief Justice at ease over his newfound power; they understandably worry that King Harry will be as wild as the prodigal Hal. As we know, Hal had struck the Justice over Bardolph, resulting in the prince’s imprisonment. Yet, as soon as the new king Henry V appears, he disarms everyone with his mild manner. Because they are worried about their futures in his court, Hal resorts to the common strategy of defining himself in opposition to national, racial, and religious others. Hal uses the analogy of Turkish kings to distance himself from barbarism and fratricide, since Turks were imagined, as were other men from foreign countries, as “exemplars of alternative models of masculinity.”276 Thus, while English men, particularly those of the upper-classes, were considered exemplars of normative

276 Smith, Shakespeare and Masculinity, 115.
masculinity, they did so by defining members from obvious out-groups as exemplars of alternative, and therefore, deviant, masculinities.

Harry also uses the analogy of the Turkish court to distance himself from his past self. Harry knows that his prodigal past has instilled worry in his court, particularly his brothers. Even after he decides to reform and align himself with patriarchal aristocratic values, he continues in his course as riotous youth because he knows “that only rare accidents please,”277 not only the gullible masses, but if done skillfully,278 even the powerful. Given that masculinity is a performance that must be approved by other men and that Henry IV and his son are keenly aware of its social performativity, Hal has played the prodigal—regardless of the earnestness or inauthenticity of the act—to capitalize on the narrative of transformation,279 a tradition going all the way back to St. Augustine at least. Hal deploys this discourse so that when he adopts the name “Harry,” he seems completely reformed, and the wildness that had defined his youth evaporates. The Arden 3 notes, “The new King’s reference to himself as Harry confirms his ownership of the public name by which he and his father have been called throughout the play,”280 contrasted with the common epithet in 1 Henry IV, the nickname “Hal.” While I argue that the conflicts that Hal experiences and re-narrativizes in coming of age will still trouble King Harry, the shift from “Hal” to “Harry” signifies that he has abandoned his free, private self to fully embrace the limiting public role as King Harry. His actions will

277 Machiavelli, The Prince, 49, claims that “the masses are always impressed by the superficial appearance of things.”
278 I am thinking of Hal being a master of Castiglione’s “sprezzatura.”
279 Smith, Shakespeare and Masculinity, 93-94, records how common “before and after” and “prodigal son” narratives were used by authors giving accounts of their lives.
280 2 Henry IV, 396, n.49.
now serve to re-fuse the king’s two bodies by prioritizing his public, mature masculinity at the expense of his private, youthful one, defined by its multiplicity and potential.

Shakespeare’s Harry, in playing up the instantaneity of his “reformation” upon becoming king—mirroring the subsumption of his body natural into the body politic—revisits the narrative of the life of St. Thomas Becket and draws on language from the New Testament, just as the historical Harry did: “The image of Henry pulling on the figurative clothes of a new, virtuous life draws on the language St Paul used in his letters, describing how the adoption of Christian faith involved taking off the old self, and putting on the new.”

Harry utilizes the similar rhetoric surrounding kingliness and salvation to fuse the concepts together, both legitimizing himself as king and declaring that he is no longer “the thing I was” (5.5.55). His salvation assures that his reign is not only divinely sanctioned, as in the doctrine of the king’s two bodies, but also that kingship itself is his salvation. He extends the logic of the two bodies doctrine, implying that, like his body politic, his body natural is also infallible.

Harry, still needing to assuage his audience’s fears and perform his mild kingliness, continues

Yet be sad, good brothers,
For, by my faith, it very well becomes you.
Sorrow so royally in you appears
That I will deeply put the fashion on
And wear it in my heart. (49-53)

Further convincing them of his familial warmth, Harry urges his brothers to continue on in their sadness, performing their filial obligations to their deceased father. Harry describes their sadness, which seems genuine—particularly because their mourning is paired with concern for how the new king will act—as “royally appear[ing]” and

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“becom[ing]” of them. This language, combined with his promises that he will “put the fashion on” and “wear it in [his] heart,” implicates them in courtly performance. Just as he puts on majesty like a garment (44), they publicly perform their grief for their father. Harry makes no distinction between interior grief and the exterior performance of it. What matters is that they perform their grief for an audience, and Harry approves, much as his father would. The newly-crowned Harry, voicing reservations over his role, attempts to silence the nagging Hal within him by eliminating the distinction between authentic and inauthentic, between private and public acts. An action only matters insomuch as it wins masculine approval by other men, and as they are sons mourning their fathers, their performed grief further enhances their masculine credibility.

Hal/Harry characteristically defers undertaking difficult tasks, like leaving Eastcheap, but has especial difficulties grieving. His stated deferral and interiority of his grief arises likely due to the need to further stoke his kingly persona. As he does in scene 4.3, Harry assigns other people’s due to be given in the present but says he “will…put the fashion on” (emphasis added), seemingly because it looks so good on his brothers that he will act sad himself. However, he will act sad over his father’s death in the future. While he might mean this literally—he cannot put on his mourning attire, as his brothers have, because his upcoming coronation precludes him from wearing anything other than the splendorous clothes of kingship—he postpones the ritual of mourning or of feeling grief. Further, he suggests that, because he now is king, he cannot afford to perform his grief but must grieve inwardly. While he had earlier justified his lack of demonstrable emotion over his father’s sickness to avoid looking the “princely hypocrite” (2.2.52), he has performed grief for the nobility, as he is found weeping by Warwick, who then can vouch
for the legitimacy of Hal’s feeling to Henry, solidifying the father-son/king-heir bond that had been so strained. Hal/Harry has come to understand that different audiences respond to different displays of masculinity—the lower-classes, with whom he had ingratiated himself, would find his grieving suspicious, given his past antics and because emotion undermines manly independence for youth culture. However, the nobility’s valorization of loyalty to one’s father and one’s king cause Hal to perform, at least in the future conditional, his own grief. Hal defers his grief because he, about to be crowned king, must appear in control, whole, masculine; Harry’s rationalization of putting on a public face distances him from the fact that some of his lack of demonstrable grief over his father stems from his continued feelings of ambivalence and resentment.

He tells his brothers that he will “be your father and your brother too” (57), assuring them that, as the eldest brother and new patriarch, he will watch over them as their father would, that he will be their father, in addition to being their brother. Harry must put his brothers at ease over his past riot, and though he socially has assumed the position of the leader of the household and will be crowned king, making his authority over them a fact, he rhetorically emphasizes his duty to them as Christian father to calm their fears that he is really Amurath, a pagan brother. As he will do consistently throughout Henry V, he “tries to define English political relations through the trope of brotherhood.”

Seeming to regard his previous statements equating himself to his father as being too sovereign and creating too much distance between them, he assures his real blood brothers that they are still “brothers,” indicating feudal loyalty to bloodline and

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282 Foyster, Manhood in Early Modern England, 139.
family name, minimizing what might be seen as a troublesome “affective individualism.”
He twists his earlier analogy and suggests that, were he to only regard himself as their father, he might be inclined to act like a Turk and tyrannize them. Harry has disproportionate power, yet he tries to establish some measure of equality between them. His insistence on fraternity mitigates his being their “political father” and his power over them; given his past record, they are understandably wary of his authority. Harry’s substitution of fraternity for paternity also serves as commentary on the father he is so ambivalent toward. Hal, certainly before the Henriad, and at occasions throughout, feels overwhelmed by his father, both in having to emulate him and absolve him. Despite his own tendencies to instrumentalize others, Hal earnestly desires mutuality and being a better patriarch than Henry was to him, going so far as to tell his brothers, “Let me but bear your loves, I’ll bear your cares” (58). He so desires their acceptance that, if they award him their love, he will take on their challenges as his own. Harry expresses the desire and promise to bear their burdens, while his own father burdened him without his consent while constantly disapproving of him. Harry will not be the father who burdens his sons but the one that bears their concerns for them. Henry might have acted like an Amurath to his sons, but Harry will not.

While Harry’s statements here, particularly those describing real grief as performed, threaten to expose the theatricality of being-in-public, as his father often threatens to do himself, his language is far more measured and controlled than Henry’s. Henry, at his kingliest, generally responds to the threat of external rebellion, that of the Percys or his son, or the internal rebellion of his guilt over Richard’s fate that fractures

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285 Paul Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, 72.
286 Ruiter, “Harry’s (inhuman face),” 61.
the consistent performance of his public persona. Henry never performs a single version of his masculine identity for very long before falling into some other mode that seemingly contradicts the one he had been trying to present. The inconsistency in Henry’s masculine performance results from his uncomfortable awareness of his crimes against Richard. Harry, to be sure, worries, but he has “become a craftier version of a Machiavellian father.” Because he has “[chosen] now this thing from one and that from another,” “[stealing] this grace” from Richard, Falstaff, Hotspur, and Henry, “taking from each the part that seems most worthy of praise,” coupled with his “expectations strategy,” no one at court, or elsewhere, knows Hal/Harry’s true nature. He entwines various strands of masculine styles and performs them confidently, seeming to others to perform a consistent and fully-integrated masculine identity. Hal does not grow as a person so much as he has accreted employable masculine strategies and traits. Given the troubled reigns and masculinities of his predecessors, “[Harry’s] reforged masculinity can thus be seen as a reaction to his father’s status as an imperfect and ultimately degenerate king, just as Henry IV’s manhood had been presented in explicit contrast to Richard II's immaturity in rhetoric surrounding his accession.” Knowing that his models are ultimately all failures, Harry weaves a tapestry of various masculine styles, taking the best from each as his own.

Harry, constrained by social expectations regarding kingly behavior, even integrates threads of his Eastcheap-derived counter-masculinity in responding to the Lord Chief justice with what may be perceived as anger or sauciness. While Harry must still bear some resentment at having been jailed—after all, Hal is a product of a feudal culture

287 Grady, *Shakespeare, Machiavelli, and Montaigne*, 199.
that believed in the “natural” privileges of the aristocracy—he utilizes “genuine” irritation, evidenced in his aggressive mode of questioning and his choice of verbs, such as “rate” and “rebuke” in his otherwise measured response. The patterning of g, r, and long vowel sounds in lines 67-71 further indicate Harry’s control of language and himself. Like a good actor, Harry utilizes genuine emotion to perform his grievance toward the Lord Chief Justice for public effect. Harry gets the satisfaction of making the Lord Chief Justice squirm under the threat of unhinged authority; yet, however much Harry’s response reveals real feelings of resentment toward the Lord Chief Justice, he elicits a response from the Justice that he later uses for his own benefit. The Justice’s reply to Harry’s poeticized grievance, “I then did use the person of your father. / The image of his power lay then in me” (72-3), perhaps resonates with Harry’s unconscious ambivalence and desired retaliation toward his father. The Lord Chief Justice, equating himself to Henry in arguing that he acted on Henry’s behalf, publicizes the resentment Hal feels toward Henry. Thus, Harry has multiple motivations in keeping the Lord Chief Justice in his position. Psychically, he can be reconciled with a still living father figure, and by making amends with the Justice, rights the wrongs he had committed against the Justice as well as the wrongs he had committed against his father. Further, the Justice’s impassioned defense of his lawful actions, imploring “The majesty and power of law and justice” (77), “the course of law” (86), “the sword / That guards the peace and safety” (86-7) of kingly majesty itself, makes it seem as if Harry is fair-minded and open to good counsel by adopting the Lord Chief Justice as a surrogate father. Harry knows that his inheriting the throne grants him some unquestioned authority, and his “reformation” from

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290 Armon, Masculine Virtue, 48, writes, “the old nobility’s concept of merit relied strictly on pedigree.” See also Kelso, The Doctrine of the English Gentleman, 13 and 31.
prodigality shields him from the criticism he might well deserve. However, in instigating the Lord Chief Justice to defend himself, much as he pranked Falstaff into defending his cowardice at running away in Gadshill, Harry takes pleasure in retaliating against a surrogate father.

Harry “commits” into the Justice’s hand the continued practice of his job, and states, “You shall be as a father to my youth; / My voice shall sound as you do prompt mine ear, / And I will stoop and humble my intents / To your well-practised, wise discretions” (117-20). Prince Hal would never say such things while still struggling for independence. Even when controlled by his father and performing his feudal and filial subservience in scene 3.2 of 1 Henry IV, Hal argues that he will show himself his father’s son by killing Hotspur, prioritizing his agency as a subject. His words to the Lord Chief Justice are unabashedly subservient, especially for someone who has been newly crowned, yet are also regal in their magnanimity. In part, Harry performs his magnanimity for others. The politically astute side of Harry positively sees the Lord Chief Justice as a wise counsellor, as “taking counsel was a dimension of self-mastery and thus of masculinity, as it sought to prevent the king acting impetuously or his decisions being governed by anything other than rational considerations.”291 Because Hal is a young king, being open to counsel would indicate his prudence to those skeptical of his masculine self-control. Further, Harry adopts the Lord Chief Justice as an ally and as a mediator between his own power and the unpopular decisions he will make, a middle man between his majesty and the inglorious deeds he will commit in the (near) future. He can, much like the Duke in Measure for Measure, have someone bear responsibility for less than desirable orders and face the crowd’s displeasure. While we have no reason to

291 Lewis, Kingship and Masculinity, 31.
suspect that the Justice is a secret scoundrel like Angelo, his embodiment of objective justice protects Hal from the ill will of his subjects. Finally, perhaps, knowing Falstaff as well as he does and suspecting that he will have to publicly reject his former friend, Hal “conscripts” the Justice to participate in the rejection, psychically insulating himself from his own ambivalence toward Falstaff.

Harry, perhaps most importantly, utilizes the Justice’s position to rewrite his paternity.292 Continuing the Henry-swapping from Act 5 of 1 Henry IV and scene 4.3 of this play, Harry declares, “My father is gone wild into his grave, / For in his tomb lie my affections; / And with his spirits sadly I survive / To mock the expectations of the world” (122-5), burying his ills with the dead Harry, while he, the living Harry, retains the good gained from the deceased one.293 Harry also distances himself, not only from his past self, but also from the taint of his father’s crime. His father’s rebellion and usurpation become the “wild”ness left behind under the old regime. As Benedict S. Robinson writes, “literal paternity is replaced by the paternity of the law—a satisfying strategy for evading the vexed problems of dynastic inheritance, since…the law represent[ed] a principle of continuity in English politics that predated the civil wars, the Norman conquest, and even the Anglo-Saxon invasions.”294 Harry, in stating that his prodigality is in the grave with his father, implicitly argues that his father’s crime does not attach itself to him. Aligning himself with the law, Harry traces back his lineage not just to the first Lancaster king, his father, or to Edward III, but to an institution that was held to be inviolable, the law, one that he himself is subject to, and one which dates to the founding of England itself. He

292 Goldberg, “Desiring Hal.” Goldberg discusses Hal’s becoming his father, casting away his wildness, and swapping his fathers in an act of “artificial paternity” (150). See also Ornstein, A Kingdom for a Stage, 165.
293 See note 126 about Jonathan Crewe’s argument in “Reforming Prince Hal.”
294 Robinson, “Harry and Amurath,” 411-2. See also Ornstein, Kingdom for a Stage, 165.
retains his father’s seriousness and duty to his brothers, while his wildness is buried with his dead father and his old name. Harry insists that his reign will start afresh.\textsuperscript{295} Again, as he did in the \textit{1 Henry IV} soliloquy, Harryrewrite his paternity. Although he makes such declarations confidently and without pause, his reiteration of his rightness to rule—essentially, that his father has become the scapegoat for his prior sin—indicates his anxiety over his illegitimacy and his father’s crime.

He solidifies his masculine image before the public with his performance in rejecting Falstaff, although he only gets this opportunity because Falstaff foolishly expects that Hal desires to see him during his coronation. Falstaff’s only interactions with Hal in this play come via a presumptuous letter lacking the customary deference to a prince and in a pointless and aborted prank. Is Falstaff so deluded that he believes Hal longs to see him? Harry Berger suggests that Falstaff “knowingly” plays along with Hal, knowing that his former protégé, in order to solidify his place as English king, needs to reject his former misleader.\textsuperscript{296} However, I believe the word “knowingly” is far too strong a word for a character representing the multiple motivations of a real human being.

Falstaff, more so in this play than in the prequel, seems driven by monetary gain. It is quite possible that his newfound obsession with gain blinds him to the changed nature of his relationship with Hal. Hal’s preferment of Falstaff in \textit{1 Henry IV}, giving him a charge of foot and allowing him to take credit for Hotspur’s death, has perhaps caused Falstaff to forget his later mistreatment at the prince’s hands, particularly Hal’s breaking

\textsuperscript{295} Ornstein, \textit{Kingdom for a Stage}. 165, describes the substitution of one king for another: “Making a scapegoat of Henry who, he declares, has ‘gone wild into his grave’ with Hal’s affections, he contrives to be born again with a new mythic paternity—the son of Justice and Good Government.” Lewis in \textit{Kingship and Masculinity} also writes that much was expected of Henry V’s reign (84).

his head. Also, given Falstaff’s bilking of Shallow, he must perform his closeness to the new king to those he promised to benefit in order to save face and money. We should also consider that Hal’s prior familiarity with Falstaff and his encouragement of it invites *Falstaff to disrupt the coronation*, thus allowing Hal/Harry to bury another father and distance himself from his former wildness, not just in private or with the nobility, but in public. Regardless, it seems Falstaff should have realized that he would be persona non grata at the coronation ceremony.

Harry’s “I know thee not, old man” (5.5.46) updates his “I know you all” and focuses it upon a single personage. Hal, in rejecting Falstaff, can illustrate that he rejects the “all.” The newly crowned king adopts what the Arden edition characterizes as “a formal public persona and speaks with a moral authority no doubt prompted by the Justice,”297 but he also reveals his earnest irritation at his one-time friend taking such liberties and not recognizing the dignity of the occasion and of Harry himself. “Old man” is a particularly appropriate phrase for Harry to use: one, it further reinforces his stated ignorance of the man before him and depersonalizes their relationship, as did his use of “old acquaintance” for Falstaff’s “eulogy” at Shrewsbury; two, in focusing on his old age, Harry reduces Falstaff from a threatening influence on Harry to nothing at all; three, in staging his conversion, Hal contrasts Falstaff’s status as “old man” with his status as a “new man.” Were Falstaff in prime manhood, he would be regarded as a more potentially dangerous influence by the audience; cast, however, not as a wise old man but a “fool and jester,” Falstaff becomes ridiculous and incongruous, given that old men should be wise.

While some claim that “the first half of his speech—the rejection of Falstaff—is riddled with puns that remind one of Harry’s playful relationship with Falstaff in *1H4* and

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297 *2 Henry IV*, 421, n.46-71.
threaten the calculated sobriety of the moment” and that, in the second half, “as if checking himself, the King addresses his wider audience in an attempt to convince them, as he has done his father in 4.3 and his brothers in 5.2, of the sincerity of his reformation.”

Harry, while having multiple motivations for virtually all of his utterances and actions, does not fall back into the old form of his prior relationship with Falstaff with his criticisms, nor does Falstaff’s seeming desire to respond illustrate Harry’s backsliding. First and foremost, Falstaff fails to recognize the rhetorical situation, which he should note is different because Harry speaks to him in verse for the first time and not the prose of the tavern. One cannot interrupt a coronation and refer to the newly crowned king as “Hal” or “my sweet boy.” Although these nicknames might be acceptable in a world of counter-masculinity, they signify disrespect and diminution in the world of hegemonic patriarchy. Falstaff does not comprehend (and neither do many critics) that, while Hal’s insults remain virtually the same, their tone is different. As in their interaction in 1 Henry IV 4.2, there is not the same joy in language play, no piling up of appositive after appositive as Hal was wont to do. His tone is sermonic. Because Harry performs this in public, he adapts the insulting he has learned in Eastcheap, characterized by piling creative terms onto Falstaff’s head and inviting back an equal and opposite response, and has weaponized it for the purpose of propping up his power. Harry combines the rhetorical facility of Richard and the calculation of Henry with tavernesque verbal play to dismiss his former friend. Falstaff, perhaps, is misunderstood in thinking he can respond—*if he were planning to respond*. It is feasible that Harry publicly describes Falstaff’s desire to respond in order to stage his preemptive power for his new

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298 2 Henry IV, 420, n. 46-71.
subjects. He then assures the audience that he is not “the thing [he] was” (55), much as he had already rehearsed with his brothers in the prior scene.

He exiles his former companions to distance himself from any misdoing. Although he has “staged” his irresponsibility, he does not want his prodigality to be seen to inhere in himself too much. Thus, he places that wildness onto his “misleaders” (63) while also stating, “I have turned away my former self” (57) “For God doth know” (56). He insists on his transformation, and by rejecting Falstaff, Hal continues to further die wild in Falstaff’s exile, in the metaphorical and soon to be literal grave of his surrogate father, just as Hal has also been buried with his natural father. Only Harry remains, and the invocation of God attests to the veracity of Harry’s statements.

However, even in this rejection scene that many experience as cruel, Harry desires to be better than he fears he actually is. Wanting to think more highly of himself, he mitigates his utterance “on pain of death,” as if Harry deems the treatment too harsh. Harry Berger, Jr. writes, “Because ‘I banish thee on pain of death’ sounds so threatening, the actual terms of banishment specified two lines later seem surprisingly lenient, producing at the rhetorical level the effect of a feint toward strict justice countered by a gesture of clemency…he brandishes…a carrot, not a stick” as an “act of moral self-protection.”

Harry, because of his continued ambivalence toward his surrogate father, recognizes the slippage that in punishing and banishing Falstaff he banishes his real father; banishing his father would thus mark Harry in his own mind as the usurper he has desperately tried burying, and so he presents himself as merciful king to satisfy his own self-esteem and protect himself from his patricidal passions.

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300 Berger, “The Prince’s Dog,” 42.
Harry, too, must feel guilty in reducing his potential-laden private self into a cardboard cutout\textsuperscript{301} of the public king, a version of himself that has lost much of his humanity. Wanting to reassert his personhood and find space within the confines of his new role, he offers mitigating circumstances. Yet, he must know these conditions are impossible for Falstaff to meet and may kill Falstaff kindly. If we accept this logic, Harry again justifies his violence as love and his love as violence. In so doing, he can persuade himself and others of his humanity while also showing himself to be the kind of king the populace would want—just but merciful. After all, Harry has “reformed” himself and become king. Cannot his misleaders reform themselves to receive his beneficence? Hal plays a double game, looking stern while also merciful and generous, trying to win loyalty by displaying justice while also trying to win love by showing mercy. However, he fears demonstrating excessively punitive impulses and ultimately protects himself by “charg[ing]” the Lord Chief Justice “To see performed the tenor of my word,” (5.5.69-70). The Lord Chief Justice’s imprisonment of Falstaff suggests that “The rejection of Falstaff is another of the signifiers of a monarchy centered in ambiguity and hypocrisy.”\textsuperscript{302} Harry treats his friend as if he were a disposable commodity, ignoring how much of his own power has derived itself from Falstaff’s teachings, and now uses his “containment” of Falstaff’s “subversion” to legitimize his right to rule.

While Hal in \textit{1 Henry IV} repaints his riotous youth to contrast the control he acquires when he achieves proper manhood upon ascension to the throne, he does not limit himself to hegemonic masculinity’s practices but also embraces the counter-


\textsuperscript{302} Derek Cohen, “History and Nation in ‘Richard II’ and ‘Henry IV,’” \textit{Studies in English Literature 1500-1900} 42, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 312.
manhood of Falstaff and the residual style portrayed by Hotspur. In this way, he demonstrates that he is master of all repertoires and can use them at the appropriate times. He regards being a parrot of honor like Hotspur as being beneath him, regardless of how noble the youthful Percy is, and likewise, sees the masculinities of his father and Falstaff as being too limited. In trying to be “of all humours,” he asserts his own superior masculinity, as masculinity for him is defined by its unfettered performance. In Act 5 he reconciles himself with all of his masculine models and adopts their various idioms of speech and thought and action.

However, upon his first entrance in 2 Henry IV, he realizes that he cannot effectively juggle all these behaviors at the same time, or at least be seen to use them. Once he leaves Eastcheap, he reduces his interior, private self to the services of his exterior, public self as heir/king. His diminished role in this play mirrors his diminishment from a full character to the face of authority he is to become and to which he must reconcile himself. He, at times, successfully integrates his earlier counter-masculine education in his imperial bearing, but, it is all in service of constructing a fiction of reformation that insists the public and the private are united, a consistent and fully-integrated masculine self. Because instability in masculine identity arises from the contradictions in performing an ideal masculinity, thus leading to tension between the inner and outer person, Hal/Harry in 2 Henry IV and Henry V moves to present himself as utterly transparent.

He attempts to perform his transformation into a purely public figure by rejecting his friends and his former self. However, observers of this transformation might be taken aback at the apparent ease with which has discards his former companions and hardens
into a political creature. As Derek Traversi writes, “success in politics implies a moral loss, the sacrifice of more attractive qualities in the distinctively personal order.”

However much Hal, and later, King Harry, utilizes his friends and others for his own political and personal gain, I want to stress that he, counter to Machiavelli’s formulation that it is better to be feared than loved, desires to be loved more than feared. Even in what many critics regard as impersonal and imperious actions in Henry V we see that “Hal’s attempt to utilize is mixed up with an effort and a desire to relate…even in the midst of self-orchestrated political history.”

Harry desires approbation for his private self, his body natural, but when denied, resorts to instilling fear in others due to his place as head of the body politic. However, even during good faith attempts to relate to others on a personal level, Harry instrumentalizes them at the same time. Harry’s breaking bad perhaps rests not so much on his staging a fiction of redemption to hide his future sins as king so much as it does in the dialectical relationship between depersonalizing himself and the depersonalizing of others.

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303 Traversi, Shakespeare from, 58.
304 Machiavelli, The Prince, 46.
305 Ruiter, “Harry’s (In)human Face,” 61.
CHAPTER 3

“HARRY THE FIFTH’S THE MAN!”: KINGLY MASCULINITY AND THE PERSISTENCE OF THE BODY NATURAL

Recuperating Harry

Given the current historical moment in the United States and the world, no one would expect a leftist literary critic to voice sympathy for King Harry, particularly due to his fusing of nationalism with religion to wage an unjust foreign war, consolidating power at home. However, critics going back to Hazlitt have been dubious of this “very amiable monster”\(^\text{306}\) and critical of a hypocrisy that can be traced to Harry’s upper- and military-class allegiances.\(^\text{307}\) Their views were largely forgotten by World War II-era critics, such as Tillyard and J. Dover Wilson, who, while not necessarily advocating for Harry’s misbehaviors, sympathized with a great, if human, man, able to unify and lead his country to victory in a seemingly unwinnable war. After Greenblatt’s treatment of Hal/Harry in “Invisible Bullets,” most American and British literary critics, in light of the protracted, counterproductive, and arguably illegal wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, would presumably agree with Harold C. Goddard’s determination that Harry has become an


“automaton”\textsuperscript{308} or Rabkin’s critical description of Harry as “master manipulator.”\textsuperscript{309} It seems the impetuous yet likeable Hal, who doubted the legitimacy of his father’s reign and sought refuge in Eastcheap, has, in Greenblatt’s phrase, bought into a hypocrisy so deep he believes it.\textsuperscript{310}

And yet, despite the near totality of Harry’s public face in \textit{Henry V}, literary critics, privileged enough to be privy to Hal/Harry’s two soliloquies, alongside his interactions with various groups and the social expectations placed upon him, have seen tensions and inconsistencies in Harry. Regardless of Harry’s success in presenting a consistent masculine self to his immediate audience, the visible tensions in his character suggest that the hypocrisy Greenblatt believes Harry to have subscribed to has not completely taken. Harry seems torn between the love he wants to inspire in his subjects and the fear he needs to inject into his rule;\textsuperscript{311} aggression toward the French versus the compassion he wants to show the people to win them to his side;\textsuperscript{312} his genuine desire for fraternity versus his desire to dominate.\textsuperscript{313} These tensions seem, in essence, to stem from the most crucial tension of them all, between Harry’s public persona and his private self.\textsuperscript{314}

As I argue toward the end of the previous chapter, Harry plays the public role of king for the most part effectively. However, the youth with the boundless potential still resides in him, and, rather than reduce himself to an awe-inspiring monarch, he longs for

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{308} Graham, “Shakespeare's Stoic Conscience,” 267.
\item \textsuperscript{309} Rabkin, “Rabbits, Ducks, and \textit{Henry V},” 293.
\item \textsuperscript{310} Greenblatt, “Invisible Bullets,” 41.
\item \textsuperscript{311} Hunt, “Origins of National Identity,” 137
\item \textsuperscript{313} Robert Lane, “When Blood Is Their Argument’: Class, Character, and Historymaking in Shakespeare’s and Branagh’s Henry V,” \textit{ELH} 61, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 31; Ruiter, “Harry’s (in)human face,” 61.
\item \textsuperscript{314} Rabkin, “Rabbits, Ducks, and \textit{Henry V},” 296.
\end{itemize}
others to admire him for his private qualities; he would rather inspire love for his body
natural than fear of his body politic.

Harry’s vacillations between mercy/aggression, fraternity/disparity, and love/fear
could all be recast as interior/exterior, private (honor)/public (honor), or perhaps more
provocatively, Hal/Harry. Claire McEachern, in summarizing Norman Rabkin and
Richard Helgerson’s criticism, writes that “Harry’s personhood” reveals “an antipathy
between hegemonic power and fellow feeling.” While Hal is no angel and holds many
troubling assumptions derived from his aristocratic upbringing, he, even after resolving to
legitimize his father’s usurpation, seems to value his private, personal self. He retreats
from court, even while purporting to support its values, and fraternizes with members of
the underclass, forging a masculinity counter to the dominant hegemonic masculinity he
has been imbued with and is expected to perform. Hal, ultimately desiring to be defined
as a man, accepts the hegemonic path that has been laid out for him. As hegemonic
masculinity circulates in a culture as the most demonstrative standard of masculinity, Hal,
benefitting immensely from patriarchy, would “naturally” resort to this style, given his
upbringing and social position. However, Hal chooses to enact the dominant masculinity
while also employing techniques of his counter-masculinity because he wants to both win
his father’s approval and surpass his father, to be more of a man than his old man.
Unlike his father who falls back on his position as king to instill loyalty in others, Hal has
“plodded like a man for working-days” (1.2.278), winning the support of the commoners
both in his prodigality and his reformation. He has inspired love for his body natural
before instilling awe and fear in others via his body politic.

Harry, however, does not quite “break bad” in switching his priorities from Eastcheap to court, private to public. His “breaking bad” consists of, not just subjecting his private self to his public self, but the way he fuses his Eastcheap identity with his courtly identity, whose sole concern is creating a powerful public persona as king. Harry often deploys tavernesque behavior in the service of hegemony. The private Hal’s resistance to the public Harry’s instrumentalization further serves to instrumentalize others for power’s sake, starting from a desire for relationship and ending up exerting his position of dominance. However genuinely he at times desires to relate to others, Harry contains Hal’s subversion, or perhaps I should say, Harry contains the subversion that is Hal. Where I differ from Greenblatt or others who over-ascribe inhumanity or Machiavellianism to Harry’s character is that this subversion is always already threatening to break out. “Breaking bad,” as with any form of masculinity, is not a singular occurrence but must be repeated in discreet behaviors and actions. Harry’s desire to relate is always superseded by his desire to dominate, and he breaks bad every single time he dominates rather than relates to others. Rather than risk vulnerability, Harry insists on his masculine wholeness and independence, even if he must resort to inhuman means to do so.

One of the methods by which he both attempts to relate and to dominate is by “strategically dilut[ing] his sovereignty.” Rationalizing away dubious actions and eschewing responsibility are symptomatic of the Second Tetralogy’s aristocracy, but Harry certainly receives his greatest lesson in this technique from his father. As discussed earlier, Henry, in his “very latest counsel,” both confesses himself to his son and still

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manages to ascribe agency to the Percys, among others, for his ascension to the throne. Harry follows suit and mitigates his majesty upon his accession to put his brothers’ minds at ease. In one regard, Harry diminishes his authority because he desires fraternity. However, the instrumentalist in him deploys this fraternal impulse to cast himself as unimpeachable—Harry, as we shall soon see in scene 1.2, ascribes his actions to the authority of experts and subordinates himself to God. Doing so, he insulates himself from the questionable deeds he undertakes and distances himself from his own conscience, thereby preempting any guilt he might have in his remaining private self.

Although deftly minimizing his own responsibility by assigning his agency and conscience to others, 317 Harry “aspires to play all the parts…like his earlier self,”318 as though strict adherence to his scripted role is not enough for Harry to prove his manhood, at least to himself. Harry desires playing various roles and improvising. Harry, like his earlier self as Hal, pranks the traitors, Fluellen, and William and play acts the role of Harry le Roy. In order to secure total victory, Harry must reestablish his “linguistic plenitude,”319 hence his soldierly rhetoric and use of French in the wooing scene. Peter Parolin concludes, “the military triumph of the historical king must be supplemented with the performative triumph of the theatrical character who plays multiple roles in multiple languages.”320 Yet, despite victory at Agincourt and engagement to Katherine, Harry faces resistance to his performance. Katherine seems hesitant to accept Harry on his terms, and Williams twice stands up to Harry’s assertions about majesty and Harry’s performance of majesty itself, even when kneeling. Their resistance resembles that of the

317 Jamey Graham in “Shakespeare’s Stoic Conscience” repeatedly affirms that Harry assigns a conscience to others.
318 Parolin, “Figuring the King,” 54.
319 Parolin, 54.
320 Parolin, 54.
audience itself to the jingoistic portrait of the king the Chorus presents, suggesting that, regardless of the success of one’s masculine performance, there may always be some doubters who will never approve it, including, finally, Harry himself. After the miraculous victory at Agincourt, a victory so improbable that Harry earnestly attributes its success elsewhere, Harry experiences powerlessness rather than empowerment or justification. Thus, the bizarre interactions with Williams and Kate, while perhaps stemming from a genuine desire to relate to others individually and privately, end up becoming exercises by which, when faced with their resistance in acknowledging his inherent manhood, Harry flexes his social superiority to coerce their assent. Although having been acknowledged as masculine king by the French nobility and his soldiers, like Fluellen, Harry continues “breaking bad” at the end of the play, resorting to the dominance of his social position to compensate for not receiving affection as a private person, indicating that Harry himself does not seem convinced of his manhood.

The Problem with Prologues

While the newly crowned King Harry does his best to present a fully integrated and consistent kingly manhood for his audience, the Chorus’ opening undermines our perception of his ability to do so. As Peter Erickson observes, the Chorus’ insistence upon its inability to properly represent the legendary actions of King Henry V undermines the illusion that the play can present a decent portrayal of Harry and his deeds.\(^{321}\) No one in Shakespeare’s audience would have expected a lavish CGI spectacle

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\(^{321}\) Erickson, “‘The Fault/My Father Made,’” 10-14.
when watching battle scenes, thus, in apologizing for its fictionality, the play undermines its efficacy to present that fiction because it is worried about the reception of its representation. As with Harry’s masculine performance, the players’ performance “is a collaborative art; saying this is another way of saying that rhetorical performance requires an audience; it requires ‘buy-in.” The Chorus, contrary to Harry’s assertions throughout the play, reveals that its exterior performance—both in the written script and the acting—does not correspond to its intent to illustrate the greatness of the great king. If the playwright and company staging this play cannot adequately represent these characters and their deeds, how are we to take the actors onstage, characters representing themselves to their fellow characters? Are we asked to criticize the characters’ performances? Should we object, as Hal does to Falstaff’s portrayal of Henry IV and use of the phrase “naughty varlet,” that this is neither how these characters would sound nor how they would act? Are the ways these characters represent themselves to themselves and to others consigned to failure? How can an actor poorly portraying Harry on stage hope to capture a fraction of his magnificence, let alone display his kingly masculinity comprising both temperance and valor? If a trained actor on a stage suffers this difficulty in performing their profession, what can we expect of a person—or a representation of that person—performing their gendered identity for the sake of an audience? Is it possible to persuasively perform identity for others?

While demeaning its own ability to adequately do its job in realistically representing historical personages on the stage, the Chorus insists on the priority of the

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322 Of course, the only real “military” action we see is Pistol’s capture of Monsieur le Fer. Erickson argues that the “marginal episodes” “serve as a counter-Chorus” (13-14), further undermining “Henry V’s ostensible grandeur” (14).

323 Parolin, “Figuring the King,” 55.
interior over the exterior, the soul over the body, the inspiration over the execution of the performance. Worried about the quality of its production, it prioritizes its intentions and its inspiration. However, these statements by the Chorus contradict what Harry has asserted about his own ability to effectively perform his interior. As I argue, Harry, starting at the end of 2 Henry IV, insists that the outer man reflects the inner person, and that there is nothing questionable about his motives in any circumstance.324 The play's privileging of its inspiration—the real King Henry V—over its representation of Henry V, proclaims that this Henry V is fake, while, of course, in the action of the play, Harry insists that his words and actions are indeed real and authentic, rather than being staged. Harry asserts his control while the Chorus explicitly states he cannot do so, “For ’tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings” (Prologue 28). Harry attempts to portray himself as the sovereign king, just as he tries to maintain control of his illegitimately acquired kingdom, but it is the theater audience, as well as his onstage audience, that “decks” him with kingliness. An actor is only as good as the reaction they can elicit from the audience. Harry’s successful performance of his kingly masculinity, while he insists on his independence, can only be approved of by outside observers. Try as he might, Harry cannot make himself a man; others must judge how effectively he performs his masculinity. Thus, Harry asserts his masculinity in casting himself as the arbiter of his own and others’ masculinities and cows others into assent, rather than acknowledging how much power the observers have.325

324 Maus, Inwardness and Theater, 67, writes, “the possibility of some secret motive, some unexposed residue can never be wholly discounted, even when the gesture of self-revelation seems most generous and complete.”

325 Robert Lane, “When Blood Is Their Argument,” 28, argues that “the play sets in motion what Bakhtin called ‘unresolvable dialogues’ over the meaning to be given to Henry’s martial enterprise. In an audience constantly exhorted by the Chorus to exercise its intelligence on the performance, those dialogues prompt critical reflection on war as well as on the character of political leadership incident to it.” Lane’s
Propagating the Prodigal Narrative

Despite his tendency to use his class status to coerce approval of his masculine performance, Harry still desires his audience to love him and portrays himself, as do those who benefit from Harry’s exploits, as being a reformed wastrel. We occasionally see some fissures in his kingly persona, and while he can successfully integrate most of these irruptions into his masculine performance, their existence illustrates that Harry continues to struggle with integrating competing values and observing normative behaviors. Although Harry presents himself to the audience as having “come of age,” he still experiences the internal disturbances that proper manhood should have reconciled. Perhaps what is most striking about the first scene of Henry V is not that the bishops seem to see through the ruse but that they propagate it themselves.

Canterbury and Ely seem to understand that Harry’s reformation does not come about miraculously but is a crafted fiction of prodigality/redemption he has circulated.326

While some have read Canterbury’s words describing Hal’s transformation as earnest, as does Erickson’s, posits that the Chorus’ insistence on the audience’s approving the performance of the players, coupled with the non-aristocratic scenes, creates an anxiety or uncertainty, leading us to see the play, or Harry himself, in Rabkin’s terms, as either a “rabbit” or a “duck.” Diana Henderson, “Meditations in a Time of (Displaced) War: Henry V, Money, and the Ethics of Performing History,” Shakespeare and War, ed. Ros King and Paul J.C.M. Franssen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 235, notes that at least the 1981 Christopher Plummer performance has Harry play the Chorus himself. I would argue that this would suggest both his desire to control audience reception of himself as well as betray his doubts about the adequacy of performing a consistent and fully-integrated masculine self.

326 Lewis writes in Kingship and Masculinity that stories of Henry V’s princely prodigality may have originated during Henry IV’s reign, originating with Clarence or even perhaps Henry IV himself. However, she writes, “The fact that it would have served Henry's purposes to present himself as a new man lends weight to the contention that the story of his ‘conversion’ has its origins in his reign, especially when considered in relation to his reputation in the latter years of his father's life. Henry V needed to be seen to reform even if the reports of his behaviour were more or less manufactured. Indeed, the image of Henry as newly and suddenly embodying the ideal man and king, of him moving from rebellious to regulated masculinity, has all the more power and impact precisely because he had been so badly behaved (or was thought to have been)...it was all the more significant that Henry was seen to have experienced and given in to lust, but could now exercise restraint. The stories of his conversion highlight the extent to which this self-control was an achievement and recognized as such” (88-9).
“But that his wildness…/ Seemed to die too” (1.1.26-7; emphasis added) suggests that his “wildness” “seemed” to die because it in fact never existed. Canterbury’s high-flown rhetoric, which escalates later in the scene, suggests he knows the truth of Hal’s transformation, calling his “body…a paradise / T’envelop and contain celestial spirits” (30-1). Canterbury understands the game here and further develops the new king’s religiosity by using phrases such as “celestial spirits” and “Consideration like an angel came / And whipped th’offending Adam out of him” (28-9) in discussing Harry’s “reformation” (33). Derek Traversi writes that Canterbury’s effusive praise “leads us, not only to question the speaker’s sincerity, but to reflect upon the intricate and deceptive nature of the background against which the moral choices of the new king are projected.” The faith Harry performs and attests to will be utilized to sanction his secular actions. Canterbury and Ely both recognize that Harry’s reformation is a ruse to win public support and understand that, if they want to achieve their own ends, they must help propagate this fiction. Canterbury reveals both his sober view of Harry’s reformation as well as his desire to play along with it, as evidenced in his first speech to Ely and the repetition of the word “never”: “Never was such a sudden scholar made, / Never came reformation in a flood…, Nor never Hydra-headed willfulness / So soon did lose his seat, and all at once” (32-3, 35-6). Depending on the performer, “never” may sound more disbelieving or astonished. Regardless, Canterbury’s mission is to propagate the myth of Harry’s reformation “all at once,” suggesting that the suddenness of Harry’s transformation on ascending the throne strains credulity, maybe not to commoners, but others in positions of power.

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327 Traversi, Shakespeare from, 167.
Canterbury’s description of Harry’s reformation would also strain our credulity if we believe his sincerity. That the figures used to describe Harry’s perfection—his ability to chasten the air with his speech, or his “rendering in music” the “discourse of war”—are so over the top, especially for a character as politically shrewd as Canterbury, suggests that, rather than ascribing to these beliefs about Harry himself, Canterbury parodies the commoners’ discourse surrounding Harry’s kingliness. His effortless rehearsal of this rhetoric regarding Harry’s newfound disposition further suggests that the clergy themselves disseminate such sentiments to their congregants. If they want to save their own lands by warring with France, they must first convince the people that the notoriously wild youth is now a godly king, both in his piety and his divine ordination, and any hardship the people might face due to the war has received divine sanction.

If we are unsure of Canterbury’s perspicacity in reading Harry properly, Ely’s comparison of the rebellious prince to a strawberry that “grows underneath the nettle” (1.1.60, emphasis added), and “ripens best” (61) when surrounded by fruit of “baser quality” (62) suggests that Harry has staged his wildness, “obscur[ing] his contemplation / Under the veil of wildness.” (63). As one of the powerful figures in this playworld, Ely is familiar with Harry’s strategy of legitimization and sees the performance for what it is, much as Warwick had attested to Henry in 2 Henry IV. Ely’s use of “obscured” suggests that Harry deliberately enacted his transformation, his wildness being a mere veil or garment to be put on or taken off to seem moral and properly royal when he assumes the throne. Others in Hal’s discourse community are familiar with this strategy to defy
expectations, and their further echoing of his reformation to each other, even while hinting at their skepticism, suggests that their mutual goal is to propagate the fiction.328

Canterbury agrees with Ely’s assessment of Harry’s past, saying, “It must be so, for miracles are ceased” (67). While this sentiment is proverbial,329 it also anachronistically builds on Protestant theology that, after the crucifixion of Christ, miracles were no more seen on earth. Because the only way for Harry’s reformation to be a real transformation would be its miraculousness, if miracles no longer exist, it was not a real transformation but a staged one. The king’s staged redemption does not bother them, however, for as soon as they agree that the king deliberately acted in this manner, Ely responds, “But my good lord, / How now for mitigation of this bill / Urged by the Commons?” (69-71). What matters to them is how the king regards their property, not that he’s faking his morality. They will play along with the king’s fictions and present the war as justified and moral, when in fact they most likely understand that it is not.

Canterbury’s revelation that he has already discussed the matter with Harry suggests that he “has made a bargain with the king: the priest will provide an apparently pious and pseudo-legal rationale for the invasion of France if the king will protect the church against a bill in parliament that threatens the church’s revenue.”330

While largely lost on current audiences, Ely and Canterbury’s awareness of Harry’s performed reformation presents the possibility, especially to an audience in

328 Ornstein, Kingdom for a Stage, 180, writes, “Knowing that miracles have ceased, they suspect that his miraculous redemption was humanly contrived and admire the way that he ‘obscur’d his contemplation, / Under the veil of wilderness.’ Tactful men, they will neither impugn the King’s motives nor examine too closely their own reasons for supporting his intended campaign.” I agree almost entirely with this sentiment, but my contention, at least with Ornstein’s point, is that his qualifying language mitigates the cynicism with which the clergy act in supporting the war and in recognizing Harry’s public face.
329 Henry V, 127, n. 67.
Shakespeare’s day, that Harry might not be reformed at all. Aysha Pollnitz points out that while thinkers such as Erasmus and Elyot “agreed that the best prince combined the cardinal virtues with sincere piety, mercy, and benevolence,” others, around the end of the century (when this play was written), “began to question what constituted a good ruler” and the “ideal of the peaceful, stoic, philosopher-king” gave over to the ideal of the “prudent military commander.” Seen in this light, one could argue that Harry (anachronistically) portrays himself as the older humanist model put forward by early 16th century figures like Erasmus and Elyot, but really fits the mold of the more militaristic and “giddy” “for foreign wars” school of the Elizabethan court. Ascham believed that “it was impossible to reform a youth once corrupted” and Erasmus claimed that a prince, left to his own devices and improperly tutored in liberal education, would spend “his youth among whores, degenerate comrades…drinkers, gamblers, and pleasure-mongers as foolish as they are worthless,” learning nothing except vice. Erasmus provocatively asked, “If as boys they did nothing but play at tyrants, what (I ask you) are they to work at as adults except tyranny?” The clergy’s recognition of Harry’s political pragmatism in playing the reformed prodigal leaves the possibility that, according to the theories of the time, Harry himself might not be reformed, thus causing the audience to question whether or not this invasion of France is just and right or just


334 Wells, Shakespeare on Masculinity, 8, describes the binary between militarism and humanism: “In militant-Protestant circles it formed part of a pattern of praising martial values by characterizing them as masculine and depreciating eirenic values as feminine.”

335 Pollnitz, “Educating Hamlet,” 130.

336 Pollnitz, 126.
some tyrant’s ploy to consolidate power at home and win lands that are not his. Erasmus himself saw the historical Henry V’s “campaigns as a classic example of the folly of attempting to extend territory” and that “the chivalric ideals that endorsed them were simply a means of promoting war under a veneer of glory.”

Agentlessness, or Who Needs a Just War When It’s a Holy War?

Harry’s first appearance in *Henry V* occurs in scene 1.2, and, at least on the surface, depicts him as a wise and prudent young king. Harry surrounds himself with his trusted advisors, seeking advice on the legality of his claim to the French throne. Katherine Lewis describes in detail the historical Harry’s deliberations in choosing to invade France, highlighting his consciousness of the need to portray his discretion due to his youth and his rectitude in considering military action:

Henry canvassed opinion widely to ensure that he could lawfully, and without offence to God, recover his inheritance by force of arms. This justificatory rhetoric was not unique to Henry, but given his proclivities for warfare it was perhaps particularly important to underline the rectitude of his decision to go to war....Depicting Henry's actions within a register of justice, measure and restraint would counter any suggestion that he was merely an impatient, belligerent, ‘hardy’ youth, motivated primarily by personal ambition and bloodlust.

In order to persuade the populace of the need to invade France, Harry must seem reluctant to do so. Thus, Harry resorts to his most effective strategy in performing his reformed and kingly masculinity: his eschewal of agency, a strategy most expertly practiced by Henry IV. Harry, at times, attempts to deliver himself from the burden of his power to relate to others, as he had done in Eastcheap as Hal. However, he has seen how effectively his father can deny responsibility for his dubious deeds by ascribing agency to

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others. Just as his father can describe his ascension to the throne as his being borne passively upon the shoulders of his supporters, Harry places responsibility onto others for his own decision to invade France. Although Harry desires legal grounds for going to war, he wants even more than legal assurance as he worries about the moral implications of the war. Harry, in 1.2, charges Canterbury to accept responsibility for the war in France and admonishes him to outline the legality and morality of invading France. Canterbury takes responsibility upon himself, but, Harry, a Christian who also performs his religiosity for the sake of others, understands the just war doctrine stemming all the way from St. Augustine and then uses the occasion of the Dauphin’s insult as further, and perhaps more believable, justification for invasion. Then, at the end of the scene, having already utilized Canterbury and the Dauphin as the instigators of the war, he “conscript[s] the rhetoric of crusade to frame the conduct of a national war” to redefine his war over inheritance. Unlike his father, Harry “strategically dilutes his sovereignty…by deferring scrupulously to God.” Using the rhetoric of the crusade masks Harry’s real intentions and casts him not as an ambitious nobleman looking to both honor and extend his patrilineal line, but as a devoted follower of God.

Henry seems particularly kingly at the outset of this play, largely because he adopts the discourse and actions of kingship. When Westmorland asks if they should bring in the French ambassador, Harry responds, “Not yet, my cousin. We would be resolved, / Before we hear him, of some things of weight / That task our thoughts

339 Lewis, Kingship and Masculinity, 52, usefully argues that “Henry evidently understood the benefits of being seen to be devout, but that does not automatically render his piety counterfeit.”
342 Parolin, “Figuring the King,” 48
concerning us and France” (4-6). His rhetoric sounds measured and sure. In fact, while he states that he is unsure—“We would be resolved”—he is sure that he wants to be made sure. As I have noted heretofore, Harry, regardless of his actual prudence, must perform his prudent deliberation for others. He claims to be burdened by “some things of weight,” presumably the potential loss of many French and English lives. He waits on counsel so that he may act properly, rather than, in “King Cambyses’ vein” (1 Henry IV, 2.4.377), follow the whims of his desire.

Yet, Prince John “leaks” to the Lord Chief Justice at the very end of 2 Henry IV: “I will lay odds that, ere this year expire, / We bear our civil swords and native fire / As far as France. I heard a bird so sing, / Whose music, to my thinking, pleased the King” (5.5.104-7). While this can be read as Shakespeare promising his contemporaries yet another play in this saga, the Epilogue could have served this function with its promise to “make you merry with fair Katherine of France” (Epi.2 28-9). These words out of Prince John’s mouth reveal the cynical machinations of power. While Harry performs deliberation in scene 1.2 of Henry V, the war seems assured at the end of the previous play, and to rehash John Mebane’s argument related in an earlier footnote, it seems Canterbury and Harry have a deal in place. The only reason the deal has not been fully ratified by Harry is that, presumably, he wants Canterbury to present it before the others in attendance so he may be seen to have deliberated before giving his answer to the French ambassador.343 Given that we are assured of this exploit before Harry receives

343 Harry performs his deliberation for the sake of others. Sullivan in “Princes to Act” persuasively sums up Harry’s utilization of Canterbury (we should note Canterbury is a more than willing partner in his own utilization), “Only before an audience composed of the peers assembled to attend to the French embassy will Henry permit Canterbury to deliver his findings...Henry’s use of Canterbury constitutes a show for the assembled lords” (136-37; emphasis added).
counsel, the deliberation, thus, becomes just another tool in power’s attempts to manipulate opinion.\(^{344}\)

Canterbury, seemingly cognizant that Harry has cultivated himself as one who invokes God to justify his actions, greets him, “God and his angels guard your sacred throne” (1.2.7). While it would seem natural for the Archbishop of Canterbury to invoke divinity when addressing his sovereign, his religious language further undergirds Harry’s presentation of himself. Because masculinity requires one’s effective performance of a consistent masculinity, it requires that others support it with their own performances.

Further, Machiavelli advises that a prince should seem religious rather than be religious.\(^{345}\) Shakespeare’s Henry VI—“whose church-like humours fits not for a crown” \(^{(2 \text{ Henry VI} 1.1.246)}\)\(^{346}\)—is regarded as too religious to be an effective king. Yet, as Lewis notes, “Arguably, Henry V made rather more substantial demonstrations of distinctive pious and spiritual interests than his son.”\(^{347}\) As I discussed in the first chapter, Christianity often contradicted with aristocratic warrior values, but Harry deploys his religiosity to justify his military action, performing a passive style of masculinity to afford him the ability to carry out the more active version that will more easily

\(^{344}\) Many critics have also made this point, so while it may seem unnecessary to do so, I should credit the specific authors who have corroborated my own opinions about Harry’s staging his deliberation. Spencer, “Princes, Pirates, and Pigs,” writes, “Henry takes great pains to conceal his capacity to exceed the law by seeking religious legitimation of, or by displacing moral responsibility for, decisions based ultimately on royal prerogative” (160); Vickie Sullivan, “Princes to Act,” writes, “He learned the higher art of manipulating others by appearing to be manipulated by them, an art which he applies throughout \textit{Henry V}” and “Henry stages scenes in which he ascribes his own intent to others” (126); Hunt, “National Identity,” drawing from Sullivan and Spiekerman, writes, “Letting others appear to be making decisions that are in fact his own is King Henry’s characteristic pose” (135).

\(^{345}\) Machiavelli, \textit{Prince}, 48-49, argues that, rather than a prince exercising real virtues, he should merely be seen as having them.


\(^{347}\) Lewis, \textit{Kingship and Masculinity}, 57-8. Lewis goes on to suggest that the tradition of Henry VI’s piety and spiritual and moral integrity, in short, \textit{his being too good a man to be a good king}, stems from his former classmate John Blacman’s account.
demonstrate his manhood. Canterbury, hoping to benefit from Harry, tailors his own performance to support Harry’s. Harry responds, “My learned lord, we pray you to proceed / And justly and religiously unfold” (9-10) Salic law to determine if he has a claim to the French throne, further stipulating,

And God forbid, my dear and faithful lord,
That you should fashion, wrest or bow your reading
Or nicely charge your understanding soul
With opening titles miscreate, whose right
Suits not in native colours with the truth.
For God doth know how many now in health
Shall drop their blood in approbation
Of what your reverence shall incite us to. (13-20)

Harry first asks the “learned” Canterbury to “justly...unfold” the legitimacy of his claim. While Harry requires some factual basis for his claiming the throne of France, he realizes that there is always a legal loophole, which Canterbury conveniently provides in his excruciatingly long explanation of Salic law. The Famous Victories of Henry V, however, takes a mere two sentences to handle Harry’s legal claims, further highlighting the cynicism with which Shakespeare’s Harry and Canterbury justify the legality of invading France.

Harry, however, can never have too many scapegoats and desires more external forces to “compromise” his agency, while he at the same time performs the thoughtful, religious king concerned about the justness of a potential war. Harry asks Canterbury to “religiously unfold,” invokes God (as ultimate witness to one’s sincerity), and admonishes Canterbury to not take liberties with his explanation of the law or Harry’s rights to France. Only after invoking God and the sin of fighting an unjust war does

348 Wells, Shakespeare on Masculinity, 39.
349 It could also be conjectured that Harry’s detailed description of what Canterbury should not do might actually be prodding him to justify his claims to the French throne in bad faith: “Now that I’ve told you what not to do, do exactly what I warned you against, and we can pretend you earnestly mean it.”
Harry allow Canterbury to list his many rationalizations. The legal explanation of Salic law reveals in several instances that many usurpers of the French crown used the argument of inheritance through the female line, which Harry himself does. Harry’s perhaps uncomfortable intuition that he makes a usurper’s claims to the French throne leads him to ask, “May I with right and conscience make this claim?” (96; emphasis added). For someone whose logic is so impeccable, it is surprising that he fails to “unloose” this “Gordian knot of policy” (1.1.146). Whether Harry can actually untie the intricacies of Salic law in order to justify his claims to the French throne is beyond the point. What he desires here is a willing accomplice to do his dirty work. While in the two Henry IV plays he had a willing abettor in Poins, those exploits were light in nature. Here, Harry wants someone to take responsibility for the bloodshed that will ensue in an invasion of France. While Harry performs his Christian faith for others, he has also grown up in a society that privileges both Christian doctrine and the attitudes of medieval feudalism. So, while it is expected of him to be “warlike,” Harry would also surely be aware from his studies, from sermons, and from his elders that it is morally grievous to fight an unjust war. Harry has competing dictates that he must balance.

Janet M. Spencer, “Princes, Pirates, and Pigs.” Spencer argues that the scene shows that sin is displaceable. She argues that Harry’s calling upon Canterbury and the Dauphin’s offense are both utilized to shift responsibility (171-2). See also Tebbetts “Shakespeare’s Henry V: Politics and the Family,” South Central Review 7, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 8-19 and Joel Altman, “‘Vile Participation’: The Amplification of Violence in the Theater of Henry V,” Shakespeare Quarterly 42, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 1-32. Traversi, Shakespeare from, 169, notes, “the idea of war has already been obviously accepted. Henry does not, in reality, look for advice but for a public statement of the justice of his cause. He prompts the subservient Archbishop at each step to the required actions”; Sullivan, “Princes to Act,” 131, notes Harry’s continued “Halness”: “Just as he had done in his youth, Henry stages scenes that utilize others to further his own purposes, but as king he also becomes an actor in the scenes of his own devising…he assigns to another the authorship of his actions”; Lane, “‘When Blood Is Their Argument,’” 29, also describes the dynamic at play between Harry and his counsellors: “The task for political leaders who urge war is to sanction this carnage, and secure obedience to marching orders, while disclaiming personal responsibility.”
Harry tries to abdicate responsibility, given the double bind in which he finds himself, playing either the Christian or chivalric king, as well as needing to mystify his own power. Canterbury shrewdly takes responsibility from Harry, saying, “The sin upon my head” (97). Canterbury does not dispute the grievousness of innocent people dying for the king’s self-aggrandizing cause or redefine the war as holy—he simply accepts responsibility for the potential sin of erroneously justifying it. However, his statement’s lack of specificity also suggests that he takes responsibility for the sin of justifying the war. In line with his position as Archbishop and the religiosity Harry performs for others, Canterbury then solidifies the legal claim of inheriting through the female line by quoting Scripture. While Harry performs as a guileless, religious king for everyone, he wants others to take the responsibility for actions he himself thinks might be morally reprehensible, and here, specifically, “rhetorically delegates the choice to Canterbury.”

As I have argued, the bishops are clearly aware of the fictiveness of Harry’s redemption but are more than happy to aid his political strategy and themselves further his portrayal of a consistent kingly, guileless masculinity, in the service of mutual self-aggrandizement.

It should be noted that in both commands to Canterbury the king insists on judicial and religious justification. While the legal grounds might be tenuous, the nature of the law is that it is precise, exact, and therefore can be subject to loopholes. However, Harry’s “May I with right and conscience make this claim,” asking Canterbury to take responsibility, seems at the same time to contradict Harry’s desire to transfer responsibility. Harry does not have to phrase the question in these terms, bringing up “conscience,” his own internal moral compass. He not only wants Canterbury to explain

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his legal rights, but he also wants the Archbishop to clear him of any moral wrong-doing. Moreover, he wants Canterbury to preemptively absolve him from any future guilt in the enterprise. However, Harry’s very conjuration of “conscience” suggests that his will never be clear. While one can have someone take the blame for an action on legal grounds, one’s conscience cannot be transferred or cleansed by someone else, even if he happens to be the Archbishop of Canterbury. Harry’s conscience, despite his attempts to void himself of his own and ascribe one to others, is tainted by the way he has come by the English throne. His proclamations in 4.3 of 2 Henry IV, particularly in their simplification and falsification of his father’s past, suggest that he continues to be bothered by his (il)legitimacy. His question to Canterbury if he may claim the French throne with conscience suggests that, even if given the go-ahead by a religious authority, he himself knows that he cannot make the claim in good faith.

Harry still suffers from the internal conflicts that had plagued him as Hal, yet he plays innocently enough for the others, having staged his reformation so that he will no longer be associated with his father’s rebellious usurpation. His transference of agency to his counsel, as well as his desire to be persuaded not just legally but spiritually, all left to the Archbishop, suggests that he will never be fully comfortable waging this war. Harry almost never breaks from his public role in this play because he is aware that, if he were to open up his private self, he might be riven by the same guilt that crippled, sickened, and perhaps killed his father. Harry attempts to convince himself that someone else can be responsible for the deaths of innocents when he himself knows that, as king, the ultimate responsibility lies with him.

353 Graham, “Shakespeare’s Stoic Conscience,” 266, perhaps most succinctly describes Harry’s customary move in Henry V: “Henry himself never has a conscience, only other people do.”
Canterbury, having defended Harry’s claim to the throne of France with a quote from Scripture, shifts from legal and religious grounds to one invoking Harry’s nobility and his family line. Codes of honor during the period stressed emulation of one’s ancestors, and, further, even texts by Ascham and Elyot, concerned with educating the nobility for statecraft, likewise argued that recalling a nobleman’s bloodline was an effective strategy for effecting the desired behavior. Canterbury thus invokes Harry’s ancestors, as “the aristocrat had not only his own reputation to consider, but also the good name of his family,” and, as Traversi argues about Hal/Harry, rather than being some exceptional individual, regardless of how remarkable he is in some aspects, he has many of the same traits of his family line and would certainly want to live up to their example. Thus, we see how effective Canterbury’s words are:

Look back into your mighty ancestors.  
Go, my dread lord, to your great-grand sire’s tomb  
From whom you claim; invoke his warlike spirit,  
And your great-uncle’s, Edward the Black Prince,  
Who on the French ground played a tragedy,  
Making defeat on the full power of France,  
While his most mighty father on a hill  
Stood smiling to behold his lion’s whelp  
Forage in blood of French nobility. (102-10)

Canterbury acknowledges the nobility and warrior spirit of Harry’s family. While essentially appealing to the acquisitive masculinity Harry really practices, Canterbury’s words also suggest that Harry's bloodline tasks him passively to emulate his forebears. As Erickson writes, “The virtual blood transfusion from the forefathers is death-giving because it deprives Henry V of his independent decision-making powers; he is accorded

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354 Watson, Renaissance Concept of Honor, 80.  
355 Traversi, Shakespeare from. See notes 235 and 263.

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identity only insofar as he merges with his ‘progenitors’ (I, ii, 95).”

Although Harry’s agency is partly elided in Canterbury’s evocation of his ancestors, Harry has staged the clergy’s persuasion of him; in doing so, he further performs his prudent deliberation, and perhaps even reluctance, in waging war on France. As a nobleman, he has to go to war against France because he must imitate his ancestors—he has no choice. Thus, he erases his own responsibility for the war, and, as a bonus, gets memorialized with great men like Edward III and the Black Prince.

Canterbury, in tracing Harry’s lineage, legitimizes Harry, not only in his claim to France but also to England. After all, Edward, his great-grandfather, was one of the greatest English kings. Canterbury’s plea, while spurring on Harry, “Go, my dread lord, to your great-grandsire’s tomb / From whom you claim” (103-4), legitimizes Harry as king of both France and England in its erasure of his usurper father. There is no explicit referent for what Harry “claims” from Edward III, and, although it is understood that Canterbury intends the French throne, it could certainly mean he also inherits the English throne from Edward, in addition, Harry might also inherit his great-grandfather’s greatness—not just the outward appearance of inheritance through his bloodline but the internal substance that made Edward such a powerful ruler.

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356 Erickson, “‘The Fault/My Father Made,’” 16.
357 Sullivan, “Princes to Act,” 136, writes, “far from the Churchmen inducing the king to press his claims, he induces the clergy to support his own plans.”
358 Although he assuages his father’s guilt in how he came by the crown in 2 Henry IV, eliding Richard’s deposition and claiming lineal succession, Harry ultimately does not feel so certain about his own claims and, as I have argued, attempts to rewrite his paternity throughout these plays. Lewis writes in Kingship and Masculinity, “in going to war Henry was able to give his subjects exactly what they wanted, fulfilling their expectations not only by embodying an imposing military presence, but also by producing a common, unifying project which promised to restore the standing of the crown and the whole English nation. This provided another means by which Henry could emphasize the fresh character of his own kingship in comparison to his father’s and indeed metaphorically bypass Henry IV’s problematic reign altogether by inviting direct comparison between himself and Edward III (103-4; emphasis added).
I want to reiterate again that Harry only performs passivity and has instigated Canterbury’s instigation. While Canterbury knows that covering judicial and religious rationales for the French invasion will suffice, he also knows that invoking the brave deeds of a nobleman’s ancestors will appeal to Harry’s sense of honor and family obligation. Harry wants Canterbury to invoke his family: one, to solidify and further legitimize his claim and ownership of both English and French thrones; and two, to offer up as models for emulation the great men who have defined his role and made him the man he is. Harry’s emulating Edward the Black Prince “While his most mighty father on a hill / Stood smiling to behold his lion’s whelp / Forage in blood of French nobility” (108-110) is a loaded metaphor to say the least. Given that the Black Prince’s death resulted in Richard’s kingship while a minor and ultimately places England on the path to civil war, Harry’s assuming the role of the Black Prince revises that “wrong,” giving Edward III the proper and worthy heir he should have had. Again, this satisfies the discomfort about his own father’s usurpation of the throne that is Harry’s largest motivation in these plays. This analogy satisfies his ambivalence. While he gets to revise English history and create the stability it lacked, easing the burden of his inheritance from a usurper who delegitimized patrilineal inheritance, he at the same time gets to solidify his father’s legacy through this action, one of the main goals for a noble son.

Harry gets to legitimize his father’s throne and win his father’s posthumous approval, which he never truly seemed to receive as prince. Of course, Hal's refusal of the

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359 Peacham, Compleat Gentleman, 14, observes: “Nobility stirreth up emulation in great Spirits, not onely of equaling others, but excelling them,” then goes on to mention both Alexander the Great and “Edward our blacke Prince” as proper models.

360 Kantorowicz, The King's Two Bodies, 33, n. 18, notes that Edward the Black Prince’s standard was a sun coming out from behind clouds, which suggests that Hal/Harry desires to claim from Edward, the Black Prince, foregoing not just his usurper father but also Richard.
toxic burden of living up to his father’s example—of making right his father’s crime of usurpation while also demonstrating that he is the “man” his father was—results in his father’s disapproval. In claiming Harry descends from Edward, Canterbury’s metaphor indicates that Harry is noble and capable of great actions natural for someone of his blood. Further, the metaphor elides his inheritance from his father while also describing him as both equal to and greater than his father. The father stands smiling on a hill, passively approving of the actions of his “lion’s whelp” (which Falstaff had used to describe Hal in 1 Henry IV, 3.3.146), who performs his manliness by killing other men. Canterbury’s words might undermine the authenticity of Harry’s nobility, and therefore also his manhood, by the use of theatrical vocabulary—“played a tragedy” implies that even military exploit, long believed to be the most objective marker of manliness, is itself “inauthentically” performed and must be approved by an outside audience. However, more importantly for Harry, the metaphor places the son as the actor who excels in the role of warrior while the father sits back passively and approves. Thus, Harry gets to achieve the military conquest his father never had the chance to embark upon, has his manly performance approved by Henry, and at the same time reduces to a passive observer his “most mighty father,” whose usurpation is arguably the manliest thing one can accomplish.

Although Canterbury takes legal and moral responsibility for going to war and appeals to Harry’s ancestors as further spur to action, Harry further conscripts the Dauphin as yet another instigator in this war he longs to fight but also longs to be seen as

361 Canterbury’s description of the Battle of Crecy as a drama echoes the very first lines in the play by the Chorus: “A kingdom for a stage, princes to act, / and monarchs to behold the swelling scene” (Prologue 3-4).
reluctant to fight.”362 That Harry once again places the responsibility for the war in someone else’s hands illustrates his inability to fully feel absolved from that responsibility. Some critics see Harry’s response to the Dauphin’s mocking gift as exhibiting the anger Henry ascribes to his son in his description of Hal’s traits to Clarence in 2 Henry IV 4.3. I, however, argue that Harry utilizes and exaggerates his authentic feeling for political purposes. How sincerely should an audience take Harry’s anger when he constantly repeats and quibbles on the word “mock”? The playfulness of the bantering language recalls the tavern prince. Harry’s language re-appropriates the Dauphin’s slight, and instead of tennis balls, Harry threatens to “strike [the Dauphin’s] father’s crown into the hazard” (1.2.264), warning that “all the courts of France shall be disturbed / With chases” (266-7). Harry, however, is not content to only invent a conceit but takes pleasure in the sounds of words, “And tell the pleasant Prince…/ his soul / Shall stand sore charged for the wasteful vengeance / That shall fly with them” (282-5). He couples the sound play (including the near-rhyme of “pleasant” with “vengeance”) with a metaphor transforming the “balls to gun-stones” (283) and further describes the Dauphin’s soul “stand[ing] sore charged” (a pun for the lighting of the cannons and guns) for the death and destruction that will surely follow. Harry has deployed the playfulness typical of the verbal volleys of Boar’s Head, except here the object is not to perpetuate the verbal one-upmanship typical of underclass counter-masculinity, but to demonstrate that he will not bear a slight on his reputation and honor. Harry, having been given a mock-present that recalls his riotous past, couples his tavernesque rhetoric with his noble prerogative to “defend his honor from the slightest affront and…take private revenge

362 Spencer, “Princes, Pirates, Pigs,” 171, notes that Harry utilizes the “Dauphin’s taunt as another opportunity to shift the burden of moral responsibility for this war away from himself.”
against his enemies despite the teachings of his church.” Fusing genuine irritation with verbal playfulness, Harry carefully assigns responsibility for the deaths of innocents to the Dauphin’s actions. Thus, Harry once again transfers responsibility for dubious action onto someone else, regardless of how much he doubts that such moral responsibility is commutative.

After receiving legal and moral “clearance” from his counsel, Harry bases his justification of invasion on the affront to his nobility (and, by extension, England itself) leveled at him by the Dauphin. Harry understands that playing the chivalric, honorable king might give him more justification for a French invasion than Canterbury’s legal precedent and acceptance of moral responsibility. Harry can have it both ways in playing the thoughtful Christian king and the noble warrior. Regardless of the early modern period’s insistence upon moral uprightness, writers who professed to abide by the Christian code of ethics also were influenced by another competing and contradictory code of ethics. Alexandra Shepard notes of the time period, “Although conduct writers emphasized the importance of restraint and self-control, even their prescriptive codes commonly assumed that the violent assertion of status was acceptable in certain situations.”

Harry has “reformed” and put his salad days behind him, but the Dauphin, in sending him the tennis balls, suggests either that he has not heard of Harry’s transformation (and by extension how legitimate a king he is), or worse, that he, like Canterbury and Ely, does not believe it. However, unlike them, he is an enemy and not a political ally, and thus, instead of playing along with the fiction, openly questions it.

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363 Watson, Renaissance Concept of Honor, 52.
364 Shepard, Meanings of Manhood, 140.
While some might argue that Hal’s response is over the top, I have illustrated that his language throughout the response is playful and that Harry’s rhetorical facility shows his control over the situation. While Harry is the reactive party, he portrays himself as the one in power, interestingly by painting the Dauphin as the agent of France’s pain and suffering. Harry, still seen as Hal by the Dauphin, will “dazzle all the eyes of France” (280), just as he did all the eyes of England.

However successfully Harry has surely performed his kingly masculinity for the English nobles and their French counterparts, I do not want to portray Hal’s portrayal of himself as fully consistent. While he mostly stays in control of his rhetoric, he frequently substitutes the royal “we” for the personal “I,” suggesting that perhaps the Dauphin’s insult has hit a little close to home. Rather than “stay in character” and use the royal “we” to emphasize his person as the body politic, Harry’s choice, conscious or not, of using the personal “I” and emphasizing his body natural, suggests that he either loses control of his performance momentarily or, perhaps more likely, attempts to persuade others that he wages war on France because “Henry's honour and manhood had been violated in ways that prevented him from attaining his rightful patrimony and had to be defended.” As Lewis notes, the tennis balls episode reveals that age is not the only guarantor of kingly manhood. One should also have the “correct temperate characteristics and...military accomplishments” (emphasis added). Harry, upset, divides private, personal revenge/ambition from public, political, and collective pursuits but eventually shifts back

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365 Traversi, *Shakespeare from*, 173, writes, “Henry’s reaction, in spite of the opening affirmation of his self-control, takes the form of one of those outbursts which are habitual with him whenever his will is crossed.” I agree overall with Traversi’s conclusion—Harry is rather combustible whenever he faces resistance, as we see in his speech before Harfleur and in his interactions with Williams. However, I argue that Harry, astutely, coopts his genuine emotion in such circumstances and turns these moments of private anguish into public performances of his kinglyness.


367 Lewis, 106.
into a fully public register, discussing the ramifications of this insult for the people of France while also quibbling on “mock.” He immediately invokes the will of God (290), reasserting that *he* is not the angry agent desirous for personal revenge. Invoking God gives him sanction for this very secular war that he spins as crusade, fusing both national and spiritual loyalties.\footnote{I would argue that Harry has, through his performance of religiosity, in a sense made England “an ecclesiastical state.” As Machiavelli writes in *The Prince*, “They are sustained by the ancient principles of religion, which are so powerful and of such authority that they keep their princes in power, *whatever they do, however they live*” (31; emphasis added).} Ever the shrewd politician, Harry says, “I am coming on / To venge me as I may, and to put forth / My rightful hand in a well-hallowed cause” (292-4). Despite attributing his invasion of France to divine sanction, Harry’s language slips once again using the personal pronoun. Perhaps recognizing his blunder in prioritizing the logic of honor, he seeks to erase the dubiousness of “venge” with “rightful” and “well-hallowed,” resorting back to the prior legal and religious assurances Canterbury had given him.

Harry’s response to the Dauphin’s insult corresponds to dictates outlined in behavior manuals for gentlemen as well as the medieval code of chivalry that would not bear insults lightly. Thus, while he has already been resolved to go to France to “busy giddy minds” and solidify unity in his fractured kingdom (as well as in his own masculine identity), the insult gives him further grounds to legitimize the invasion of France. However, to present a fully integrated masculinity, he makes sure to paint his aristocratic chest thumping as part of God’s plan and God’s will. Harry attempts to fuse national and religious matters,\footnote{Robinson, “Harry and Amurath,” 406, Robinson argues that Harry fuses the discourse surrounding nationhood with “crusading ideology,” using Christopher Tyerman’s phrase. Wells has a similar take in *Shakespeare on Masculinity*, and summarizing an argument put forward by Steven Marx,} just as he fuses residual forms of medieval chivalry with Christian masculinity, uniting both practically and theoretically dominant forms.
It should be noted that Harry’s response to the Dauphin is the same as would be expected for the social inferiors whom aristocrats look down upon. Harry’s response is ultimately no different than Poins’ “I’ll steep this letter in sack and make him eat it” (2 Henry IV, 2.2.132-3), directed at Falstaff for lying that Poins has been angling for Hal to marry his sister. While Poins is angered at the suggestion of his desire for social advancement through manipulative means, Harry, here, is angered by the suggestion that his outward behavior, and thus, his inner man, are not equal to the social station he has attained. He feels it a class derogation to be equated with the riotous sport of tennis. As I have argued earlier, Harry distances himself and reasserts his class superiority over his friend Poins in scene 2.2 of 2 Henry IV by alternately shifting from vulnerability to crass cruelty, leveling charges about illicit sexual behavior and venereal disease at Poins, suggesting that the tennis court keeper is privy to Poins’ misbehavior. Thus, the Dauphin’s gift unwittingly strikes a deeper nerve than he had intended, as Hal, decathecting from his old friends, did so in part by connecting his friend to tennis. His rage makes more sense if we understand that Harry believes the Dauphin sees him to be as lowly and as insignificant as Poins.

Interestingly, while Harry threatens the death of innocents in defense of his reputation as a man and attributes responsibility to the Dauphin for those deaths, the underclass in scene 2.1 of Henry V resolve their differences amicably. While Nym and Pistol argue over money—marrying the rich widow Mistress Quickly and eight shillings—and threaten violence against each other, Bardolph acts as mediator, resulting in Nym and Pistol’s shaking hands and coming to an agreement. Harry himself, the

writes that “Henry deliberately and cynically [uses] holy war as a political device to inspire faith in his followers” (39).
Chorus tells us, is made an offer of the princess Katherine and “some petty and unprofitable dukedoms” (3.0.31) but rejects the offer and continues with the invasion. Harry himself states that Katherine is his “capital demand” (5.2.96), but the Chorus’ declaration that “The offer likes not” (3.0.31) undermines the veracity of Harry’s public statement to his political rivals, soon to be his uneasy political allies. Given the nobility’s response to insults concerning something as abstract as honor while the underclass make amends and defuse potentially dangerous conflict over scarce monetary resources through mediation, is it any wonder Harry has to always spin his endeavors, “For we have now no thought in us but France, / Save those to God that run before our business” (1.2.303-4)? Harry tries to persuade himself to the rightness of his own cause, and the only reason he has so often been seen as reducing himself from human being to void practitioner of political power is because critics have not paid close enough attention to the minor lapses in his rhetoric that undermine the integrated dominant masculinity he tries to portray.

This scene illustrates that, while Harry utilizes the Dauphin’s insult and the clergy’s legal, religious, and aristocratic appeals for persuading him to war in France, Harry must provide the connective logic of the holy war himself. As Benedict Robinson notices, “It is Henry, not the bishops, who injects religion into the conversation, repeatedly invoking God as both witness and copartner and insisting on the links between legal and political reason and religious faith.”

Henry understands that while “the relation between religion and ‘the Policie of War’…was not univocal,” as St. Augustine and Erasmus seemed to believe there was no such thing as a just war, there

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was also a theological tradition of seeing all war as divinely sanctioned, and he only needs to replicate this discourse to persuade skeptical parties and to perform his guileless kingship.

Pranks in Service of State Power

Henry is arguably at his most powerful in scene 2.2 in his clever, forceful discovery and dispatching of the traitors in his midst. Shakespeare effectively reworks the historical material surrounding the Southampton plot to emphasize Harry’s positive kingly qualities: being just and merciful, and his divorce of personal feelings from his imperatives as monarch, prioritizing his body politic over his body natural. Katherine Lewis describes the brutality with which the historical Henry V punished Scroop, who was “humiliatingly dragged to his execution on a hurdle” and had his lands “swiftly seized and redistributed in a possibly unlawful fashion.” Lewis, interpreting these events through the lens of a contemporary history of Henry V, the Gesta Henrici Quinti, continues that “Scrope seems to have been treated most severely precisely because he had been the closest to Henry.” Shakespeare, however, wisely tempers the justice Harry

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372 Nicolaescu, “Religion and War,” 126, writes that English bishop Lancelot Andrewes, who held clerical positions during the reigns of Elizabeth and James, “adopts a position similar to the one championed by [Stephen] Gosson, namely that priests have a divine assignment to support wars… insist[ing] that there is ‘an use of Divinitie in war and an use of war in Divinitie.’”

373 I would be remiss to neglect this wonderful summary of the propagation of patriarchy by Stone in Family, Sex, and Marriage that seems to motivate the interested parties in power in the play: “Patriarchy for its effective exercise depends not so much on raw power or legal authority, as on a recognition by all concerned of its legitimacy, hallowed by ancient tradition, moral theology and political theory. It survives and flourishes only so long as it is not questioned and challenged, so long as both the patriarchs and their subordinates fully accept the natural justice of the relationship and of the norms within which it is exercised. Willing acceptance of the legitimacy of the authority, together with a weakness of competing foci of power, are the keys to the whole system” (109).

374 Lewis, Kingship and Masculinity, 93.

375 Lewis, 93.
delivers, particularly towards Scroop, to show him a rational king in control of his personal emotions and public actions.

Shakespeare emphasizes Harry’s control in dealing with the traitors and his own emotions: Harry knows of their treachery beforehand and enters the scene equipped with written letters sentencing the traitors to death. Moreover, characteristic of his desire for others to take responsibility for his distasteful actions, Harry orchestrates the traitors’ agreement to their own execution. By pardoning the rash words of the man who drunkenly railed against his person in front of traitors, he instigates the traitors’ performance of their ardent loyalty to him. Harry uses their attempts to cover over their own treachery by calling for the drunkard’s death, to get Scroop, Cambridge, and Grey to sign their own death warrants. Having learned playacting at the Boar’s Head, he stages this scene to effectively have those he will execute sign their own death warrants. The prank allows him to get revenge on those that would kill his person, but the impersonality with which it is undertaken, i.e. the delivery of sealed letters to each of the traitors, casts their doom not as personal revenge but as the unstoppable function of state power’s protecting the body politic. Yet, even here, at perhaps his most impersonally powerful, Harry may betray some of his interior or his body natural in his words to Scroop and defining his French mission as justifying his kingship in England.376 Harry’s long speech to Scroop, his former bedfellow, expressing extreme disappointment in his betrayal, in one sense, might reveal too much personal hurt and vulnerability befitting a king.

376 Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin, “Gender and Nation: Anticipations of Modernity in the Second Tetralogy,” Shakespeare, Feminism and Gender: Contemporary Critical Essays, ed. Kate Chedgzoy (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 93-114. Howard and Rackin write, “From the beginning of the play Henry has defined the conquest of France as the means by which he will secure the royal legitimacy that he could not inherit from his usurping father” (108). Mebane, “Impious War,” 257, comes at the issue from the opposite direction: “How can Henry believe in the legitimacy of his claim to France when he confesses the illegitimacy of his claim to England?”
However, Harry could conversely seem manlier, expressing hurt over Scroop’s breach of faith, giving Harry a touch of humanity. Thus, in sentencing a former friend, he can illustrate his dedication to the rule of law and *subservience* to his role as body politic. He also gets to relate to a former fellow, although now disappointedly and from a position of unchecked power; however, expressing his hurt—despite its use to manipulate his audience and present himself as an ideal king—might on some level be a way for Harry to perform some of his private self.

Our foreknowledge of the treachery mirrors Harry’s foreknowledge, reinforcing Harry’s control while also forestalling the audience’s potentially distasteful feelings toward what may come across as a dark prank on Harry’s part. The traitors’ attempt on Harry’s life for “treacherous crowns” (2.0.22) might cast them in a worse light than the rebels of *2 Henry IV*. While those rebels had more reasonable grounds to rally against Henry, i.e. his illegitimacy and their stated support of Richard’s cause, these traitors attempt to undermine their nation for a foreign power’s money—money that supposedly is beneath the interests of the nobility.

Harry’s response to Scroop further illustrates the control he has desired to demonstrate in this whole scene. His over the top figures of speech, figuring “this revolt of thine” (141) as “Another fall of man” (142), cast Harry as God and Scroop as “th’offending Adam,” styling Harry as omniscient and divine.377 The highly rhetorical repetition and formalism of “Why, so didst thou” and his noted pleasure in the sounds of words themselves, “And thus thy fall hath left a kind of blot / To mark the full-fraught

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377 Parolin, “Figuring the King,” 48, argues that Harry, “By subordinating himself so thoroughly to God...achieves a paradoxical effect: he comes to seem less like God’s servant and more like God’s partner or even a god himself.” While Parolin points to Harry’s many invocations of God and Harry’s ascribing divine agency for virtually everything, Hal’s use of religious rhetoric here furthers his co-partnership with God.
man and best endued / With some suspicion” (138-40), even rhyming “blot” and “fraught,” all suggest Harry’s control in this situation and his secret joy in having successfully orchestrated it. The sheer length of his anti-Scroopian diatribe suggests Harry’s pseudo-Ricardian pleasure in his verbal mastery, but a verbal mastery that masters his audience by his effective performance of kingly masculinity.

However, as I have argued, this outburst is not merely a fiction that Harry stages; part of the impetus for his response to Scroop, as well as its sheer length, comes from genuine feelings of hurt in his former bedfellow’s betrayal. Harry’s foreknowledge of Scroop’s treachery should mitigate his passion. Despite his rhetorical precision in uttering these lines, Harry cannot suppress the feelings that come about in performing these words. As I have stated earlier, Harry does not hesitate cowing others by deploying his superior social position, but he prefers for others to love him for who he is. He seeks approval from others, not for successful performance of his masculinity, but because his aristocratic privilege tells him he deserves it, that he is a man already and without regards to his kingship. Harry feels entitled to others’ love, and when denied it, becomes defensive, as is most evident in his words to Williams in scene 4.1. Harry, having grown up to believe in his own class superiority, expects others to approve of it, and he cannot accept that a former friend would see him only in his public role as king and not as his body natural.

His words regarding Scroop’s betrayal also perhaps indicate his suppressed feelings of guilt and anger toward himself for his treatment of Falstaff. However, rather than direct these feelings toward himself for betraying the old man, he projects those feelings on to Scroop, whom he can rationalize deserves his harsh words for his attempt
on his life. Scroop’s plan to kill Harry, on some level, mirrors Harry’s own desire for harm to visit his own person as he, on some level, feels he deserves punishment for rejecting Falstaff. Harry, successfully utilizing the victim’s discourse, much as his father did, retaliates against Scroop, who is a Henry himself,\textsuperscript{378} to distance himself from recognition of his own sins.

Harry, although carrying out this prank to serve the justice he must enforce as king, folds his counter-masculinity into his dominant masculinity and plays a politic prank on his would-be betrayers. As I have suggested, Harry, who at the end of 2 Henry IV has come to terms with the limitations placed upon him in playing his social role and so combines his counter-masculinity with his hegemonic masculinity, giving it a more appropriate personal touch, feels the “majesty” “pinch [its] bearer” (2 Henry IV, 4.3.159, 160) throughout Henry V. However, rather than majesty or his body politic overwhelming his body natural, he at times infuses his body natural into his performance of the body politic (and at other times, desires his body natural to overwhelm his body politic). Here, Harry infuses his counter-masculine personality into his treatment of the traitors, but, rather than relating to other men as he had in Eastcheap, this playing reinforces his dominance.\textsuperscript{379}

Giving them papers, he jests, “What see you in those papers, that you lose / So much complexion?—Look ye how they change! / Their cheeks are paper” (2.2.72-4); his quibbles on the word “paper,” joking at their fright, casts him as omniscient and

\textsuperscript{378} Lewis, Kingship and Masculinity, 93. Scroop’s also being a “Henry” might stir up some recognition of Harry’s own betrayal and rejection of Falstaff.

\textsuperscript{379} I should add that much of his playing in Eastcheap establishes his dominance over other people, but, even then, he still desires fraternity.
omnipotent. This power is coupled with his ability to make others responsible for his own actions, stating, “The mercy that was quick in us but late / By your own counsel is suppressed and killed” (2.2.79-80, emphasis added). Given their urging to execute the lowly soul who drunkenly “railed against our person” (41) instead of freeing him, Harry takes their advice and shows no lenity toward them. Of course, they have committed a much more grievous crime and deserve the deaths they are soon to receive, nor would anyone judge Harry for executing people plotting his murder. Yet Harry, to solidify his power and maintain support, characterizes himself as beholden to greater forces beyond his control.

He states rather coolly:

> Touching our person seek we no revenge,  
> But we our kingdom's safety must so tender,  
> Whose ruin you have sought, that to her laws  
> We do deliver you (175-8).

Harry takes great pains to distinguish his body natural from the body politic. He only metes out justice because, in attempting to kill his body, they have attempted to destroy the nation. Conversely, in making the distinction between his two bodies, he relates them as well: “I don’t want to kill you for attempting to kill me, but I am the state, after all.”

His (dis)avowal of seeking personal revenge perhaps reveals his belief in his own natural

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380 Lewis relates in *Kingship and Masculinity* that Mortimer, the Earl of March, who himself was to be carried to the throne had the Southampton plot had been successful, related the plot to Henry V himself (93). Shakespeare wisely leaves out the information to heighten the sense of Harry’s omniscience and power.

381 Sullivan, “Princes to Act,” 135, describes, as have others, Harry’s customary technique in having other parties take responsibility for undesirable actions: “Thus, in a case in which right appears to be manifestly on his side, he is at pains to appear not to render judgment in his own name. Having so manifestly manipulated the guilty to sentence themselves, Henry’s method in this instance may cast light on his behavior in his first appearance in the play when right is not as evidently on his side.” Sullivan uses the Southampton episode to read back into Harry’s justification for war with France, further supporting my argument. Harry, regardless of how much cover he acquires for his actions, ultimately does not buy the rationales he presents to others or stages others as presenting to him. Regardless of his inheriting the throne, successfully performing (for others onstage) a seemingly consistent masculinity and casting himself as a mere conduit of the divine will, Harry cannot undo his father’s crime. He can only capitalize on it, regardless of how much he dresses himself as passive divine agent.
superiority and that somehow, by virtue of his being himself, he deserves to be king, regardless of his father’s actions. Harry declares that he is bound to carry out the laws of England, and as such, renders them up for execution, exclaiming, “God quit you in his mercy!” (166). While God is forgiving enough to acquit them of their sins, Harry, as executor of the law of England, cannot render them the same mercy. He removes himself from his position of power and downplays his desire for personal revenge, even trivializing his very person. Harry purports to value the integrity of the English state more than his life, and as such, he has no choice but to follow English law.

At the end of 2.2, Harry restates the intent for their mission in France, using this heavily staged scene as justification for the exploit’s success. He assures those skeptical of an English victory in France by declaring, “We doubt not of a fair and lucky war / Since God so graciously hath brought to light / This dangerous treason lurking in our way” (185-7). Because of the ease with which they dispatched the betrayal, God must be on the side of the English, and thus, “We doubt not now / But every rub is smoothed on our way” (188-9). Even the Gesta Henrici Quinti speaks of the Southampton plot in similar terms, Lewis writing that “The author presents it as proof of Henry’s status as God’s champion.” Thus, the discovery and foiling of the French plot becomes further justification for a war whose moral grounds are dubious and whose practicality seems absent: God favors Harry. Harry further implores his men, “Let us deliver / Our puissance into the hand of God” (190-1), further painting this secular war over aristocratic succession in the terms of a crusade in which they are on God’s side and He theirs.

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382 This seems to echo his father’s “God pardon thee!” in 1 Henry IV 3.2 when Hal weakly apologizes for the bad reports concerning his behavior.

383 Lewis, Kingship and Masculinity, 93.
Harry ends this scene unwittingly undermining the integrity that he so successfully performs in the rest of scene, saying, “No king of England, if not king of France!” (194). Harry recognizes that, to be “king,” he must be more than a Christian king who observes the strictness of the law in extreme cases and grants mercy at others. While Christianity is the prescriptive model of masculinity espoused by the church, prescriptive writing, and other authority figures, society at large rewards those who exhibit easily demonstrable forms of masculinity. Harry plays it both ways, making himself a Christian warrior, and utilizes the rhetoric of honor and conquest to paint his invasion of France as acting according to God’s will. These attributions of God’s will to secular actions are ultimately non sequiturs, but Harry claims his faith as his rationale for acting. He casts himself as servant of powers superior to himself, subordinating his own desires to them. However, he is fully cognizant that he must invade another country in order to legitimate his rule over the one he is supposedly king of, knowing, as did Machiavelli, that “domestic affairs will always be secure, as long as foreign policy is successful.”

He can forge a unified nation by opposing a nation all the separate factions in his own country despise, thereby exploiting the tendency to “other” as a way to solidify the legitimacy of his rule in England.

**What Becomes a Man**

Harry’s famous “Once more unto the breach” speech, in addition to legitimating his rule over his soldiers and his attempt to relate to them, is quite the primer on manhood. Harry’s main concern is rallying wearied soldiers and inspiring tentative wearied soldiers to masculine exploits in the first place. Chris Given-Wilson writes that for medieval chronicle historians, “war was the ultimate proving-ground of a man’s

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character,” and Harry’s speech to his men participates in this tradition. However, examination of the speech’s language reveals unresolved fissures in Harry’s performance of kingly manhood that potentially undermine the authenticity or essence of martial masculinity, which, in large part, was how aristocratic men defined themselves.

Harry differentiates between what is fitting for men during peacetime, “modest stillness and humility” (3.1.4), and what becomes them during wartime, “the action of the tiger” (6). His acknowledgment that one must “imitate the action of the tiger” (6) during war time suggests that the war he fights with legal, religious, and chivalric backing in reality reduces one to an animal. As John Mebane writes, "The exhortation to the troops…states clearly and powerfully that combat is unnatural to human beings and reduces them to the level of beasts." Harry’s statement about imitation, followed by his instructions to “Stiffen the sinews” (7) and “Disguise fair nature with hard-favoured rage. / Then lend the eye a terrible aspect…/ Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide, / Hold hard the breath” (8-9, 15-6) sound like those an acting instructor might give an aspiring actor. Harry teaches that putting on the proper warlike spirit in “imitating…the tiger” comes about through a physical transformation. To change one’s internal state, one must change one’s exterior and the way one is perceived. Thus, he acknowledges the difference between interior and exterior—which he often equates—and, perhaps most spectacularly, insinuates that one’s outward behavior can change the inner “nature” of the person; you can change what kind of person you are by the way you perform yourself to yourself and to others.

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386 Mebane, “‘Impious War,’” 261.
Further, Harry’s speech implies that Harry’s manhood, which he desires for others to see as exuding from his interior self, is itself an act. Harry’s monologue in 3.1 reveals that “nobility, like gender, was understood both as an innate essence present at birth (having been inherited from predecessors) and as a set of properties which required training both to understand and to master.”

His words follow in a tradition that acknowledges that one has certain essential qualities, like nobility or manhood, but that those states may only be fully achieved through work and practice. His language, through its theatrical metaphor, suggests that anyone can achieve it. Further, his language recalls the playacting metaphor Canterbury uses to describe the heroism of Edward the Black Prince and the Prologue’s desire for “princes to act / And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!” (Prologue 3-4). What has been long portrayed as being essential to one’s being is mere appearance. Harry’s words, recalling the Prologue, suggest that the former prince, now king, is but an actor, and that the actor is but a prince—the spectator-kings approve of the performance of nobility or masculinity, the ones ultimately in the positions of power.

However, perhaps intuiting this uncomfortable truth about masculinity, the speech also serves to legitimate his rule over his soldiers while at the same time seeking fraternity with them. While this speech and his “band of brothers” speech before Agincourt are often performed and understood as being addressed to all of his forces, we should note that, despite his seeming language of fraternity, particularly in the use of the epithet “dear friends” (3.1.1), Harry distinguishes between the nobility and the common soldiers, granting the nobility the privilege with which to achieve true manhood—due to their being born with something essentially manly—unlike their common counterparts,

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who, for all their work, can never fully achieve it. He implores his fellow noblemen that if they do not respect his commands to keep fighting, they might as well “close the wall up with our English dead” (2), attempting to guilt the less-lusty of them into believing that their fellows had died in vain. He uses the rhetoric of shared nationhood to instill fraternal feeling and a sense of shared communal responsibility. Having already used the language of friendship to bind his soldiers to himself, he shifts into the language of nationality to further impel them to action and to prevent leaving a pile of English corpses in the walls of Harfleur.

He then implores them, “On, on, you noble English” (17), linking nobility with their being born within the bounds of England, as if the very place had ennobled them all rather than the social system from which they benefit. He continues to tell the nobility that their “blood is fet from fathers of war-proof, / Fathers that like so many Alexanders / Have in these parts from morn till even fought” (18-20). He deploys the language of blood and breeding, resorting to the common strategy of appealing to the nobility’s ancestry to inspire the desired behavior. In reminding his noblemen their fathers nobly fought like Alexander, he urges them to imitate their fathers, show their mothers true, and prove themselves their fathers’ children.

In imitating their fathers, they themselves become “copy now to men of grosser blood” (24), the bulk of Harry’s soldiers. The noblemen he addresses replace their fathers, who presumably stand upon a hill smiling at them. However much Harry, at other times, demonstrates his superiority to others of his social class in the two previous plays, he consistently stresses the fraternity he shares with his fellow aristocrats. Because he is so dependent upon them, in both approving of his masculinity but also physically fighting
for his cause, he reiterates their shared social status. Further, in stressing their nobility, he appeals to the militarism that the aristocracy often defined itself by. Primed from birth to see military exploit as the only route by which they can define themselves as men, the noblemen are likely persuaded by Harry’s speech. However, this language also reveals Harry’s concern over his own manliness, particularly his relation to his father’s burdensome and tainted masculinity. In presenting his nobles an opportunity to both prove themselves their fathers’ equals and the chance of surpassing them, Harry presents a way for himself to surpass his father’s own daunting masculinity.

Harry, turning to the men of “grosser blood,” equates them with “good yeomen” (25), rhetorically ennobling them from their, likely, lowlier social stations. It might seem to some that his earlier phrase “you noble English” is meant to enoble all Englishmen and imply that they are all noble by virtue of their being English, but he stops to address the yeoman separately. While he talks about the blood of the nobility as being “fet from fathers of war-proof,” he says of the rest of his soldiers that their “limbs were made in England” (26), again as though English birth were enough to make them more noble than the French aristocrats. In his attempts to establish fraternity and maintain control over his potentially flagging troops, he seems to forget that many of his soldiers are of Irish, Welsh, and Scottish descent, potentially undermining his attempts to relate to and ennable these soldiers by diminishing their countries of origin with his rhetoric. These common soldiers have more to prove, more to demonstrate; while the nobles are merely to imitate their fathers, the common soldiers are commanded, “show us here / The mettle of your pasture” (26-7), the “us” showing the distance between the noblemen and the

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388 See Stone, Crisis of the Aristocracy, Wells, Shakespeare on Masculinity, and Armon, Masculine Virtue among others.
“good yeomen” and the need for the commoners to show their social superiors how hearty their constitutions are. "Pasture,” as the Arden 3 notes, means “food,”389 but pasture also suggests the very parcel of land that they were reared upon. In essence, their bravery in battle will show them, not just true men, but true Englishmen: “Show us that you were born in England by your martial performance.” Given the terms Harry has established in this speech, the only real man could be one born in England, though not all English-born males are men.

Harry’s appeals to paternity suggest that he still desires his father’s approval, and that, though he cannot receive it in person, Henry could perhaps smile down on him from the hill of heaven, watching his fight to claim the French crown. Harry’s invocation of fathers suggests a large motivation to conquer France is to please his dad—maybe not the one who has passed on or the one who looks down on him from heaven but the one he has internalized. Harry strives to do something his father never could, making good on Henry’s promise to fight a foreign war, and in the process refigures the war against France as a crusade.390

Harry deploys similar talk of parentage with his common soldiers, saying, “let us swear / That you are worth your breeding” (28). While still discussing the soldiers’ responsibility to make their families proud, the shift from “blood” for the nobles to “breeding” for the commoners suggest that he thinks they are essentially livestock, despite his attempts to appeal to them in order to fight on his behalf. As I have argued, Harry often desires relation with those of lower social class, but his aristocratic privilege

389 Henry V, 203, n. 27.
390 Henry ends Richard II expressing his desire to fight a crusade in the Holy Land to absolve himself of Richard’s murder. Perhaps Harry understands on some level that he needs to successfully fight a foreign war to make his subjects forget about Richard’s fate?
often asserts itself in spite of himself. He continues, perhaps realizing how his prior rhetoric has undermined his stated goal of achieving unity amongst the different social classes in his ranks, asserting that “For there is none of you so mean and base / That hath not noble lustre in your eyes” (29-30). Still trying include his common soldiers into his “noble English,” he, however, describes them based on their relationship to meanness and baseness, rather than the positive qualities they might well have, ascribing nobility to some imperceptible quality in their looks.

Hal’s class snobbery is nothing new, but here we see how its ingrained nature undermines his attempts to unite soldiers sieging a foreign country with greatly outnumbered forces on his behalf. He is shrewd enough or has enough memory of his former friends to mitigate the tone of his words by extending a rather paltry olive branch. He fights against his aristocratic upbringing and expectation of noble privilege with egalitarian principles acquired from the hierarchy-less tavern world.

Harfleur, or “It’s Not My Fault If My Soldiers Brutalize You”

While Harry attempts to ennoble his troops in rallying them to fight, he paints them as monsters when trying to convince the men of Harfleur to surrender. Harry, too, perhaps reveals some of his inhumanity, his role as king making him morally calloused. The implication from his “breach” speech that outward actions can change one’s character further corroborates his developing inhumanity. Some critics, in fact, see two separate Harrys threatening the people of Harfleur before its gates. Some believe that Harry uses violent rhetoric to forestall actual physical violence;391 his long and bloody

391 Rothschild, “The Conqueror-Hero,” 67, offers a fairly nuanced take of what goes on with Harry while threatening Harfleur: This striking contrast between the extremely unjust things Henry threatens and
speech becomes a tool coercing Harfleur’s surrender without loss of life on either side. Other critics see Harry hypocritically absolving himself of any of the violence that he imagines or is preparing to unleash; Greenblatt has famously asserted that “Hal continually warns his victims that they are bringing pillage and rape upon themselves by resisting him, but from the head of an invading army these arguments lack a certain moral force.” The hypocrisy in ascribing Harfleur’s potential destruction to its failure to surrender reveals itself once Harfleur concedes to his demands. Having already praised the power of mercy in enlarging the man who railed against his person, he, soon after this scene, declines to stay Bardolph’s execution despite urging Exeter, “Use mercy to them all” (3.3.54) in regards to the people of Harfleur. He rationalizes the justice visited upon his old crony with words that suggest cognitive dissonance, “for when lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom, the gentler gamester is the soonest winner” (3.6.110-12). Claire McEachern notes that in executing Bardolph for theft after threatening Harfleur with pillage and rape, Harry turns “conquest into a ‘noble’ sport.” Janet Spencer expresses a similar sentiment in "Princes, Pirates and Pigs," highlighting the episode in which Alexander the Great supposedly pardoned a pirate who observed that both men are guilty of the same crimes; however, Alexander, because of the large scale of his conquests, is considered a worthy king, while the pirate is considered a thief deserving of the extremely just things he does...assures us that this protagonist is at all times aware of, and subject to, justice and judgment.” Rothschild takes a far milder view of Harry than is customary in post-Greenblatt scholarship, but while I disagree with his overall assessment that Harry is “a finer model for a king than he had hitherto been allowed” (67), Rothschild refreshingly believes that Harry exhibits human qualities.

392 Greenblatt, “Invisible Bullets,” 42. See also Ornstein, A Kingdom for a Stage, 189: “just as Harry could dissociate himself from the sentencing of the traitors, so too he can dissociate himself from the horror he threatens at Harfleur by abstracting the violence of war so that it seems to have a life and agency beyond his control.”

punishment. To differentiate his own actions from those of the lower-classes, Harry casts petty crimes committed by commoners, particularly in seeking spoils of war, as heinous offenses; his exaltation of aristocratic values transforms theft on a far grander scale into a virtue, quite befitting of a son who still feels the need to impress his usurper father.

While Harry earlier states that he is “no tyrant but a Christian king” (1.2.242), his lengthy description of the horrors that will be visited upon Harfleur violate over a millennia of writing about the Christian doctrine of fighting a just war. Virtually all writers on the subject in the 15th and 16th century Europe believed that women, children, and old men should be spared and that rape should always be condemned, and, if carrying out a siege, one should only fight enemy troops, leaving other citizens alone. Yet, Harry paints a portrait of raping virgins and killing infants, mothers, and old men not fit for military duty. He might acknowledge here the distance between theory and praxis, and that, while Christian nations inherit the assumptions that one must fight a war “morally,” the reality is darker. While it would be naïve to believe that Harry would have qualms about killing the French, given his ardent nationalism and desire to establish his masculine identity, I argue that Harry chooses to play the bloodthirsty warrior in order to avoid being one, if for no other purpose than he knows he needs his limited troops to remain as fresh as possible. However, Shakespeare’s source materials would likely have described that “[b]oth Henry and his men had to maintain a tricky balancing act between aggressive force and measured mercy in their progress through France, in order to

394 Spencer, “Princes, Pirates, Pigs,” 170, argues that, because Harry is a king, he defines his sins as political acts that absolve him from personal moral responsibility, while “Bardolph’s theft…would be a petty instance of impiety compared to Henry’s conquest of France.”.
395 See Spencer, “Pirates, Pigs, and Princes” and Mebane, “‘Impious War’.”
demonstrate the rectitude of his claims.” If Harry wants to win over some of the French populace, he must seem worthy of the role of king—willing to do what it takes to win a war, yet also extending mercy. However, the length of the description and the repetition of the violence described—for instance, the violence against virgins is described in lines 13-14, 20, and 35 and that facing the infants at lines 14 and 38—suggest that Harry might revel in this virtual violence. Erickson argues that “Henry V does not exercise perfect control” as “his repetitiousness suggests a tendency to get carried away by envisaging the brutality he is trying to prevent.” In trying to shock the listeners, the men of Harfleur, into laying down their arms and opening up their gates, Harry, who like his uncle Richard, enjoys his mastery of language, the sounds of words, might end up taking some vicarious pleasure in violent images he has created.

Perhaps because the good Harry worries about uttering these words and the moral implications of uttering them into existence—or worse, having to be true to his word and follow through with violence—he evades responsibility and transfers it to the Governor and the other men of Harfleur. However, at the beginning of his threats, he takes responsibility, saying,

as I am a soldier,
A name that in my thoughts becomes me best
If I begin the battery once again,
I will not leave the half-achieved Harfleur
Till in her ashes she lie buried (5-9).

He adopts the role of soldier here rather than king, and, in his attempt to embody that role, suggests that he will not tire of assault, that he has the stamina to raze the town. If

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396 Lewis, Kingship and Masculinity, 129.
397 Erickson, “‘The Fault/My Father Made,’” 18.
398 It seems that Shakespeare understood something about the historical Henry V, as Lewis writes in Kingship and Masculinity, “Warfare was the defining element of Henry's reign and personality” (46).
Harfleur does not open the city gates and let the English penetrate its walls, the “gates of mercy shall be all shut up” (10). He shifts from his own agency as a soldier willing to destroy the city to an agentless mercy that will shut itself up, allowing the “fleshed soldier” to kill and rape. While accepting agency for destroying the walls of the town itself, as soon as the description of the true violence, that against the inhabitants of the town, begins, Harry erases himself from the picture to be replaced by the nameless and faceless “fleshed soldier,” suggesting that these are the commoners in his ranks. As Theodor Meron puts it, “Surely a leader strong enough to insist that Bardolph be hanged for stealing a pyx from a church, so as to set an example for others and ensure humanitarian treatment of the French population under English occupation; such a leader could have threatened to punish his troops in Harfleur severely if they resorted to rape, so as to ensure the maintenance of discipline,” and the historical Henry V surely understood this; because the army was an extension of himself, “Henry tried to style his army in France in a similar mode of ‘self-controlled manhood.’” However, Shakespeare’s Harry, seemingly familiar with Machiavelli, knows that adhering to Christian values in “impious war” (15) will not result in practical success. He must pay lip service to this belief system while acting out an affective individualism inflected with chivalric masculinity if he is to carry on the patriarchal legacy of his forebears.

Harry describes disorder and misrule taking over Harfleur. Keep in mind that Harry, in establishing his own proper manhood and kingliness, had to vanquish misrule in the person of Falstaff as well as in himself; now, he deploys misrule and disorder as

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400 Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 130.
401 Harry’s use of the phrase “impious war” suggests he intuits, not just the injustice but also the sacrilege of fighting this war of conquest that he styles a crusade.
accomplice to the acquisition of land, power, and patriarchy. Disorder, now serving conquest and state power, is surely more heinous than when it was associated with the drinking of sack, committing petty robberies, and whoremongering. Note the language Harry uses to describe the fleshed soldier: “In liberty of bloody hand shall range / With conscience wide as hell” (3.2.12-3). Harry envisions the fleshed soldier acting without restraint, free to do what he wants. Lewis writes that, although Henry V tried to impose similar self-control on his troops as he did himself, “his chastity was an element that set him apart from them. It signified that he and he alone truly embodied the standards of hegemonic masculinity which lent such authority to his rule.”

Thus, in focusing on his soldiers’ purported propensity for rape, Harry, setting himself above and apart from their behavior, establishes his right to rule. While he might give in to some imagined verbal violence, he has the manly restraint to keep from participating in it himself. However, does his rehearsal of the horrors visited upon the innocents of Harfleur reveal some subconscious fantasy of freedom for Harry, who is ruled by the necessity of integrating his seeming Christian faith with an older set of values that privileged activity? Is that perhaps why he circles back to similar scenes of violence in this lengthy speech?

Perhaps noticing that his language betrays itself, revealing his desire to participate in the unfettered and frenzied freedom to do as he wishes, he further develops the images of violence in gruesome terms while eliminating himself from the scene, except as one who “whiles yet” “command[s]” his soldiers (29) and as the “cool and temperate wind of grace” (30) that “O’erblows the filthy and contagious clouds / Of heady murder” (31-
He repeats the formula, “What is it/is’t (then) to me” twice in the space of five lines, the first instance followed by the mention of the crimes committed by the abstract and seemingly agentless “impious war” (15), the second instance followed by “when you yourselves are cause” (19) of the rape of virgins. Thus, Harry erases himself from the equation, replacing himself with “impious war,” which commits atrocities because the people of Harfleur, failing to surrender, are themselves responsible. Harry, again, transfers moral responsibility to impersonal, outside forces and to other human agents; yet his very attempts to transfer moral responsibility suggest his awareness of the moral hazards facing him and the impossibility of being absolved of them. Thus, to outrun his guilt in committing awful deeds, Harry must have others buy into his narrative that they themselves are the responsible party with control. He must convince them that it is their fault to prevent it becoming his fault.

He reiterates his plea with, “Therefore, you men of Harfleur” (27), recognizing that they themselves need to perform their masculinities and might reject his terms and fight, causing him casualties, time, and strength he cannot spare. Knowing that being conquered would be a blow to their self-representations, Harry appeals to their moral rectitude and their responsibilities to their families. Rather than risking the deaths of everyone to prove their masculine prowess in defending their town, he appeals to their proper manhood, their need to protect their families. The Governor responds that they have not received reinforcements promised by the Dauphin, a man not of his word, and surrenders because his desire to keep his people safe outweighs his desire for honor. Harry, when imploring his own soldiers to fight for his cause, defines true manhood as

403 We should note the similarity of this statement to the language with which he describes his friends as “contagious clouds” in 1 Henry IV 1.2.188.
martial in nature, but when faced with resistance from those he desires to conquer, redefines manhood as prudent protectorship. Harry, while desirous to display his manly essence to others, understands masculinity enough that he can redefine it to accomplish his ends.

Before Agincourt: A Dark Night of the Persona

Harry is at his nadir, both privately and in his public role as king, in scene 4.1, the night before the Battle of Agincourt, despite the immediately preceding words of the Chorus: “Nor doth he dedicate one jot of colour / Unto the weary and all-watched night, /
But freshly looks and overbears attaint / With cheerful semblance and sweet majesty” (4.0.37-40). Foremost, Harry worries about the impossible odds in the battle the next morning. Failure would mar his kingly legacy, and, although kings were to be wise, temperate rulers, he will certainly not be remembered for his domestic policies. His expeditions in France will define his reign and demonstrate his masculinity not just to his subjects and followers but to the French, and the dismissive Dauphin, who disbelieves Harry’s reformation narrative, still assuming him a reprobate. The fissures in Harry’s masculine identity widen, given his disturbance over the possible outcomes of the battle. Harry disguises himself to seek relationship with his men for myriad reasons. As he had done with the now deceased Bardolph and Falstaff, Harry seeks out the company of the underclass to stabilize his still shaky identity by defining himself in relation to them. However, it seems that Bardolph’s execution has marked a point of no return—the future impossibility of relating to others. Harry’s position as king is still new to him, and he, a

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404 Henry V was crowned on April 9, 1413, and the Battle of Agincourt took place on October 25, 1415.
formerly social animal, desires fraternity with others, as his “Once more unto the breach” and “band of brothers” monologues suggest. Yet, as I have argued, Harry’s genuine, personal desire to relate to others gets instrumentalized by his public self, and Harry, though wanting to relate to his soldiers as equals, also desires them to uphold his entitlement. He also wants them to love him, not out of fear of his social position but because of his inherent betterness—to recognize not just his positional superiority in his body politic but the greatness of his body natural. He confesses to them his doubts over the battle, but, instead of having his guilt eased by his soldiers, ends up needing to dominate them when receiving pushback by Bates and Williams. He expects that his soldiers should want to fight for him as a private person but is disheartened to hear that they only serve him because their position as subjects demands it of them. After Williams further insists that the gap between the king and his subjects cannot be spanned, resulting in a row and a formal challenge, he engages in a self-serving and deflecting monologue, plays the victim in being the monarch, laments "thrice-gorgeous ceremony" (4.1.263), and, ascribes the sin of his inheritance to his father, imploring God to not punish him for that on the battlefield, projecting onto the Almighty his own doubts and fears.

The Chorus before Act 4 depicts Harry’s cheering up his tired and outnumbered army. However, this simply is a propagandistic mischaracterization of the action presented in the play. Harry mingles with his soldiers to cheer himself up. Wanting to quiet his own doubts concerning the battle and his responsibility for lives lost, Harry seeks out his men to clear his conscience.

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Harry defends what seems to be a lost cause at the beginning of 4.1, saying to Gloucester, “‘tis true that we are in great danger, / The greater therefore should our courage be” (1-2), attempting to prop up the masculinity of his nobleman, who, it seems, has expressed worry over the English’s long odds of success on the morrow. Instead of seeing the 60,000 or so French soldiers for the intimidatingly large army they are, Harry styles them as “outward consciences / And preachers to us all, admonishing / That we should dress us fairly for our end” (8-10). While acknowledging that he tacks on a moral to an undesirable situation, he still does so and paints it with the typical religious overtones, suggesting that the opposing army, rather than being there to kill their mortal bodies, are to help preserve their immortal souls. Harry’s worry over responsibility for the deaths of his men’s physical bodies causes him to invoke the status of their souls, over which he has no control, deflecting his own responsibility and mitigating his guilt. He also assumes that his Christian army will agree with this assessment. He switches the argument from secular to spiritual matters, from specifics to abstractions, thus changing the terms of the debate and securing the consent of the disagreeing parties. Rather than the consequences of a potentially illegal and immoral war being a matter of public interest, and thus, the responsibility of the king, Harry makes the soldiers’ deaths a private matter, each individual body natural worried over and responsible for the state of its own soul. This logic, as we shall soon see, plays out in his conversation with Williams and Bates.

Interestingly, after Erpingham gives him his cloak, Harry, franker than at any other time in the play, says, “I and my bosom must debate awhile, / And then I would no

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406 Nicolaescu, “Religion and War,” 127, relates Lancelot Andrewes’ theological support of war; Andrewes “approves of war on moral grounds because it ‘awakes us from the lethargy of sin that the security of peace hath cast in us.’”
other company” (4.1.31-2). He openly declares that there is some internal schism within himself—shocking for someone who strives to represent himself as confident and assured. However, performing his doubt for Erpingham promotes his Christian kingly persona and suggests his seriousness and moral conscience, good traits for a ruler to have. While Harry does not specify exactly what he needs to debate with himself, his remarkable explicitness suggests that there still exists a private person underneath the public persona; the private individual, the Hal who has supposedly been discarded, wishes to unburden himself to someone—as he had to Poins in 2 Henry IV—but realizes that his station as king makes that impossible.

Thus, he disguises himself as Harry le Roy, resorting to his former role-playing, so that he may relate to his soldiers as equals. Yet, this name, sure to have elicited a chuckle from the audience when divulged to Pistol, might suggest that Harry wants to be “discovered.” However lowly he presents himself, he desires his subjects to see his inherent majesty beyond his modest outward appearance. While Harry wants others to approve of his inflated opinion of himself, inculcated in him by his noble upbringing, Harry also contains his desire for recognition and approval and deploys it in the service of his public role. Elyot writes at length that, “Fyrst the gouernours…shulde sondry tymes duringe their gouernaunce, either purposely or by way of solace, repaire in to diuers partes of their iurisdiction or prouince, and making their abode, they shall partly them selfes attentifly here what is commonly or priuately spoken concerning the astate of the contray or persones.”

Thus, Harry, employing some of the role-playing he has learned from Eastcheap, follows sage advice for rulers, taking the temperature of his people to see if they approve of his performance as king.

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Harry’s response to Bates’ question about whether Erpingham has told his fears to the King—“No, nor is it meet he should” (101) because “no man should possess him with any appearance of fear, lest he, by showing it, should dishearten his army” (110-12)—echoes the Chorus’ sentiment that the soldiers “inly ruminate,” and suggests that false exterior appearances are sometimes necessary for the well-being of the multitude.

Erpingham, in light of his public role as a commander, hides his own personal, private worry from his soldiers to keep them from discouragement. However, Harry himself confesses his doubts and fears anonymously in private because he cannot do so in public and seeks to discover the common soldiers’ opinion of the war and of himself as king. In so doing, Harry interposes discussion about the king’s body natural, saying that the king’s “fears” “be of the same relish” (109, 110) as common men’s, this being the closest he comes to admitting his fear publicly. While he has, throughout the play, tried to fuse the body natural with the body politic and suggests that the king is the representative of God on earth, here he states that, “his ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness he appears but a man” (105-6). Yet, in trying to relate to his common soldiers’ shared humanity, he can only go so far as to say that the king “appears but a man” (emphasis added), as if he wants to reserve for himself the possibility that he is essentially of a different quality. He asserts further that the king experiences emotion more fiercely, but that, when he apprehends fear, it is only of the same relish as common people’s.

Harry, even when trying to relate to his soldiers as fellow humans, cannot help but insist upon his “natural” superiority. Although disguised, he tries to call his audience’s attention to his kingliness through his obvious pseudonym and statement, “I think the King is but a man, as I am” (102; emphasis added.). Harry’s addition does almost nothing
to refine his statement that the king is a human being, but “as I am” suggests that he
wants to reveal to his soldiers that he is the king. He is at cross purposes though, for,
while he believes in his aristocratic privilege and wants his common soldiers to recognize
his kingly qualities and bearing, another part of himself tells them, “I, the king, am afraid
of what will happen tomorrow and need to divulge myself.” Erpingham’s fear is logical,
and Harry no doubt experiences this reasonable fear as well. However, the only way he
can reveal it is while disguised because it would mar his kingly bearing.

Harry is afraid not only of the mortal outcome, whether the English win or lose,
but also the moral outcome for himself, as we see when the conversation shifts. Bates
declares that the king “may show what outward courage he will” (113), but on a cold
night before an impossible battle, he would wish to be back home in bed. Harry objects to
this, and, as a “third-person” defends his masculine vigor by arguing that the king would
not want to be anywhere else. Harry, believing that others must like him because of his
inherent nobility, is appalled at hearing these soldiers wish the king were ransomed to
save “many poor men’s lives” (122) and insists that the common soldier “could not die
anywhere so contented as in the King’s company, his cause being just and his quarrel
honourable” (126-8). Williams and Bates reject this statement, asserting their uncertainty
of the justice of the king’s cause, and finally conclude that its justice is beyond their
scope because their responsibility as subjects is to obey the king. These statements of
soldierly doubt undermine what Harry has spent his whole reign as king setting up, and,
really, the time from his “I know you all” soliloquy: he has attempted to illustrate his war

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408 Mebane, “Impious War,” 257, writes, “Williams’s belief…that the ruler, not the soldier, is
responsible for establishing the justice of the cause is a standard position in ‘just war’ doctrine that goes
back at least as far as St. Augustine, and the question of the justice of the cause is an issue that Henry
completely evades in this scene.”
as not merely just but a divinely sanctioned crusade, further instigated by the French’s
disrespect towards the reformed, mild, English king. If he has successfully performed the
masculine self he tries to portray, he demonstrates that he is worthy of his subjects’
risking their lives for him. But even these soldiers—more respectable than the likes of
Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph—who may well have gone to the breach when implored,
express doubts over the whole enterprise.

Harry, in his most delusional and self-justifying bit of speechifying, shifts the
logic of the conversation from the king’s responsibility for his soldiers killing and dying
in an unjust war to the soldiers’ responsibility for the fitness of their souls before and
during the war they fight. Harry’s analogies concerning sons and servants dying while on
business are not appropriate. While a father or master has little reason to believe that the
son or servant being sent may die, a king sending soldiers into battle should expect
casualties. Harry characteristically mystifies the discussion, making the deaths of his
soldiers a spiritual matter because of his uncomfortable awareness of his own political
and moral responsibility to protect his subjects. He, moreover, knowingly
mischaracterizes Williams’ argument. Williams discusses death in physical terms, not
spiritual ones—“Some swearing, some crying for a surgeon, some upon their wives left
poor behind them, some upon the debts they owe, some upon their children rawly left”
(138-41)—and, rather than their souls pleading their cause or asking for forgiveness in
fighting in an unjust war, it is their “legs and arms and heads chopped off in a battle”
(135-6). Williams, while briefly entertaining the idea that soldiers may be punished for
committing unnecessary acts of violence in an unjust war, seems more concerned with
the ramifications of *the loss of life in the present*. The dead soldiers, like true men, grieve
over the responsibilities they will no longer be able to oversee: paying debts and providing for their families.

Harry mystifies Williams’s genuine concerns about leaving behind one’s responsibilities for an unjust cause one has no say in fighting. Harry shifts the discussion to salvation, introducing a red herring to lead away from Williams’ secular-minded argument. Williams argues that the king is responsible for both men killed in an unjust war and the evil acts they commit in fighting that war. Williams himself seems to be familiar with Elyot’s *The Boke Named the Governour*, which argues, “For moste harde and greuous iudgment shall be on them that haue rule ouer other. To the poure man mercy is graunted, but the great men shall suffer great tourmentes.”

Harry, deflecting his responsibility for his subjects’ well-being, suggests that Williams has argued that any sin ever committed by a dead soldier should be placed on the head of the monarch. Clearly, this does not follow, but Harry, as is characteristic of himself, his father, and the other nobles in *The Second Tetralogy*, contorts logic to his own ends and misrepresents another’s argument when it implicates him in sinful action. He further evades his responsibility by his now-classic invocation of God: “War is his beadle, war is his vengeance” (168-9) and “Therefore should every soldier in the wars do as every sick man in his bed” (177-8). He rationalizes away his own responsibility in sending his own soldiers to death by suggesting that war is God’s punishment for those who have yet to receive punishment. If not divine retribution for unpaid-for sins, war becomes a form of spiritual purification; given that one knows the possibility of imminent death, one should prepare one’s soul.

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Yet, Harry himself does not believe this line of reasoning but employs it to shield himself from self-recrimination. Harry in 1.2 goes to great lengths to stress the evil of sending innocent soldiers to their deaths, declaiming to Canterbury:

For never two such kingdoms did contend
Without much fall of blood, whose guiltless drops
Are every one a woe, a sore complaint
'Gainst him whose wrongs give edge unto the swords
That makes such waste in brief mortality. (1.2.24-29; emphasis added)

Harry not only assigns moral responsibility to the rulers who wage such a war but speaks of it in much the same terms Williams does in 4.1. Harry, like Williams, does not focus on the state of soldiers’ souls but the ruler’s responsibility for “such waste in brief mortality.” Harry displaces this responsibility onto Canterbury, then the Dauphin, whose “soul / Shall stand sore charged for the wasteful vengeance” (282-3, emphasis added) on the innocent French lives lost. Harry wants others to take responsibility for his own sins and finds a willing abettor in Canterbury and an unsuspecting dupe in the Dauphin. Yet, his need for scapegoats suggests his awareness that he, as king, can never be absolved of the deaths of subjects fighting for his cause. Thus, he bristles when Williams attacks him with his own line of reasoning.

Harry wins Williams’ agreement only after shifting the argument, adamantly denying the king’s responsibility for what happens to the souls of his soldiers; Harry’s impassioned defense of himself, because of its very passion, suggests the accuracy of Williams’ charges against the king. However, Harry faces more rebuttal after saying

410 Thomas Kochman, “The boundary between Play and Nonplay in Black Verbal Dueling,” Language in Society 12.3 (September 1983): 329-337. Kochman writes, “Because heated defensive denials in black culture are taken as evidence that the effect of the remark has been felt, and that, therefore, it must be true, the strategy for those who might conceivably consider themselves accused is to pretend that they have not been touched, and, with their noncommittal response, imply that the
that he will no more believe the king if he lives to see the king ransomed. Williams objects, reasoning that commoners have no effect on the great and that the king does not care if a commoner loses faith in him. Peculiarly, their disagreement reaches its head here, but rather than continue debating, Harry asks Williams to exchange gloves so they may challenge each other in the future. Perhaps Harry knows he cannot possibly defend this position, ultimately knowing that the opinions of men like Williams and Bates are incapable of blocking his desires. However, even more problematic for Harry, is that, regardless of his effective performance of kingly masculinity, his “intoxicating blend of testosterone and piety,” biology and conduct, martial valor and wisdom, Harry’s kingship ultimately has no basis unless he can convince the commoners that he has their interests at heart, for “the world consists of nothing but the masses.” Anne Barton writes, “Henry discovers with a sense of shock that his soothing account of the king as ‘but a man, as I am’…sensitive to the disapprobation or approval of his humblest subject, is treated as flatly absurd. For Williams, the gulf between commoner and king is unbridgeable.” Unable to verbally rebut Williams’ charge, Harry must role-play as a loyal soldier defending the honor of his king.

Harry, alone, continues in his self-deception and self-pity in mischaracterizing his disagreement with Williams in a condescending parody of his and Bates’ claims:

Upon the King! ‘Let us our lives, our souls,
Our debts, our careful wives,
Our children and our sins lay on the King!’

accusation did not apply to (or include) them” (336). Although writing specifically about African-American culture in the 1970s and 80s, Kochman’s observation that “heated defensive denials” indicate the truth of the remark rebutted seems applicable here.

412 Machiavelli, Prince, 49.
We must bear all (227-30).  

He laments his put-upon nobility, calling it a “hard condition, / Twin-born with greatness” (230-1) and implies that he is not sovereign but “subject to the breath / Of every fool whose sense no more can feel / But his own wringing” (231-3). Harry, having fully embraced his public persona, now that he has faced resistance in seeking approbation for his private self, bemoans the fact that everyone gets to pass judgment upon him. Harry shifts responsibility and agency to others and paints himself, the man who ordered thousands to invade France for his sake, as being powerless to the opinions of “every fool” who cannot empathize with others. He refuses to truly look into himself for fear of undermining the edifice of masculinity he has carefully constructed.

The class resentment that had bubbled up at moments in his other speeches comes to the forefront in his soliloquy. He declares that the underclass cannot feel the pain of others; he, as king, must weigh the public good with every decision. He presumes that they live good lives with a solid rhythm—apparently not monotonous or robotic—eat until their bellies are full, and “[Sleep] in Elysium” (271) with “infinite heart’s ease” (234). He apparently has never considered their poor health, food insecurity, poverty, and inability to leave their stations and instead performatively contradicts the words he has just uttered by focusing only on his own burdens. He might be right that “the slave, a

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414 Erickson, “The Fault/My Father Made,” 19, writes, “The king’s subsequent outburst indicates that he has not been entirely convinced by his elaborate self-justification to Williams. In the privacy of soliloquy, Henry V exhibits the emperor’s new clothes with a vengeance.”

415 Ornstein, Kingdom for a Stage, 194, points out Harry’s inadequate understanding of his subjects: “Although he has learned the language of common men in the tavern, Harry cannot sympathize with the lowly born. He is not really moved by the prospect of his soldier’s fates, nor does he grieve for the lonely impoverished widows and orphaned children they will leave behind. What agonizes him is the thought that he will be accountable for all this suffering. He joins the men about the campfire partly to confess the anxieties he dares not reveal as King and partly to be absolved by them of guilt for the impending disaster.” For an extended discussion of Hal’s inability to empathize with Francis, see Ruiter, “Harry’s (In)human Face” or my upcoming essay, “Hal’s Class Performance and Francis’ Service Learning: 1 Henry IV 2.4 as Parable of Contemporary Higher Education,” Shakespeare and the 99%: Literary Studies, the Profession, and the Production of Inequity, ed. Sharon O’Dair and Timothy Francisco (Palgrave, 2019).
member of the country’s peace…/ in gross brain little wots / What watch the King keep to maintain the peace” (278-80), but his speech indicates his ignorance of the people he rules. He admires himself for his rhetorical prowess in sounding like anyone, but he only sees things from his own perspective and projects his biases onto the commoners. Williams describes many worries of dying/dead soldiers, including paying their debts, leaving their wives and children, displaying the empathy Harry himself lacks and believes commoners incapable of.

Harry sounds thoroughly like his father in focusing on the great man’s lack of sleep due to his responsibility, transforming privilege into burden. Also like his father or others of their “discourse community,” Harry reveals the hypocrisy that great men insulate themselves with, lamenting with unwitting irony, “What watch the King keeps to maintain the peace” (280), while preparing to fight a battle the next day.

In attributing the distinction between great men and commoners to “ceremony,” he resorts to the victim’s discourse, attempting to illustrate the burdens placed upon people of his position. Yet, in acknowledging ceremony’s role in the hardship the nobility face, he voids himself of the inherent superiority he believes himself endowed with and unconsciously admits that, although he desires for others to see this greatness of his spirit, he himself does not ultimately buy into the logic; his greatness is a social construct, however much he attempts to paint it as divinely sanctioned or otherwise due him.

While it has become a critical commonplace to see Hal/Harry as thoroughly Machiavellian and in control from the very first moment we see him in *Henry IV*, his actions and words in 4.1 suggest the opposite. He disguises himself and attempts to stage his subjects’ absolution of the guilt he feels, understanding the battle the next morning is
certain death for many of them; angrily scorns their opinions when he finds they do not feel the way he wants them to; and then, finally addresses God and prays for his success in battle. His prayer, however, reveals his own inherited guilt concerning Richard’s death, which he had for multiple plays either elided or placed upon his father. He prays ostensibly to “steel [his] soldiers’ hearts” (286) and rid them of the sense of “reckoning” (288), which the Arden notes should be taken to mean “counting”—as in to see how badly the odds are stacked—but which I argue should be also taken to mean “judgment”—that they should fight unfettered without worrying about the justness of the war.

He implores God to “think not upon the fault / My father made in compassing the crown” (290-1). Although addressing God, he here refers to himself and the pangs of conscience concerning his inheritance. While he tries to place the blame for the “impending catastrophe” onto his father in “insisting on his own blamelessness,” his efforts to re-inter Richard’s body and his paying five hundred poor to pray for pardon of Richard’s murder taint Harry’s conscience and the legitimacy of his throne. Harry, in 2 Henry IV, paints his inheritance of the crown as legitimate, perhaps to illustrate to his father his fitness for succession. However, his attempts to cleanse his father’s crime betray the distress he feels over it, putting him in a seemingly unresolvable position.

416 Mebane, “‘Impious War,’” 258, writes, “Henry V’s prayer on the eve of the battle strongly suggests that the king knows that his public justifications for the invasion of France are Machiavellian fraud and that he fears not only that he will lose the battle, but that he may be damned for the series of bloody crimes that create and sustain the Lancastrian monarchy.”

417 Ornstein, Kingdom for a Stage, 197.

418 Shakespeare’s waiting to reveal this bit of historical information about Harry’s re-interring of Richard suggests just how guilty Harry believes himself to be. Lewis notes in Kingship and Masculinity that one of Henry V’s first acts as king was to rebury Richard: “While this was a political act designed to emphasize Henry V’s legitimacy by symbolically presenting himself as heir to Richard II, it is possible that the presentation of Richard as his ‘chosen’ father was also an expression of affection” (72-3). I have noted earlier Hal/Harry’s possible affection for Richard.
because “all that I can do is nothing worth, / Since that my penitence comes after all” (300-1). Harry, much like Hamlet’s Claudius later, realizes the hypocrisy of his praying for pardon for a crime from which he continues to benefit. Although Harry did not commit the crime himself and tries to atone for it, he knows that whatever he does to solidify the Lancastrian line—as his victory at Agincourt and marriage to Katherine do temporarily—their rule will continue to be tainted by his father’s usurpation, and he himself is implicated.  

“Band of Brothers”

Harry’s tune has shifted in the light of day—rather than worry about the outcome of the battle, standing before his men, Harry responds like Hotspur to Westmorland’s wish for more troops: “The fewer men, the greater share of honour” (4.3.22). He further ramps up his Hotspurian rhetoric, saying that he does not care about money, clothes, etc. as “Such outward things dwell not in my desires. / But if it be a sin to covet honour / I am the most offending soul alive” (27-9). He opposes honor to “outward things,” yet honor, “A relic of late medieval ideas about chivalry” and therefore “demand[ing] public recognition of individual worth,” seems to be one of these outward things. Yet, the code of chivalry and the residual forms of masculinity that Henry’s usurpation seemed to bury find themselves conveniently deployed here to

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419 Erickson, “The Fault/My Father Made,” 22, argues that “Henry V is acute enough to realize that he is implicated and that his own ‘penitence’ is compromised.”

420 Sullivan, “Princes to Act,” 131, writes: “Indeed, in order to increase the honor that accrues to him, Henry V acts the part of Henry Percy, the hot-blooded Hotspur, in language strikingly reminiscent of that which Hal had employed to belittle his thoughtlessly impetuous rival.”

421 Stone, Family, Sex, and Marriage, 74.
suggest Harry’s confidence and his masculine integrity. Harry, as he does much throughout the Tetralogy, insists that his public and private faces match.

He, however, unwittingly undermines himself by stating that he *covets* honor. Christian doctrine prioritizes the inner person, not the façade one presents to others, for God can see one’s heart. As Erickson writes, “When Henry V dedicates himself to ‘the greater share of honor’…his putative purity is no longer that of the Christian king, but that of the hero aspiring to *virtus*.”

Fighting a war solely for honor rather than more substantive reasons would indeed be a sin according to Christian theology. I am not arguing that Harry is hypocritical, as many men living in Shakespeare’s time abided by these often overlapping, but competing and ultimately irreconcilable, codes of behavior. Harry’s seemingly seamless integration of both systems here calls attention to the fault line on which they are fused together. Harry’s appeal to honor, spoken in front of a noble audience, illustrates that, despite the nobility’s lip service to Christian humanistic values, their real preoccupations are with warrior aristocratic values. Again, while the older system later accommodated itself to expressions of Christian piety, they ultimately contradict.

Harry dismisses Hotspur in *1 Henry IV* as an unthinking parrot, and while Hotspur-style chivalry gets parodied in *2 Henry IV* and *Henry V* by the bombastic Pistol and the horse-loving Dauphin, Harry more accurately imitates his former rival. As Vickie Sullivan argues, Harry, conscious of his father’s admiration for Hotspur, knows that people, particularly the martially-oriented nobility, have an affinity for those who

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422 Erickson, “‘The Fault/My Father Made,’” 22, further argues that “The ambiguity in the word ‘virtue’ reveals a gap in his conception of himself as ‘ideal king’ and of ‘ideal warrior.’
earnestly crave to perform brave deeds.\textsuperscript{423} One, they have grown up with the assumptions that these bold acts are worthy. Two, Hal sees that the rest of the nobility, just as his father, “the very man who…admits to having staged his own appearances in order to rob the then reigning king of his majesty, is captivated by the guileless Hotspur,”\textsuperscript{424} responding to the perceived authenticity of someone who strives for honor.

Westmoreland’s acceptance of Harry’s logic of chivalric honor, going so far as to wish himself and the king the only English soldiers, suggests that the nobility have a blind spot in not seeing ulterior motives in those who so loudly proclaim the “discourse of honor.” It seems there can be no guile in people so single-mindedly undertaking military exploits to aggrandize their reputation. Thus, before his nobles Harry plays the guileless soldier hungry for honor; in playing the residual form of Hotspurian chivalry, Harry can manipulate his fellow nobles, engaging them in their own discourse, and gain their acquiescence to his acquisitive project. Harry, regardless of how authentically he desires chivalric honor (rather than land and titles), plays the passionate soldier to seem earnest and earn the trust of his troops, needing to rally them in the face of incredible odds; he can also appeal to nobility’s assumptions about their own honor and goad them to perform better in battle.

Harry recognizes that honor, and thus masculinity, is socially-approved. To solidify his own masculinity and distinguish it from his father’s, he relies heavily on his troops and nobles to affirm his position. He needs them to acquire land, the French crown, and Katherine, the woman who will arbitrate peace between the two long-warring nations and will bear the heir to the throne. Thus, to establish his own manhood, he needs

\textsuperscript{423} This briefly summarizes Sullivan’s argument in “Princes to Act.”

\textsuperscript{424} Sullivan, 131.
to prop up the manhoods of those fighting for him, inciting them to fight for honor. Given that masculinity (or honor) in Harry’s accounting is a zero-sum game in which one’s acquisition of masculinity necessarily comes at the detriment of someone else, he desires not “one man more” (32) because he “would not lose so great an honour” (31).

His statement, “We would not die in that man’s company / That fears his fellowship to die with us” (38-39) confuses those he is addressing, the nobility and all of Erpingham’s host, with himself (the royal “we”). The pronoun confusion here further ennobles his men as he blurs the distinction between themselves and him. While he blurs the distinction between himself and the rest of the nobility, characteristic of his vacillating desire for fraternity, he cannot help himself and distinguishes their ilk from that of the commoners, for those who fought at Agincourt on St. Crispin’s Day will remember “our names, / Familiar in his mouth as household words” (51-52). To spur his nobility on, he catalogues his name and those of the other nobles present, but, none of the common soldiers. Thus, while that common soldier “will strip his sleeve and show his scars / And say ‘These wounds I had on Crispin’s day’” (47-8), those wounds being a permanent marker of masculinity even in old age and decline from proper manhood, that nameless and faceless former soldier will remember the names of the nobility, honor

425 Anne Barton, “The King Disguised,” 19, astutely points out this by now characteristic maneuver by Hal/Harry, who, when most striving to bridge the gap between himself and others, reinforces the boundaries, maintaining his aloofness while gesturing towards fraternity and inclusion: “In passages like these, where Henry’s ‘we’ and ‘our’ seem to refer both to himself as king and to the nobles and soldiers around him as a group, a community in which he participates, the idea of the king’s two bodies acquires a meaning that is concrete and emotionally resonant. Rightly considered, Henry’s soldiers are part of his body politic and thus extensions of his own identity. But it is only in moments of stress and mutual dependence that the doctrine articulates itself naturally, allowing the king an easy jocularity which is familiar without being intimate, essentially distant at the same time that it creates an illusion of warmth and spontaneity. As the peril of the situation in France grows, so does Henry’s sense of fellowship.” Rothschild in “The Conqueror-Hero” also writes how Harry erases the pre-existing familial structures of his soldiers and “re-constructs new functions for them as brothers in his national affiliation” (17).

426 Lewis, Kingship and Masculinity, 121, writes, “The close relations which Henry fashioned with men of the nobility (and some of lower ranks) have been identified as the heart and spine of his successful kingship.”
being a form of secular immortality. Unlike Coriolanus whose own wounds must speak for his actions and his worth, Harry conscripts the wounds of his common soldiers to be the future speaking monuments of his and his nobility’s masculinities.427

This “band of brothers” (60) can only be a “happy few” (60), as most men must be denied achieving masculinity if it is to be worth anything: “true manhood is a precious and elusive status beyond mere maleness….A restricted status, there are always men who fail the test.”428 Even a soldier who is neither noble nor gentle will “gentle his condition” (63) “be he ne’er so vile” (62) and performs like the men of higher status at this battle. Again, Harry reveals his class snobbery, seeming to impose artificial distinctions onto the commoners. Even though he claims that military service will gentle the commoners’ condition, he still finds it necessary to rhetorically insulate himself and the rest of the nobility from the taint of the common man.

Masculinity being a zero-sum game, “gentlemen in England now abed” (64, emphasis added)—perhaps that same bed Bates asserts Harry would rather be lying in—will “hold their manhoods cheap” (66) for not having been at Agincourt with the king. Harry again revises masculinity for his own purposes. He had offered the men of Harfleur one version, more paternal and fatherly, to compel their surrender; but in order to have his men fight valiantly, he portrays their joining with him in battle as true masculinity—regardless of social class—while those gentlemen back home who partake in effeminate leisure and idleness are not real men, for they will lack the scars to prove it. Despite the privilege of their position or perhaps because of it, they will envy the lot of the common

427 Alison Chapman’s “Whose Saint Crispin’s Day Is It?” describes how Harry re-appropriates a working-class holiday for his own purposes.
428 Gilmore, Manhood in the Making, 17, quoted in Smith, Shakespeare and Masculinity, 2. See note 39.
soldiers who fight alongside Harry. Harry, in trying to have his masculinity approved as warrior-king, defines masculinity in one way when urging the French forces to surrender and another when urging his English forces to fight. What makes one a man in one instance very well may unman one in another instance.

“The Emperor of Masculinity”

Because masculinity, like honor, requires “public recognition of individual worth,” one can only be considered a man by successfully demonstrating one’s masculinity to other men. While Harry has spent much of the play balancing his Christian kingliness with his warrior aristocratic masculinity, he has also presented himself as the ultimate arbiter of masculinity. In both his “breach” and "band of brothers” speeches, he has defined masculinity in martial terms for his English soldiers. Before Harfleur, he defines manhood as embodying prudent judgment and consideration of civilians’ lives. Although these definitions are at odds with each other, many men accepted both private, internally-directed styles of masculinity and visible, publicly-directed styles as necessary to being a man; Harry, as king, has attempted to effectively perform his own enviable blend of masculine traits but also becomes the ultimate judge of manhood.

Exeter’s description of York's and Suffolk’s deaths can thus be seen as both York’s and Exeter’s petitions for Harry's approval of their masculinity. While Exeter’s speech has been fodder for scholars working in the homoerotics of battle, highlighting the discrepancy between prescribed heterosexual marriage and the aristocracy’s privileging of homosocial relationships, I argue that Exeter’s words are also part of his and York’s

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429 Gerald Early, Unforgivable Blackness, directed by Ken Burns (Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson (Alexandria, Va.): PBS Home Video.
performance of masculinity. A medieval nobleman like Exeter would likely base his masculinity on his performance in battle and would also approve of strong bonds of friendship between men of noble station. Thus, his effusive description of York’s and Suffolk’s demise describes his fellow noblemen as exemplars of aristocratic masculinity, dying for their sovereign in battle against a hated foe; in addition, not only do they die, but they die with each other, showing that they are true noblemen in their strong homosocial bonds with each other. York and Suffolk become eternal bedfellows. York’s dying words to Exeter, “Dear my lord, / Commend my service to my sovereign” (4.6.22-3) indicate that he wants approval for his dying in battle properly as a man. Exeter’s relating their brave deaths to Harry and the description of the “testament of noble-ending love” (27)—whose “pretty and sweet manner...forced / Those waters from me which I would have stopped, / But I had not so much man in me” (29-31)—indicate that his paradoxical effeminacy in being so moved by the spectacle in fact demonstrates his own masculinity.

Harry, subscribing to aristocratic definitions of masculinity whose terms he largely has established himself, approves Exeter’s report of extreme emotion, in which “all my mother came into my eyes” (31), saying, “I blame you not, / For hearing this I must perforce compound / With my full eyes, or they will issue too” (32-4). Harry accepts both Exeter’s and York’s performances of masculinity, explaining that he has been moved himself. Harry’s attempts to maintain control of his emotion indicate he is truly moved. The story of York’s and Exeter’s deaths feature several traits that Harry has presented as masculine/noble behavior: homosocial friendship, the concern about their

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430 Henry V, 308, n.34. Although there are many textual variants for “my full eyes,” including “mixtfull eyes,” “mistful eyes,” and “willful eyes,” no possibility indicates that Harry is actively crying.
souls, and that they “kept together in [their] chivalry” (19). Warfare, fraternal bonds, and religion are the strands of masculine discourse Harry constantly weaves together in his reign, culminating in his invasion of France. Exeter’s story fully displays all those traits, perhaps because Harry has instilled these values into them and affected their discourse; more likely, they, including Harry, are bombarded by these coexisting and at times contradictory discourses. In death, however, York and Suffolk have fully integrated them. They die showing that they are true men.

However, because he is king and must set himself apart as another kind of man altogether, rather than cry, Harry says that he must wipe his eyes, or he will cry too. Neither the audience nor Exeter can be sure just how full Harry’s eyes are, and, although Harry comes closer here to actively grieving than he has done in the other plays, he preempts any genuine emotion that might reveal his vulnerability. The description of the two noblemen embracing each other in death might also cause Henry to think back to his bedfellow Scroop’s betrayal of him, or what would presumably hit home more for Harry, his rejection of Falstaff. Harry might be so moved and need to preempt his potentially emasculating emotion because he realizes, particularly after Bardolph’s death, that his own experience of this homosocial bond can never be realized again. As king, he cannot suffer anyone to be his equal, otherwise he cannot effectively perform his sovereignty.

However, after victory is assured, Harry strives for fraternity once more. It seems that once he has guaranteed his masculine legacy and the power of his body politic, he must assure himself of the value of his body natural, which he in fact prizes more than his public face. He humors Fluellen in engaging him in conversation, who perhaps oversteps the bounds of modesty and instigates discussion. Harry then inquires about the gage
Williams he wears. As I have stated before, Harry often instrumentalizes others to assert his masculine authority over them, and the prank he plays on both Williams and Fluellen most assuredly accomplishes the same purpose: “the episodes in which the King tricks Fluellen and terrifies Williams recall the misbehavior of the old Hal, but with none of the old charm and a lot more power to do hurt.” Yet, I want also to stress that he related to his friends in Eastcheap through his pranks and jests. Although Harry retaliates against Williams for failure to see him as a good, private man, on some level he also retaliates out of frustration for the failed attempt at fraternity the night before. As for his prank on Fluellen in giving him his gage that Williams will be sure to challenge, Fluellen remarks, “Your grace does me as great honours as can be desired in the hearts of his subjects” (4.7.157-8). Harry has an ulterior motive in giving Fluellen the glove to wear, yet he must surely know that a loyal soldier like Fluellen will be flattered to receive such a gift from his king. Despite potential violence that might be visited upon Fluellen for wearing the glove, Harry, on some level, wants to reward his countryman, who has approved his own feats, remarking earlier that both his great-grandfather and great-uncle had both fought bravely and successfully in France (4.7.91-4). While the interaction between Harry, Williams, and Fluellen here most obviously illustrates Harry’s power over them, Harry’s “gifts” to both of them, coupled with his Boar’s Head-style prank, suggest that he still desires human connection.

Harry’s desire for domination and control, however, contains his desire for fraternal bonding. While demonstrating his control over both Williams and Fluellen—the one oblivious to Harry’s identity the night before and the other who rather pedantically demonstrates his knowledge of Harry’s identity—he approves both of their manhoods. In

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setting Williams and Fluellen against each other, he determines that they are both men of mettle and will fight for their honors. He even asks Fluellen if Williams should keep his oath, to which Fluellen responds, “He is a craven and a villain else, an’t please your majesty, in my conscience” (131-2) were he to violate his word. Even after presenting the possibility that Williams’ quarrel is with a nobleman, Fluellen insists that being perjured is far worse. Of course, Harry solicits Fluellen’s opinion to coerce Williams into keeping his word, but he also sees how willing they are to keep their promises. Harry, in approving and upholding the masculinities of others, upholds and demonstrates his own masculinity.

Yet, there are myriad motives for Harry’s carrying out this prank and his rewarding of Williams. Harry, having resigned himself to the privileges and burdens of kingship, has in many ways reduced himself from the all-encompassing Hal we saw in I Henry IV. Given that masculinity is often defined as liberty to do what one wants, Hal’s superior social position as father of the nation affords less freedom to act as he wishes. While he was able to maintain some privacy in Eastcheap and wear different hats as it were, everything he does now is public performance, aside from his role-playing as Harry le Roy. This is not to say he cannot spin some of his private self into public action, but he must always be keeping an eye to the audience. In secretly engaging with his soldiers and staging a fight between Williams and Fluellen, he proves to himself that he is “the thing I was” (2 Henry IV, 5.5.55), that he can still be “of all humours,” trying to persuade himself that his story is not “the tragedy of the king’s two bodies”\footnote{Kantorowicz, The King’s Two Bodies, 26.} but the triumph and reassertion of the body natural over the body politic.
Playing the prank on Williams and Fluellen allows Harry, momentarily, to find surrogates for Poins and Falstaff. Williams, plays the role of the duped Falstaff but, in this case, allows Harry himself to come up with the witty extrication from the situation.\footnote{Marilyn Williamson, “The Episode with Williams in Henry V,” \textit{Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900} 9, no. 2 (Spring 1969): 279.} By recruiting Fluellen, Harry is able to once again to have a “friend” who will willingly participate—no questions asked—in the exploits he proposes. Although the power dynamic here is even more extreme than that between Hal and Poins, Harry can take pleasure in someone’s acting out his scripts; yet, unlike the nobility, who profit from Harry’s lies, Fluellen plays along faithfully without concern for his own personal gain.

These first couple of motivations are more positive in nature, but there are certainly some sinister motivations as well. Marilyn Williamson writes, “What Henry discovers after he becomes king is that the old tricks have new results, that instead of having the fun of discomfiting Falstaff, he himself is deeply shaken at the feelings his men reveal as they wait for the morning’s battle” because his subjects know he has privileges they do not.\footnote{Williamson, “The Episode with Williams,” 276 and 277.} Rather than be discomfited by his soldiers’ inability to see him as a private person, he flexes his authority by revealing himself to Williams to reestablish the proper power dynamic and revive his sense of himself. Given Harry’s interaction with his common soldiers to alleviate the guilt he feels in waging this war, only to have his psychic needs foiled by the less than enthusiastic response by some of his soldiers, Harry reasserts control through the implied threat of his social station. Harry, in having his body natural ignored or rejected by his men, demonstrates the power of his body politic. Much like his toying with the Lord Chief Justice, the weaker party must feel a great deal of anxiousness in being confronted by the monarch—especially in this case, as Williams is a
common solider and not a nobleman—only to be further indebted to his greatness by his show of mercy.

While the loyal Fluellen demands that Harry have Williams executed for the insult, Harry illustrates his magnanimity by giving the gloveful of crowns, presumably because he respects Williams’ manly honesty. However, Harry’s revelation of himself as the injured party contradicts the magnanimous offer. Certainly, after a miraculous victory as that at Agincourt, the king would have more important matters on his mind than such trifles, especially after attributing the victory to God. Yet, Harry’s challenge to Williams suggests that, although he has secured his masculine legacy by defeating the French at a decisive battle, he must, if not freely receive the admiration of the masses, coerce their loyalty to him through their fear of his position.

Harry wants to regain control over his circumstances and demonstrate that his body natural is deserving of praise, that he is separate from the social role “ceremony” has elevated him to. Harry’s incredulity over the disparity in the French and English losses, ten thousand men to a paltry twenty-nine, and only four noblemen, might indicate that he has performed his role as valiant Christian king so well that God really had been on the English side. However much Harry styles himself as being God’s servant, part of himself does not buy the argument. The overwhelming nature of the English victory both publicly solidifies Harry’s kingly masculinity, which he has long sought approval of, but might also indicate that the private Harry had little to do with the outcome and that God or chance were on his side. His attribution of victory to God, while further demonstrating his manly piety, serves another, less admirable purpose; Harry, by praising God for his success, attempts to bribe the Almighty with praise. If he can perform his piety well
enough, God, somehow, might forget his father’s sin “in compassing the crown” (4.1.291) and continue smiling on his reign. Having abjected himself to God, Harry must later assert his control to persuade himself of his own masculinity. Although he has successfully performed his masculinity for the French, his nobles, and the commoners, he now doubts his manhood and demonstrates it to himself by awing social inferiors. Williams, after all, kneels before responding that Harry should accept the fault as his own. Despite attributing Harry responsibility for suffering his harsh words, Williams knows enough to make himself abject before the king.

The generosity towards Williams further differentiates Harry’s nobility from the commoners. The gap between Harry’s and Williams’s social stations—making it unseemly for a nobleman to fight a commoner—in a sense effeminizes Harry because of the impossibility of his physically challenging Williams. However, Harry can still exert his power over Williams by paying him off. Knowing that Williams will accept, in no (social) position to reject the king’s money, Harry places Williams in the position of the debtor, resorting to a Duncan-like “negative usury” in both the monetary gift and the gift of overlooking a punishable insult on the king’s person. Williams is now most certainly in the king’s debt, so much so that, regardless of his loyalty to the king, he cannot ever possibly repay him. This potlatching further diminishes Williams as it corroborates for Harry, a nobleman, the money-hungriness of the lower-classes. Harry can represent himself to himself as being genuinely magnanimous and a true man because liberality would be expected of someone of his nobility. As Alison A. Chapman writes, “Henry’s ‘dismissive generosity’ emphasizes Williams’s subordinate position, and the language of
the scene associates Williams with the feet of the body politic.”435 Harry is both able to place Williams in the inferior position by giving him a gift he may not deserve and certainly cannot pay back and by requesting that Williams “wear [the glove that was filled with crowns] for an honour in thy cap / Till I do challenge it” (4.8.60-1). Although Harry would not dream of fighting a commoner, he can level that threat at Williams to show that he may at some future time defend his honor against Williams physically if he so desires.

Yet, Harry’s payment to Williams might not be entirely made up of aristocratic condescension towards commoners. Williams corroborates Harry’s own ideas about ceremony, saying, “Your majesty came not like your self: you appeared to me but as a common man—witness the night, your garments, your lowliness; and what your highness suffered under that shape, I beseech you take it for your own fault and not mine” (51-5). We should note that the bulk of Williams’ response concerns what Harry looked like on the occasion in question. While “Your majesty came not like your self” seems a bit abstract as we do not know exactly what Williams implies about Harry’s person—his “self”—he continues, making excuses for the darkness of the night and Harry’s clothes not corresponding to his kingly position. I have argued that Harry tries to reveal his kingliness by equating himself with the king, “The King is but a man, as I am” (4.1.102), hoping that the soldiers recognize his inherent superiority. However, Williams argues that the “bitter terms” (4.8.43) he gave to Harry arose from Harry’s not seeming what he was.

Most interestingly, Williams suggests that Harry should take the indignities he suffered “for your own fault” (55). As we have seen, Hal/Harry throughout the Second

435 Alison A. Chapman, “Whose Saint Crispin’s Day Is It?,” 1487. Chapman credits Anne Barton for writing, “it is a dismissive generosity which places the subject firmly in an inferior position and silences his voice.”
Tetralogy eschews responsibility for his actions and shifts agency onto others to avoid having his motives questioned. In addition to evading his own guilt and disowning his responsibility for questionable actions, Harry desires to close the gap between his private and public selves to seem kinglier. Masculinity in Shakespeare’s day was often defined by authenticity, and if the inveterate actor Henry V were ever “caught” performing, his cultivated persona would come crashing down. However, Harry, rather than rebutting Williams or challenging his comment, pays Williams. Does Harry, as Terrell Tebbetts writes, “tacitly accept[] that judgment by immediately offering him tribute,” finally accepting his responsibility for something? Is the payment for Williams’ making Harry see something about himself he has tried to avoid? Or, is the payment hush money that will prevent Williams from asserting his own truth because he is a commoner and subject to being paid off monetarily?

This episode is ultimately unnecessary, as Harry has forced a French surrender and the resulting treaty talks, gaining his “capital demand”—the hand of Katherine. However, unsure of his own manliness in his failure to personally account for the lopsided English victory or having his subjects admire him for his person rather than his persona, Harry resorts to demonstrable masculine acts predicated on violence and domination to perform his manhood for his audience—in this case, himself.

It Takes Two to Tango, or “is pig not great?”

Although Harry begins to doubt the unimpeachability of his masculinity, as evidenced by the otherwise baffling prank on Fluellen and Williams and his wooing of Katherine, Harry has successfully performed his masculinity for others. The French King

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welcomes him at the beginning of scene 5.2, “Right joyous are we to behold your face, / Most worthy brother England” (5.2.9-10). Although Harry arrives as a conqueror, the King uses fraternal language that Harry himself deploys. Most importantly, his acceptance at the French court is guaranteed by his victory at Agincourt. However, victory in battle, like masculinity, must be approved of by more than just one side. When Montjoy tells Harry in scene 4.7 of the loss of French life and their desire to bury their dead, Harry must still inquire, “I tell thee truly, herald, / I know not yet if the day be ours or no” (82-3). Despite the significant losses suffered by the French, Harry is uncertain of the outcome of the battle because the French have not yet verbally granted the English victory. Just so, despite however one might convince oneself of his own masculinity, it does not truly exist unless approved by others; masculinity is, among other thing, an unofficial contract between one and others.

Harry, once being granted victory, characteristically praises God “and not our strength for it” (86), going so far as to proclaim a death sentence to anyone of his soldiers to brag of their good fortunes, as it would “take praise from God” (4.8.116). While seemingly a paradox, Harry’s refusal of celebration of his victory at Agincourt is itself a way to enhance his honor. His subjects will praise his high-minded modesty because he fails to boast of his military exploits. Thus, while Harry attributes their success to God’s intervention, he still knows that his subjects will attribute the victory to his proper kingly manliness. Although I have indicated that much of Harry’s attributing his victory to God’s intervention stems from his desire to avoid retribution for sitting on a tainted throne, here he more obviously demonstrates the religiosity he has presented since first

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437 Lewis, Kingship and Masculinity, 110, notes that the Gesta Henrici Quinti reports that, “Indeed, from his quiet demeanour, gentle pace, and sober progress, it might have been gathered that the king, silently pondering the matter in his heart, was rendering thanks and glory to God alone, not to man.”
taking the throne, depicting that “Henry had won at Agincourt not through simple
courage or brute force but because his cause was just and because he was devout and
temperate, not bloodthirsty, arrogant or self-satisfied. If his manhood could be kept in
equilibrium it would be the guarantee of future success which would further benefit his
realm and his subjects.”\footnote{Lewis, \textit{Kingship and Masculinity}, 112.} Despite the seeming thoroughness with which Harry solidifies
his masculine identity for others in winning the battle, securing the hand of Katherine,
and becoming heir to the French throne, he cannot persuade himself of its achievement
and must continuously perform it.

Despite his own doubts over his masculinity, which now seem exacerbated by his
public success, Welsh captain Fluellen and captain Gower praise the king, awarding him
masculinity from below \textit{before} his legendary victory is assured. Gower begins scene 4.7
by praising Harry’s command to his troops to cut their prisoners’ throats. While Harry
prudently does so, his side being so outnumbered, this act contradicts the chivalry Harry
has co-opted for his purposes.\footnote{Lewis, \textit{Kingship and Masculinity}, 109, relates that, although French historians lamented the
death of so many noblemen, none of them criticized Henry V’s command, which was in fact preceded. Meron however notes in “Law of War” that the author of \textit{Gesta Henrici Quinti} neglects to mention Henry V’s order and “describes the killing as almost an act of nature. This may mean that the king was not proud of the order and did not want it to be highlighted” (39). Holinshed later describes it as a “lamentable slaughter” (Lane, “‘When Blood Is Their Argument,’” 40).} Yet, Gower characterizes the killing of the prisoners as a
response to the killing of the English boys, fabricating a causal connection between
things that are only correlated; that Harry’s loyal subjects paint over his possible crime
corroborates Machiavelli’s assertion that the masses desire to see the best in their
rulers.\footnote{Machiavelli, \textit{Prince}, 47-49.} Gower assumes the causal connection between the French attack on the boys
and Harry’s command to cut the prisoners throats because his belief that Harry is a good
man leads him to distort the sequence of events, attributing Harry’s order to retribution rather than the fear of the French regrouping.

Fluellen, ever the proud Welshman, approves of Harry. In addition to implicitly comparing Edward III and the Black Prince to Harry in person, he at length describes the similarities between Harry and “Alexander the Pig” (4.7.12-3) to Gower. Fluellen is not alone in making comparisons to Alexander the Great. Back in the very first scene, Canterbury says of Harry’s considerable wits, “Turn him to any cause of policy, / The Gordian knot of it he will unloose, / Familiar as his garter” (1.1.45-6). Harry himself, in order to spur on his “noble English” (3.1.17), urges them to imitate their “Fathers that like so many Alexanders / Have in these parts from morn till even fought” (19-20). However, Fluellen’s comparison between the two kings focuses not on conquering lands or shining qualities of character but on superficial geographic comparisons of their respective birthplaces and their killing of best friends.

The discourse about Alexander that circulates in this play suggests that the English, and perhaps Harry himself, have propagated this analogy for patriotic purposes: England should rally behind Harry because he is as great as Alexander. Yet, although Fluellen approves of Harry’s actions, concluding “there is good men porn at Monmouth” (4.7.51-2), the comparisons between Harry and Alexander also invite unflattering comparisons. As briefly mentioned earlier, St. Augustine himself argued, “What are kingdoms but faire theeuish purchases,” continuing that they no longer are perceived as

441 Of course, there are differing stories as to how Alexander untied the knot. One version of the story describes him as having the wit necessary to unravel the knot. The other version of the story relates him using force and cutting the knot in half with a sword. He gets to be both Machiavelli’s “fox” and “lion.”

442 Fluellen’s assertion that good men have been born in Monmouth also suggests that Harry is not especially good or great if Monmouth keeps producing such men.
“theeuish” because, if the nation succeeds, the theft is supported by the law, 443 justifying his critique of nations by relating the words of the pardoned pirate to Alexander: “How darest thou molest the whole world? But because I doe it with a little ship onely, I am called a theefe: thou doing it with a great Nauie, art called an Emperour.” 444 While people often have their nationalistic sentiments played to and can ignore the crimes of their politicians, the more personal fault Fluellen relates might even be more damning. The Arden 3 notes that Alexander killed his friend Clytus at “a banquet at Maracanda (Samarcan) at which, both being heated with wine, they disagreed as to whether Alexander had outdone his father Philip” (emphasis added). 445 While Fluellen claims that Harry, having assumed his proper nobility, rejected his friend Falstaff, and in so doing is a better man than Alexander who killed his friend while drunk, his analogy suggests a couple of potentially dangerous things for Harry’s reign: one, that his reformation is not real and that the sober Harry equals a drunk conqueror; two, Fluellen’s allusion to Clytus, presumably the party who disagreed and said Alexander had not outdone his father, points to Harry’s greatest motivation in becoming the man he is—Harry must deal with his father’s awesome example and is worried he cannot outdo it. Fluellen’s statement and Alexander’s murder of Clytus suggest that, regardless how great a man’s accomplishments might be, naysayers will diminish one’s accomplishments and yeasayers, even in their praise, might undermine one’s “achievement” of manhood.

443 Spencer, “Pirates, Pigs, and Princes,” 163.
444 St. Augustine, from The City of God, quoted by Spencer, “Pirates, Pigs, and Princes,” 163.
445 Henry V, 312-3, n. 38.
“Katherine” Is Harry’s “Capital Demand”

A school of criticism, dating back to Samuel Johnson, believes Shakespeare ran out of material and needed to add on the comedic ending to Henry V.446 However other critics see the “wooing scene” as integral to the structure of the Second Tetralogy. While some read Harry’s wooing of Katherine as genuinely stemming from his desire for her, or, at the very least, his desire to win her affections, most see the gendered imbalance of power in Harry’s verbal incursions (mirroring the military incursions of his army into France) in relation to Kate’s utter powerlessness.447 The men in the other room, along with her mother, are deciding her fate. She seems to have suspected this outcome all along, given that she has been learning English for precisely this occasion.

However, I want to suggest that Harry’s desire to dominate here butts up against his desire for true mutuality. Harry’s response to Exeter’s story and his interaction with Fluellen and Williams, regardless of the power imbalance, suggest that Harry misses the human connection he once had in Eastcheap as Prince Hal.448 As Marilyn Williamson writes, the scene “repeats a basic pattern in Henry’s behavior that reaches back to his madcap days”—“he plays at being ‘the best king of good fellows,’ a man who may be loved for himself alone”—however, the scene “clinches the revelation that now that he is king, he can no longer behave genuinely and simply as a man, despite a strong desire to do so.”449 Williamson’s wonderful and short essay summarizes much of what I have argued all along: Harry desires to be loved and admired for his body natural—yet, upon

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446 Williamson, “The Courtship of Katherine and the Second Tetralogy,” Criticism 17, no. 4 (Fall 1975): 326-27. Williamson summarizes Johnson and his ilk’s take. Many of the ideas laid out in this brief section mirror hers, which I quote from liberally.
447 Traub, “Prince Hal’s Falstaff” is probably the most prime example.
448 Williamson makes this same observation in “The Courtship of Katherine.”
becoming king, he faces resistance to his presentations of himself as a private person as his subjects only respond to him as the public figure of the body politic. However, given that the self is always a gendered self, Harry desires approval of himself as he has come to believe in his inherent superiority to others. While he reduces himself to his public role with some private flourishes, particularly at the end of 2 Henry IV and at the beginning of Henry V, he also desires his private manhood be approved and admired by others. Once he has secured the success of his public masculinity in winning the battle of Agincourt, he resumes his failed attempt at having his private manhood approved by Williams and, later, Katherine. However, when he fails to relate to others or they fail to approve of Harry as a private man, he answers their rejection to his private manhood by asserting his public face as king, coercing the acceptance and approval that he once so successfully gained before his accession. Harry realizes that others’ approval of his effectiveness as king—granting him “honor” is in fact only public recognition of public worth. He cannot truly have his masculinity approved if it is only seen as a public performance and not his private essence.

While most critics agree the wooing scene is “gratuitous,” they also admit its political utility. Donald Hedrick writes, “Having her both accept his offer and love him would naturally legitimate his conquest, prevent its appearance as ‘symbolic rape.’” Harry always desires others to take responsibility for actions he has already agreed upon. Due to his inheriting a usurped throne, Harry takes pains to cast himself as subordinate to

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450 Williamson, “The Courtship of Katherine,” 333, writes, “he wants to react as a private person with Williams, Bates, and the other soldiers, but his need to justify his cause finally crops out and mars the encounter because he cannot keep his word as a man since he is king. Similarly, a kingly pomposity overwhelms whatever charm might have lain in the brief return to wit and unconventionality in the courtship scene.”


external forces or to others’ wishes rather than appearing as the agent himself, troubled by how he has come to his position of power.\textsuperscript{453} Thus, if Katherine “accepts” him, he can continue on in ignorance of his own attempted usurpation of the French throne.\textsuperscript{454} While Katherine’s decision has already been made for her, her acceptance of Harry would mitigate his exercise of power, making him seem to himself both a worthy sovereign, but more importantly, as a man worthy of being loved.

Thus, the wooing of Katherine, like the encounter with Williams, serves to assuage Harry’s self-conception as a man. Harry’s staging of it, although his marriage to Katherine is certain, indicates how much he does this for psychic reasons. Yes, Harry dons his public soldier persona here again, precisely because its assumed simplicity supposedly suggests nothing about his ulterior political motives. However, Harry here might also adopt this persona to hide from himself his own psychic need in having Katherine approve of him as a private man. He wants to feel, for his own sake and for his own masculine self-conception, that she appreciates him for him and is not merely doing it because of their social circumstances as conquering king and conquered princess. The private man who has been kept so quiet for most of the last play and a half desires that his wife, his partner, should want to be with him. More explicitly than he does with his soldiers, as they are men themselves and he may not risk the same level of vulnerability with them, Harry asks, seeking mutuality, “Do you like me, Kate?” (5.2.106-7).

\textsuperscript{453} Williamson, “The Courtship of Katherine,” 329, writes, “Perhaps Henry is still unsure of himself and of his title because of his father’s usurpation, and so he creates situations in which others will justify his actions, which he has already decided to carry out, but which he likes others to seem to bring about because of his unease in the kingship: when he declares, war, or executes traitors, or marries, all crucial actions of a monarch, he seeks support, even if it is spurious, in the behavior of others.”

\textsuperscript{454} See Williamson, “The Courtship of Katherine.”
His attempts to find out whether she likes him—she “cannot tell vat is ‘like me’ (108-9)”—or to instill that desire in her result in the verbal assaults of Harry’s customary speechifying which we witness “every time he feels defensive about an action or when he wants to be certain people will follow him.” Williamson brilliantly summarizes, “Shakespeare has been at pains to emphasize the fact that she cannot understand much of what Henry says, and so we can only conclude that his long, persuasive speeches are as much self-justification, given for his own benefit to rationalize his action, as they are made to affect his future queen.” Harry wants to present himself to himself as a man wooing a woman in a typical, though highly contrived, courtship to escape his own guilty feelings about his kingship of England or his newly-granted claims to France as well as to present himself to himself as a private person, no longer subsumed by the body politic.

Yet, although he desires to relate to her personally, if only to persuade himself of the continuing existence of his own private manhood, he ultimately desires her to propagate his patriarchy now that he has installed himself as heir to the French throne. Given Renaissance beliefs about sexual feeling and conception, Harry needs her to have positive feelings for him if they are to have the strong son he desires. However, we see how ineffective his ploy is. Katherine often asks for clarifications, and we are left doubting whether she truly understands him or if she declines to play along with Harry’s deceptive game. She remarks that men’s comments are full of lies, indicating her knowledge that Harry’s simple soldierly language is a sham. She refuses to tell him she “likes him,” and when he ultimately asks if she will have him, she says she will if it pleases her father.

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455 Williamson, 331.
456 Williamson, 332.
It is perhaps this final refusal to “personally” accept Harry as her husband and her invocation of her social responsibility to wed him that leads Harry to kissing Kate against her will. Frustrated by her resistance to approve of his private self, he kisses her, disguising his violence as affection as he once did with Falstaff: “Henry’s final gesture in the wooing scene enables us to understand clearly that though he may often yield to his impulse to imitate the common man, Henry is unable—or perhaps unconsciously unwilling—to escape his kingship and the habits of mind and heart that go with it.”458

Harry, not receiving someone’s freely given approval, takes it from them.

After she does “consent,” he engages in crude sexual banter about her with Burgundy, resorting to the kinds of verbal antics that one would expect from Hal of the tavern, although he never speaks of Mistress Quickly this rudely. While just moments before Harry seemed to wrestle with his mixed motivations in trying to win Katherine’s assent, once in the company of a nobleman, he resorts to familiar boy’s club rhetoric, favoring homosocial bonding over heterosexual bonding. After all, ultimately his marriage to her will result in a political alliance with France, however short-lived, and his goal is that the fruit of their heterosexual bonding—approved of by men—will wage war against a political, social, and religious other, further extending Harry’s public manhood into the future, regardless of her momentary personal rejection of his private self.

Epilogue: “In your fair minds let this acceptance take”

Shakespeare’s theater audience would have known, of course, of Henry VI’s troubled reign. Henry VI, even more so than Henry V, had to endure the continuing and overwhelming legacy of his father, whose early death solidified his heroic status. Henry

V, like Edward III, became a standard of balanced kingly masculinity, but, beyond his becoming a model after his death, also understood how to satisfy his subjects during his lifetime by satisfying their expectations with his self-presentation. The audience knows historically that Henry V’s patriarchy failed to propagate itself beyond a single, ineffectual heir.

Despite the foreknowledge of the disappointment to come and the triumphs the audience has witnessed in the preceding play, the Chorus, rather bafflingly, chooses to commemorate the epic hero Henry V, not by attempting to imitate a “muse of fire” (Prologue 1) fitting his stature, but focusing on the play’s shortcomings in the form of a sonnet: “Thus far, with rough and all-unable pen, / Our bending author hath pursued the story.../ Mangling by starts the full course” (Epilogue 1-2,4) the “glory” (4) of “mighty men” (3). “Confining” (3) what should be continued praise of Harry, the Chorus chooses to limit his mightiness to fourteen lines of strictly rhymed poetry, rather than the epic possibility of open-ended blank verse. The Chorus further continues to mar Harry’s legacy as an Englishman, describing France as “the world’s best garden” (7) and admits that “Fortune made his sword” (6), contrary to Harry’s desire to be seen as having the will and inherent greatness to be the conquering warrior himself.

After the volta, the sonnet turns and shifts its focus to Henry VI, and, seeming to take its cue from Harry, attributes the failures of his progeny to the “so many” that “had the managing” (11), rather than to Henry VI’s own shortcomings, which might reflect poorly on his kingly father. The Chorus ends urging the audience for approval, not because of its successful execution of the life of Henry V, but for the pleasure the Henry

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459 Lewis, Kingship and Masculinity, 86.
Not only does the play describe its failure to successfully portray its subject matter, Henry V, but it asks for applause based on the earlier set of plays about the failed son of a legendary father. It seems that, by extension, Henry V should be approved, not because he successfully passed on his kingly legacy, but that the very existence of any son results in the approbation of the father: do not love the play/father for what it is, but for that something follows it.

Katherine Eggert argues that the play itself, by ignoring or eliminating the importance of Katherine of France to the future history of England, “asserts that both authority and its familial succession ought to be an entirely male purview.” While her take seems corroborated by the Chorus’ attempts to blame Henry VI’s advisors, and perhaps even Margaret of Anjou who served as ruler during Henry’s bouts of insanity, the Chorus’ insistence on its own failings complicates this more traditional feminist take on the play’s project. As I have noted earlier, Harry himself, as his father did before him, has admitted the theatricality of kinglyness and masculinity. Harry himself is the “bending author” of his own story of prodigality, redemption, and divinely-sanctioned conquest. Joel Altman writes, “Harry requires substantiation from audiences dramatized as well as real. Sometimes this takes the form of explanation or justification, sometimes that of projected causation as he insists that the motive force of his actions lies outside himself, in his hearers or more distant agents. Great though he may be, or rather because his greatness depends upon mutual participation, what he is and what he does must be empowered by others.”

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463 Joel Altman, “‘Vile Participation,’” 20.
to perform kingliness, free from the taint of his father’s usurpation. Harry, thus, mystifies his own power, spuriously subordinating himself to outside forces. He requires the audience’s approval, or, in the Chorus’s terms, it is in his observers’ “thoughts” “must deck [him] king” (Prologue 28). The Chorus’s insistence upon the play’s badness suggests not only must the audience be the approving and observant king to the actor’s performing and acting prince, but that the performance itself, of its representation of Henry V, and by analogy, Henry V’s representation of himself and his masculinity, might not be adequate to receive the proper praise. Harry, like the play itself, however much he tries, might not adequately perform masculinity. Theater, like masculinity, only succeeds through audience approval.
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