King Henry IV, Part I Study Guide

King Henry IV, Part I by William Shakespeare

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

BOOKRAGS

Contents

King Henry IV, Part I Study Guide....1

Contents....2

Introduction....4

Plot Summary....6

Act 1, Scene 1....7

Act 1, Scene 2....8

Act 1, Scene 3....10

Act 2, Scene 1....12

Act 2, Scene 2....13

Act 2, Scene 3....14

Act 2, Scene 4....15

Act 3, Scene 1....17

Act 3, Scene 2....18

Act 3, Scene 3....19

Act 4, Scene 1....20

Act 4, Scene 2....21

Act 4, Scene 3....22

Act 4, Scene 4....23

Act 5, Scene 1....24

Act 5, Scene 2....25

Act 5, Scene 3....26

Act 5, Scene 4....28

Act 5, Scene 5....30

Characters....31

Character Studies....47

Conclusion.......... 50

Themes.......... 51

Modern Connections.......... 53

Overviews.......... 56

Critical Essay #1.......... 57

Critical Essay #2.......... 60

Critical Essay #3.......... 63

Critical Essay #4.......... 67

Critical Essay #5.......... 71

Critical Essay #6.......... 77

Critical Essay #7.......... 85

Critical Essay #8.......... 87

Critical Essay #9.......... 96

Critical Essay #10.......... 105

Critical Essay #11.......... 114

Critical Essay #12.......... 123

Critical Essay #13.......... 125

Critical Essay #14.......... 131

Critical Essay #15.......... 134

Critical Essay #16.......... 147

Critical Essay #17.......... 149

Critical Essay #18.......... 152

Adaptations.......... 158

Further Study.......... 159

Copyright Information.......... 163

Introduction

Henry IV, Part One continues the story Shakespeare began telling in *Richard II.* To understand the events of *Henry IV, Part One,* readers must know that in *Richard II,* Henry IV, who was then known as Bolingbroke, returns from exile, has King Richard imprisoned, and declares himself King. In *Henry IV, Part One,* Henry's former supporters, those who helped put him in power, join forces against him. Henry and his son, Hal, fight together against the rebels. The story continues in *Henry IV; Part Two* with civil war still threatening the nation. Henry dies and Hal becomes King Henry V. Finally, in *Henry V,* the last of the group of plays known as the Lancastrian tetralogy (Lancaster refers to the family, or house, from which Henry was descended), Henry V conquers France, establishes peace, and marries Katherine, the French princess.

Scholars estimate that *Henry IV, Part One* was written and performed in late 1596 or early 1597. The play was published in 1598. For the historical plot of the play, Shakespeare drew from several sources of English history which were written during Elizabethan times. His primary source was Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (2nd edition, 1586-87). Shakespeare also consulted Samuel Daniel's narrative poem entitled *The Civile Wars between the two houses of Lancaster and York* (1595) and Edward Hall's *Chronicle of the Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre and Yorke* (1540). Finally, Shakespeare seems to have drawn heavily from an anonymous play, *The Famous Victories of Henry V* (1594?), for the Hal-Falstaff plot.

Although little was written about the play until the mid-seventeenth century, when Samuel Pepys commented that the performance "did not please" him *(Diary and Correspondence,* 1660), it is known that Shakespeare was persuaded to change Falstaff's name, which was Jockey Oldcastle when the play was originally performed. When the play was first printed, the name had been changed. Scholars suggest that perhaps an Elizabethan descendent of the historical Oldcastle was offended by Shakespeare's representation of the family name.

The major conflicts in the play include Hal's strained relationship with his father. Henry IV is concerned that Hal is tarnishing his princely reputation with his association with the corrupt Falstaff. Falstaff is often associated with the idea of disorder, as his friendship with Hal appears to threaten the Prince's ability to mature into a responsible ruler. Critics argue whether Hal, who, after a confrontation with his father suddenly transforms himself into the prince his father wants him to be, was actually only using Falstaff to heighten the impact of his transformation. Others attempt to demonstrate Hal's sincerity.

Critics are also concerned with the rebellion against the crown and one of its chief instigators, Hotspur. The rebellion, led in part by Hotspur, threatens the stability and order of the nation. Hotspur's valor is admired by many in the play, especially by Henry, who suggests to Hal that Hotspur is perhaps a more deserving heir to the throne. Henry's comparison of the two often leads critics to do the same. Many commentators

focus their comparison on the two distinct views of honor expressed by Hal and Hotspur.

Plot Summary

Henry postpones his planned trip to the Holy Land, which he had hoped to offer as penance for the death of Richard II. Hotspur refuses to surrender to Henry the Scottish prisoners he has captured unless Henry agrees to pay the ransom for Edmund Mortimer. Mortimer, Hotspur's brother-in-law and Richard IV's rightful heir, was captured by Owen Glendower when English forces attacked Wales. Henry refuses to ransom Mortimer and demands Hotspur to release the Scottish prisoners. Hotspur again refuses and returns to his home in Northern England with his father (Northumberland) and his uncle (Worcester). The three plan to raise a rebellion against the

King by joining their forces with those of the Archbishop of York, Owen Glendower, Edmund Mortimer, and Douglas. In the meantime, Prince Hal is plotting with Falstaff and other companions to rob a group of travelers passing through Gadshill, near London.

Act 1, Scene 1

Act 1, Scene 1 Summary

At the palace in London, King Henry enters with Lord John of Lancaster, the Earl of Lancaster, Sir Walter Blunt and various other nobles and attendants. The King is tired of civil war and hopes to end the strife by uniting the country in a crusade to the Holy Land. Sadly, the crusade has been his plan for the past year, but thus far, the plan has not been realized, due to the conflicts at home.

Westmoreland reports on the events of the past night's council. There is bad news from Wales, where Mortimer has been defeated by Glendower, culminating in a massacre of a thousand of his men. This news prompts King Henry to break off all business with the Holy Land.

Westmoreland continues with more bad news. In the north, Henry Percy, also called Hotspur, fought with the Scottish Archibald. Sir Henry Blunt has just come from the battle and has already given news to King Henry. Hotspur has defeated the Earl of Douglas and taken Mordrake the Earl of Fife and the Earls of Athol, Murray, Angus and Menteith, as prisoners.

King Henry expresses his envy of Northumberland, Henry Percy's father. He wishes that he could trade his own son, Prince Henry, for Northumberland's Henry Percy. He is also angered by Henry Percy's pride. Percy is keeping the prisoners and has sent word that the Earl of Fife is the only one he intends to send to the King to be ransomed. Westmoreland blames Worcester, Hotspur's uncle, for encouraging his pride. King Henry says that he has sent for Henry Percy, so that he may answer the charges on his own.

Act 1, Scene 1 Analysis

Henry Percy (Hotspur) and Prince Henry are established as parallel characters. King Henry compares them, indicating that Hotspur is more like his true son, while his own son is an irresponsible embarrassment, or a false son. Hotspur and King Henry are both ambitious and hot-tempered, qualities that will place them in opposition to one another when they meet.

The theme of false identities is carried throughout the play. In later scenes, more characters will be introduced in two states of deception- deception of themselves and deception of others. The honorable thieves are the men who deceive others, but not themselves, while the false thieves deceive themselves but do not deceive others. In Act I, Scene I we meet the first of the false thieves, Hotspur, who has stolen Prince Henry's place in King Henry's respect and affections. However, having taken Prince Henry's place unknowingly through pride and ambition rather than honest intent, Hotspur is a false thief.

Act 1, Scene 2

Act 1, Scene 2 Summary

In London, at an apartment belonging to the Prince, Prince Henry and Sir John Falstaff enter. The pair has been out carousing, and Falstaff wonders what time it is now. The Prince responds by teasing Falstaff for being so addled by drink that he can't tell the time of day.

Falstaff suggests that, when Prince Henry becomes king, he should proclaim all men who steal purses by night to be the knights of the moon, since they are governed by the moon just as the sea is. Prince Henry agrees and adds that their fortunes ebb and flow just as the sea, since their fortunes are also governed by the moon. Money snatched on Monday night is spent by Tuesday morning.

Falstaff and Prince Henry continue their banter, commenting on the hostess of the tavern. Prince Henry has been using his credit to finance their entertainment, but his credit has been used up. Falstaff admits this to be true, and asks that, when Prince Henry is king, he will not hang thieves. Prince Henry jokes that he will make Falstaff the hangman when he is king, and Falstaff will hang thieves.

Falstaff tells Prince Henry that he has met men in the street who spoke ill of Henry's behavior. His own good name has been lost because of his association with the prince. Prince Henry responds by asking where Falstaff plans to steal his next purse, and Falstaff explains that although he is a thief, he is an honest thief and pursues his vocation.

Poins enters and banters with Prince Henry about what a devil Falstaff is. Poins reveals that tomorrow morning there will be pilgrims going to Canterbury with rich offerings and traders with fat purses going to London. Poins has a plan for committing a robbery.

Falstaff agrees to be part of the plan, but Prince Henry demurs. Unlike Falstaff, Prince Henry is no honest thief and will not assist them. Poins tells Falstaff that after Falstaff leaves, Poins will give the Prince reason to go with them. Falstaff leaves, noting that a true prince may prove a false thief.

With Falstaff out of the way, Poins reveals that the situation is a set-up. They have already waylaid the pilgrims, so that Falstaff and his men can rob them. Then Prince Henry and Poins will rob Falstaff. The fun of the jest will be the lies that Falstaff will tell them about the fight later on, which they will then reveal to be falsehoods.

Prince Henry agrees to help with the plan and Poins exits. Alone, Prince Henry reveals that he has hidden his light under a false front of idleness, like sun behind the clouds. When he chooses to reveal his true self, he will look all the more impressive because of the comparison with his past behavior. So, for the time being, he is determined to be offensive, until its time to redeem himself.

Act 1, Scene 2 Analysis

Falstaff provides a comic counterpart to the serious action of the play, however his role extends beyond that of a mere buffoon. Falstaff repeatedly refers to himself as an honest thief. Unlike many of the other characters, Falstaff is not deceived about who he is or the role, he plays. He is unflinchingly honest about himself unlike Prince Henry, who announces to the audience that he is a false thief playing a role. While other characters embrace self-deception, Falstaff repudiates it.

Falstaff accuses Prince Henry of being a false thief, which he is, but only in a very literal sense. Prince Henry pretends to be a thief, but will not participate in Falstaff's robberies, so in this way he is false. However, at the end of the scene, Prince Henry reveals a very shrewd and honest assessment of the role he is playing. He has chosen to deceive the world into thinking of him as a scoundrel and admits to his actions. As Prince Henry is not deceiving himself, he is a true thief, like Falstaff.

The imagery of the sun and the moon are used to counterpoint the contrast between Falstaff and Prince Henry. As an honest thief, Falstaff ties his fortunes to the moon. Prince Henry, in contrast, is a creature of the sun- hiding his true nature in order to better fit in with Falstaff. Prince Henry is in reality, the polar opposite and even the enemy of Falstaff. Given the opportunity, Prince Henry is more than happy to make Falstaff the butt of a prank, revealing the very marked difference between them.

Act 1, Scene 3

Act 1, Scene 3 Summary

At the palace in London, King Henry enters with Northumberland, Worcester, Hostpur, Sir Walter Blunt and others. King Henry says that his patience is growing thin, and he intends to act as a mighty king in response to the indignities he has suffered.

Worcester complains that his family does not deserve these accusations, since they have helped to put King Henry in his current place. Angrily, King Henry sends Worcester away.

Northumberland, Hotspur's father, explains that either envy or mistake is the problem and not his son. Hotspur continues the explanation. After the battle, while the dead were being collected and taken away, he was approached by a well-dressed man who taunted the soldiers, then haughtily and rudely demanded that the prisoners be handed over to the King. Hotspur's grief and anger prompted him to refuse the order. Blunt agrees with the account.

King Henry is not appeased and vents his rage on Mortimer, Hotspur's brother-in-law, who has yet to be ransomed from the Welsh. He suggests that Mortimer did not fight valiantly for his cause, but has instead betrayed him to the Welsh. Hotspur defends Mortimer, describing his valor in the King's cause and angry that Mortimer's name is now slandered by the King.

King Henry insists that Henry Percy is lying. He gives Northumberland and Percy leave to go, but warns that there will be consequences if they do not hand over the prisoners immediately. King Henry, Blunt and King Henry's train exit.

Furious, Hotspur says that he will never turn over the prisoners now. Northumberland tries to calm him, but is interrupted by the arrival of Worcester. Hotspur insists that he will join with Mortimer to raise him to be king in place of Henry.

Worcester wonders what has happened to cause this anger. Hotspur explains how the King has demanded his prisoners and then refused to ransom Mortimer, his brother in law. Worcester explains that Mortimer was proclaimed heir to the throne by King Richard, who is now dead. Henry Percy now understands King Henry's attitude, but thinks that they have shamed themselves by placing such an ungrateful king on the throne. Even if they lose their lives, they should regain their honor by deposing King Henry.

Worcester reveals, despite many interruptions from Hotspur's angry outbursts, that the Scots who are Hotspur's prisoners should be ransomed back to Scotland and can be used to gain power there for Hotspur. He will also gain the support of the Bishop of York. Then he can join Scotland and York with Mortimer. All three agree that, as long as King

Henry is in power, the animosity towards their family will continue, so they will protect themselves by raising up a new king. They exit to carry out the plan.

Act 1, Scene 3 Analysis

When brought together, Hotspur and King Henry quickly become enemies. Hotspur strongly resembles the King, to the point that the pair cannot co-exist. Not only do they share temperament, but they also share experience. King Henry himself lost favor with a king and became a rebel, for many of the same reasons as Hotspur. They even share a claim to the throne. The two men are so similar that even in opposition, they clearly understand one another. Hotspur steals the role of a true heir to King Henry, a role that Prince Henry has chosen to avoid playing.

King Henry is also revealed to be a true thief. He has stolen the right to the crown from Mortimer, and clearly both knows and resents playing that role.

Act 2, Scene 1

Act 2, Scene 1 Summary

At an inn yard in Rochester, a carrier enters with a lantern. He calls to the ostler to bring his horse. A second carrier enters, and the pair banters. Gadshill arrives and asks the time. It is two o'clock, and he wishes to see his gelding in the stable. The carriers exit, planning to get some rest before they leave for London.

The Chamberlain enters and tells Gadshill about a company of men, who will be leaving the inn shortly with three hundred marks in gold. The Chamberlain hints that Gadshill may one day hang, but Gadshill reminds him that Falstaff will hang with him. Gadshill promises the chamberlain a share in the night's takings and calls for his horse.

Act 2, Scene 1 Analysis

This scene is part of the build-up before Poins springs his joke on Falstaff. It also re-emphasizes the recurring idea of thievery and its rewards or punishments. A thief may gain riches if he succeeds, and he will be executed if he does not. It foreshadows the end of the play, in which the false thieves are punished, and the honest thieves triumph.

Act 2, Scene 2

Act 2, Scene 2 Summary

The scene opens on a highway, near Gadshill. Poins and Prince Henry enter with Falstaff not far behind them. They have stolen Falstaff's horse, much to Falstaff's dismay. Falstaff rails against Prince Henry, wondering what medicine the prince has given him to make him continue to love and follow him. Prince Henry silences him by claiming to hear the arrival of travelers.

Gadshill, Peto and Bardolph enter. Bardolph announces that travelers with the King's money are coming down the hill. The Prince and Poins slip away to disguise themselves, leaving the others to commit the robbery.

The travelers arrive and are robbed and bound by Falstaff and his thieves, who exit with the money. Prince Henry and Poins re-enter in disguise. Falstaff and his thieves return to share the loot, only to be attacked by Poins and Prince Henry. Falstaff and the thieves run away, leaving behind the loot. Prince Henry and Poins exult in the success of their prank.

Act 2, Scene 2 Analysis

This comic scene is the second portion of the prank that has been arranged by Poins and Prince Henry. Two sets of thieves steal from one another. This scene symbolizes and summarizes the underlying conflict of the play- a group of false thieves trying to steal plunder from the true thieves.

King Henry is a true thief, who has stolen a kingdom. Sir John Falstaff is a true thief, who has stolen gold. A group of false thieves, led by Hotspur, intend to steal the kingdom from King Henry. A group of false thieves led by Poins plan to steal the gold from Falstaff.

Act 2, Scene 3

Act 2, Scene 3 Summary

At Warkworth castle, Hotspur enters, reading a letter. The letter is from someone, who indicates that they support Hotspur's family, but they are concerned about the dangerous nature of the planned rebellion. Angry, Hotspur insists that the plan is good and the allies secure. He will have the aid of York, Mortimer, Owen Glendower and Douglas. He is prepared.

Lady Percy enters, asking her husband, Hotspur, why she has been banished from his bed and why he is so distracted and moody. She says that he speaks of nothing but prisoners and war. She is interrupted by the arrival of a servant, who tells Hotspur that Gilliams has been sent away with a packet, and Butler has arrived with a horse.

Lady Percy again asks Hotspur what is the matter, insisting that she will know the truth. Hotspur is short with her at first, but at last admits that he loves her. He refuses to tell her more than that he plans to leave and that she will be allowed to follow her the next day.

Act 2, Scene 3 Analysis

This scene parallels Act 2, Scene I. It is building up to Hotspur's rebellion against the King. It also raises the question of whether he is honest or false. Although Lady Percy has noticed that something is wrong, Hotspur will not speak honestly about the problem. Instead he chooses to avoid the question, upsetting his wife and making her doubt his affection for her. Having become entirely consumed by thoughts of war, Hotspur has, in a sense, ceased to be himself, because he no longer behaves like himself. This marks Hotspur as a false thief, and therefore not a real heir to the true thieves led by King Henry.

Act 2, Scene 4

Act 2, Scene 4 Summary

At the Boar's-Head tavern in Eastcheap, Prince Henry enters with Poins. The Prince has been making friends of some of the young men and boasts that he now calls them by their first names. One young man, Francis, has given the Prince a small amount of sugar. Prince Henry decides to use this as an excuse to play another prank to pass the time while he waits for Falstaff.

Prince Henry instructs Poins to call for Francis every few moments, so that every time the young man tries to speak, he will be forced to interrupt himself by calling "Anon!" back to Poins. Poins exits and Francis enters. Just as they have planned, Prince Henry questions Francis, but every time Francis tries to reply, he is interrupted by Poins. Prince Henry continues the prank by choosing his questions so that he can pretend to take offense, when Francis cries "Anon!" The confused young man is at last called away by the vintner, who has entered to announce the arrival of Sir John Falstaff.

Poins returns and asks Prince Henry to explain the joke on Francis. Prince Henry explains that he isn't like Henry Percy, who constantly fights for honor. He would rather make fun of Falstaff.

Falstaff enters with Gadshill, Bardolph and Peto. Falstaff curses all cowards and begins to complain that there are no more good men, who have not been hanged. He accuses Prince Henry as well, but the Prince teases him in reply. Falstaff begins drinking and tells the story of how he was attacked the night before. The story becomes more and more fabulous, as his attackers multiple in number. Two men in buckram become eleven over the course of the story.

Prince Henry encourages Falstaff's tale, until he finally reveals the truth that the attackers were only two in number and none other than Poins and Prince Henry. Falstaff immediately responds that clearly, his instincts recognized the Prince, and this explains why he was unable to strike any blows and cowered instead.

The Hostess announces the arrival of a nobleman, who has been sent by King Henry to speak with his son, the Prince. Falstaff goes to answer him. While Falstaff is gone, the Prince questions Bardolph and Peto, who reveal how Falstaff has damaged his own sword in order to support his story of fighting with many attackers.

Falstaff returns to announce that the nobleman was Sir John Bracy, and he has orders from the King that Prince Henry should return to court. Percy, Glendower, Mortimer and Douglas, Mordrake and Worcester are making war in the North. Falstaff warns Prince Henry that his father, the King, will be terribly angry, and he should practice his excuses.

Falstaff pretends to be King Henry so that Prince Henry can rehearse his answers. As king, Falstaff upbraids Prince Henry for drinking, stealing, blackening his own name and

keeping bad company. Falstaff suggests that only he, himself, is virtuous. This is too much for Prince Henry, who decides that they should switch places- Prince Henry will play the king, and Falstaff will play the prince. As king, Prince Henry complains of his own behavior and blames Falstaff. Falstaff defends himself, explaining that to be fat, merry and old is no sin.

The game is interrupted by the entrance of Bardolph to announce that the sheriff's men have arrived. Falstaff goes to hide. The rest exit, save for Prince Henry and Peto. The sheriff enters looking for Falstaff, but Prince Henry says that Falstaff is not there, but will be sent to the sheriff later on. The sheriff explains that two men have been robbed of 300 marks, and the prince promises that Falstaff will answer for the crime, if he has committed it.

After the sheriff leaves, Prince Henry calls for Falstaff, who has fallen fast asleep. Prince Henry and Peto search Falstaff's pockets but find only papers, among them a receipt for food, the greatest charge being for liquor. There is nothing to be done with the information now, since it is time for Prince Henry to go to court and then to war. The money will be paid back with interest after the battle.

Act 2, Scene 4 Analysis

This scene presents itself as an extended series of practical jokes, which illustrate the theme of deception. Prince Henry has been ingratiating himself with the local young men. However, he is not really one of them and is still playing the false role of a reprobate. Given the opportunity, he is happy to make one of these men, Francis, the butt of a joke. This is similar to his treatment of Falstaff, another supposed friend, who is in actuality being deceived by Prince Henry's ruse.

When Falstaff enters, the real merriment begins, and the scene is a tour-de-force for the old knight, who exaggerates two attackers into eleven men in buckram. When Prince Henry reveals that he knows exactly what happened, because he was one of Falstaff's attackers, Falstaff is ready with a response. Having sensed that the false thief was really Prince Henry, Falstaff could not attack him. Falstaff is claiming the ability to see beyond a false identity, recognizing the real prince in his attacker. However, Falstaff is also himself deceived, having failed to recognize that Prince Henry is still playing a false role.

Act 3, Scene 1

Act 3, Scene 1 Summary

Hostpur, Worchester, Mortimer and Glendower are meeting at the house of the Archdeacon in Bangor. The men are hopeful, because Lancaster fears both Hotspur and Glendower. Glendower explains that this is because there were portents at his birth- the skies filled with fire, and the earth trembled. These portents have marked Glendower out for an extraordinary life. He even suggests that he might command the Devil. Hotspur responds that one may "tell the truth and shame the devil."

The men return to business and discuss how England will be divided amongst them after they have defeated King Henry. Tomorrow, Hotspur, Mortimer and Worcester will leave to meet Northumberland and the Scots at Shrewsbury. Glendower says that he will bring the ladies in, but the men should plan to slip away without goodbyes, in order to avoid tears and sorrow. Percy banters with Glendower.

After Glendower has left, Mortimer complains about the way Hotspur treats his father-in-law (Glendower.) Hotspur admits that Glendower has annoyed him with his supernatural tales. Mortimer reminds Hotspur that he too has been offensive with his pride and temper and that he should learn to control this fault.

Glendower returns with the women, one of who is Glendower's daughter, who is married to Mortimer. Mortimer's wife speaks only Welsh and Glendower must translate her comments for her husband. Mortimer's wife doesn't wish to be parted from her husband. Mortimer lays his head on his wife's lap, and she sings to him in Welsh. Hotspur lays his head on Lady Percy's lap and suggests that she sing as well, but she refuses. Hotspur exits, followed by Glendower and Mortimer.

Act 3, Scene 1 Analysis

Glendower is introduced as a force of nature. He describes himself in terms of portents and natural catastrophes. He can understand his allies, but they are unable to comprehend his language. Glendower represents a connection to the natural and spiritual, and is the personification of Wales.

Hotspur, through pride and foolishness, rejects Glendower, claiming that he is uncomfortable with the things he says. Mortimer, on the other hand, has embraced Glendower by marrying his daughter. Mortimer was chosen as an heir to the land by King Richard and has now symbolically improved his claim through his marriage. Hotspur, on the other hand, proves a false heir to the kingdom, through his rejection of Glendower, a rejection of Wales. Prince Henry, the true heir, is the Prince of Wales.

Act 3, Scene 2

Act 3, Scene 2 Summary

In London, at the palace, King Henry speaks with his son, Prince Henry. King Henry scolds the prince for his dissolute behavior. The prince blames his youth and asks for his father's pardon. The King continues his speech, reminding the Prince that he has lost the respect of the court and his place in council is held by his younger brother. King Henry says that had his reputation been like his son's he would have lost the support of the people and would have been banished by his enemies, instead of winning the crown. He explains how he won the love of the people by being humble and sober, while the former King appeared irresponsible and shameless. Prince Henry has placed himself in a similar position of disrespect, and he promises to "be more myself" in the future.

King Henry compares Prince Henry to King Richard and himself to Henry Percy. He praises Henry Percy, Hotspur, for his success in battle against the Scots. The King claims that he is speaking of his enemies, because he fears that Prince Henry intends to join them in their rebellion.

Prince Henry promises to redeem his reputation by fighting against Henry Percy. He intends that he and Percy will trade reputations on the battlefield. When the war is over, Prince Henry will be praised for his valor and Hotspur's reputation will be ruined.

Sir Blunt enters with news that the rebels have met in Shrewsbury. King Henry decides that John of Lancaster will march first, followed by Prince Henry the next day and finally he himself. They will meet in battle at Bridgenorth in twelve days time.

Act 3, Scene 2 Analysis

When Prince Henry promises to "be more myself," it is a literal statement. Until this point, Prince Henry has chosen to be someone else. He promises to redeem his identity by fighting with Hotspur. Since Hotspur is the would-be usurper of Prince Henry's role, he has no choice but to fight with him, in order to reclaim his right. King Henry even goes so far as to imply that Prince Henry might desert him and fight with the rebels, actions which would indicate a complete reversal of roles, making Prince Henry the rebel and leaving the true heir's place for Hotspur.

Act 3, Scene 3

Act 3, Scene 3 Summary

Falstaff and Bardolph are still at the Boar's-Head Tavern in Eastcheap. Falstaff is fretting that his recent suffering has made him grow thin. He asks Bardolph to cheer his mood, and Bardolph replies that Falstaff is extremely fat. Falstaff in turn attacks Bardolph's red face, saying that it looks like a burning death's head.

The hostess enters, and Falstaff asks if she has found out who has picked his pockets. The Hostess insists that she does not keep thieves in her inn and suggests that Falstaff is trying to avoid his bill. Falstaff refuses, insisting that he has been robbed of a seal ring worth 40 marks. The Hostess comments that she has heard the prince say that the ring is only copper and not valuable.

Prince Henry and Peto enter, marching. Falstaff tells the Prince about how his pockets were picked while he lay sleeping. He claims to have lost several bonds and the ring. The prince dismisses the ring as trifle, much to the amusement of the Hostess, who begins to argue with Falstaff. Prince Henry joins the argument and eventually confesses to having picked Falstaff's pockets. Falstaff makes peace with the Hostess, and she exits.

Falstaff asks Prince Henry for news of court and of the robbery that they committed. Prince Henry replies that he has paid back the money and is now in his father's good graces. Prince Henry informs Falstaff that he will have a charge for him to undertake.

Prince Henry sends Bardolph off with a letter for Lord John of Lancaster. He directs Peto to bring the horses. Falstaff is to meet him the next day for instructions. Either the Prince or Percy (Hotspur) must be defeated.

Act 3, Scene 3 Analysis

As promised in the previous scene, Prince Henry gives up the false thief identity. No longer a thief, he admits to his crimes and has paid back the money that was stolen. Now that Prince Henry has become a true thief, he and Falstaff are allies rather than adversaries and will fight together against Hotspur.

Act 4, Scene 1

Act 4, Scene 1 Summary

Hotspur, Worcester and Douglas are in the rebel camp near Shrewsbury. Hotspur is praising Douglas and says that he holds him in high esteem, even though this truth may sound like flattery. Douglas, in return, compliments Hotspur's honor.

A messenger enters with news from Hotspur's father, Northumberland. Northumberland writes that he has been taken ill and cannot assist in their rebellion. This is bad news for the rebels, but as King Henry knows of their plans, they have no choice but to go on with the battle anyway.

Worcester is concerned that people will take Northumberland's to mean that he does not support the rebellion, and it will harm their cause. Hotspur takes the opposite side, thinking that the increased odds against them will make their cause seem the more valiant.

Sir Richard Vernon enters with news that Westmoreland and John of Lancaster are marching towards them with seven thousand men. The King himself is not far behind.

Hotspur wonders where Prince Henry is, along with his disreputable associates. Vernon describes how he saw Prince Henry in his armor, comparing his majestic appearance to angels and the sun. Hotspur silences him, saying that the praise is "worse than the sun in March."

Vernon has more bad news, Glendower cannot join them for another fourteen days, and the King's army is thirty thousand strong. Hotspur is determined to fight, even if it means his death.

Act 4, Scene 1 Analysis

In this scene, another true thief is introduced- the Earl of Douglas. As a Scotsman, he is natural rival to King Henry, however his is an honorable rivalry which Hotspur recognizes. Honor is an underlying theme in the play- specifically, honor as a false quest. As the odds against him increase, Hotspur insists that there will be greater honor to be won in battle. However, Hotspur has already been established as a false character. He has the semblance of honor, however he has also broken his vows of loyalty to King Henry, which are not honorable actions. Throughout the play, the honor Hotspur has won in battle is strongly emphasized, but since Hotspur is a false character, it means that his kind of honor is really false honor.

Act 4, Scene 2

Act 4, Scene 2 Summary

Falstaff and Bardolph are on a public road near Coventry. Falstaff sends Bardolph into the town to purchase more liquor. Alone, Falstaff confesses that his soldiers are a sad bunch of rascals and all because of Falstaff's misuse of the right to press soldiers into duty. Rather than selecting men who would be able to go to war, he found men who would buy themselves out of service, leaving him with a company of rascals and old men.

Prince Henry and Westmoreland arrive on the scene. Prince Henry comments on the beggarly condition of Falstaff's men. Falstaff banters back that they are but mortal men, and certainly good enough to be cannon fodder. As Hotspur is already in the field, the men do not stay to chatter. They exit to go to the battle.

Act 4, Scene 2 Analysis

This brief scene is another commentary on the honor of war. The ideas that are implied in the previous scene are stated openly by Falstaff. Falstaff sees his army for what it is- a sorry bunch of men, who will be used as cannon fodder. Being an honest character, Falstaff has a true understanding of the nature of battle and its ugliness that Hotspur lacks.

Act 4, Scene 3

Act 4, Scene 3 Summary

Hotspur, Worcester, Douglas and Vernon are still at the rebel camp near Shrewsbury. Hotspur wants to fight that very night, but Worcester counsels him to wait. Douglas and Vernon agree that the battle should wait until the next day, but Hotspur is still eager to begin the fight. The argument is interrupted, when the trumpet sounds a parley.

Sir Walter Blunt enters with offers from King Henry. The King has asked that the rebels name the cause of their rebellion and their grievances, and he will grant their requests and pardon them. Hotspur responds by describing how King Henry had been out of favor, but was helped to power by Northumberland, Hotspur's father. He explains how King Henry put on the appearance of bringing justice, and used the favor he gained to execute the absent King Richard's favorites and then to usurp the crown for himself. Hotspur continues his complaint, bringing up King Henry's refusal to ransom Mortimer, the insults he has endured and Northumberland's banishment.

Blunt asks if this is the reply he is to take to King Henry. Hotspur asks him to wait while he and his men consider their reply. Blunt is to return to the King and arrange for some promise of safety for Worcester, who will bring their answer early the next morning.

Act 4, Scene 3 Analysis

Act 4, Scene 3 illustrates the consequences of deception. King Henry has gained the crown through false claims- essentially stealing the rights of others. He has made promises that he failed to keep, and in so doing has lost the trust of his former supporters. It is a situation that mirrors the present rebellion and casts doubt over which side is in the right. However, in the context of the play, an honest thief is an honorable character. King Henry is a thief, but as an honest thief he has a right to ill-gotten gains.

Act 4, Scene 4

Act 4, Scene 4 Summary

At the Archbishop's palace in York, the Archbishop of York enters with Sir Michael, whom he gives letters which are to be directed to his various allies. Northumberland, Glendower and Mortimer will not be present to aid Hotspur. This being the case, the Archbishop fears that the rebels have little hope of success. King Henry is aware of the Archbishop's part in Hotspur's confederacy and should they fail, he will have to answer to King Henry, therefore it is vital to alert his allies and ward off disaster.

Act 4, Scene 4 Analysis

This short scene shows that Hotspur's allies have begun to desert him. Although Hotspur cannot recognize that his pride will cause disaster, the others are not so deceived.

Act 5, Scene 1

Act 5, Scene 1 Summary

King Henry, Prince Henry, John of Lancaster, the Earl of Westmoreland, Sir Walter Blunt and Falstaff are at the King's camp near Shrewsbury. It looks to be a tempestuous day, the weather reflecting the battle to come.

Worcester and Vernon are announced by a trumpet, and King Henry greets them bitterly as traitors. Worcester insists that he had no choice. He supported King Henry against King Richard, believing King Henry's promise that he only wished to take back his right to Lancaster. King Henry betrayed that promise by taking the crown and so Worcester opposes him.

King Henry insists that Worcester's claims are only meant to make an excuse for rebellion. Prince Henry notes that many men will lose their lives in the coming battle. He praises Hotspur for his daring, and contrasts Hotspur's valor with his own shameful past behavior. He offers to fight Hotspur alone to decide the battle. King Henry offers a pardon to Hotspur and all of his allies. Worcester and Vernon exit.

Prince Henry does not think that Hotspur will accept the offer of pardon. After the Prince and the King exit, Falstaff comments that his honor is pricking at him however, what is honor? Honor is only a word. Honor is a false thing, so Falstaff prefers to have none of it.

Act 5, Scene 1 Analysis

Having taken his place as his father's heir, Prince Henry now recognizes that the central conflict of the battle must be between Hotspur and himself. The rest of the fighting is immaterial and it is needless for other men to fight and die. However, Worcester, who is cast as the ultimate traitor to himself and his allies, a completely false thief, cannot see or accept this.

Worcester presents the archetypal example of a false thief. He is concerned for his own welfare to the detriment of others but refuses to accept that this is the case. He convinces himself that his treachery is justified and has no interest in the consequences for others. This provides the proof of his falseness and lack of true honor, and shows that King Henry and Prince Henry for all of their past mistakes, are true rulers of the kingdom and honest thieves.

Act 5, Scene 2

Act 5, Scene 2 Summary

Worcester and Vernon return to the rebel camp. Worcester insists that they hide the news of King Henry's offer of pardon. He is certain that the King would only find another way to punish them. King Henry is an accomplished dissembler.

Hotspur and Douglas enter and ask for news of the meeting. Worcester says that the King bids them battle. Douglas expresses defiance and exits. Worcester claims that he told the King their grievances, but the King expressed no mercy. Douglas returns, calling the men to arms.

Worcester tells Hotspur that Prince Henry has challenged him to combat. Hotspur asks in what manner the challenge was made, and Vernon praises Prince Henry's noble and respectful manner. Vernon thinks that Prince Henry is a great hope for the country, whose misbehavior has led to his being misunderstood. Hotspur is not impressed.

A messenger enters with letters, but Hotspur says he has no time to read them. Another messenger enters announcing that the King is coming. Hotspur says that each man should do his best, as they will never have another chance like this one. The men embrace and exit.

Act 5, Scene 2 Analysis

Worcester, the ultimate false thief, commits his final act of treachery by stealing the chance for pardon and survival from Hotspur and his allies. Although within the context of the play's thematic elements, Hotspur cannot be allowed to continue in the role of rival heir to King Henry, King Henry has offered an opportunity to transform his identity by accepting pardon and reconciling with the King. Worcester, having no honor, conceals King Henry's offer, forcing Hotspur and his allies into a losing battle.

Act 5, Scene 3

Act 5, Scene 3 Summary

On the plain between the camps, King Henry enters with his men. The alarm to battle is sounded. Douglas and Sir Walter Blunt enter. Douglas mistakes Blunt for King Henry. Douglas asks Blunt if he is the King and Blunt assents. The two fight, and Blunt is killed.

Hotspur enters and Douglas tells him that he has killed the King. Hotspur recognizes that the dead man is Blunt and not King Henry. Blunt was only a decoy placed on the field by King Henry. Douglas insists that he will kill any man dressed as the King, until he eventually finds the real King Henry. The two exit.

Falstaff enters alone. Falstaff looks at the corpse of Blunt and sees no honor in death. Falstaff's men have been massacred. The few that are left will be reduced to beggary, when the battle is over. Prince Henry enters and asks Falstaff to lend him his sword. Falstaff responds with banter, which infuriates Prince Henry. Falstaff says that his case contains "that which will sack a city," and the Prince assumes that he means a sword only to find that the case contains a bottle of sack which Prince Henry throws at Falstaff before exiting.

Alone again, Falstaff notes that if Hotspur comes into his way, that's fine, but he really doesn't care to win honor in death. He prefers to try to save his own life. If he cannot protect his life, then honor will come unlooked for.

Act 5, Scene 3 Analysis

The theme of deception and falseness is presented in two different instances within this scene. Firstly, Hotspur encounters Blunt, who is acting as a decoy for King Henry. When questioned about his identity, Blunt claims to be the king, placing him within the group, and he is killed by Douglas. Blunt's ruse marks him as a false thief, and he cannot prevail against Douglas, who is a true thief. Although fighting on the wrong side of the conflict, Douglas is a fair and open enemy, who has never dissembled his position- a true thief.

Later, Prince Henry and Falstaff banter briefly. Prince Henry asks for Falstaff's sword, only to be fooled by Falstaff's wordplay. The sword that Prince Henry requests would be the same sword that Falstaff claimed to have used against the imaginary men in Buckram- men, who turned out to include none other than the Prince himself. The sword symbolizes Falstaff's lack of honor in battle and as such, cannot now be used by Prince Henry, who has now accepted his identity as a valiant and honorable man. Instead, Falstaff sends him away with a play on words.

Falstaff re-iterates his ideas about the falseness of honor itself. If honor comes his way, he will accept it, but he has no intention of seeking it out. Prince Henry, himself,

expressed a similar opinion earlier, when he said that he didn't have the same desire to seek out excuses for valor, as Hotspur has done. This implies that the desire for honor is an indication of a false person, because the honest man admits that he would prefer survival to risking his life for no cause other than his own vain glory.

Act 5, Scene 4

Act 5, Scene 4 Summary

In another part of the field, King Henry asks Prince Henry to withdraw from the battle, since he is wounded and bleeding. Prince Henry refuses the help of John of Lancaster and the Earl of Westmoreland and the two men exit. King Henry and Prince Henry praise the valor John of Lancaster has displayed in the battle and Prince Henry exits.

Douglas enters and is surprised to see the King, having already seen one false king killed. King Henry reveals that he is the true king, and that he has been seeking Douglas on the field. The men fight, with Douglas getting the best of the King, until Prince Henry enters to defend his father. They fight, until Douglas flees. Prince Henry and King Henry are reconciled, and the King exits.

Hotspur enters and sees Prince Henry. The two exchange harsh words, Prince Henry insisting, "Two stars can keep not their motion in one sphere; Nor can England brook a double reign of Henry Percy and the Prince of Wales." The men fight.

Falstaff enters, followed almost immediately by Douglas. Falstaff and Douglas fight until Falstaff falls down as if dead, and Douglas again exits. Prince Henry wounds Hotspur, who falls down and then dies.

Prince Henry meditates briefly on the contrast between Hotspur's ambition and pride in life and his humbled state in death. Seeing Falstaff on the ground, he mistakes the old man for dead but even so cannot help but banter about the old man's girth.

After Prince Henry exits, Falstaff rises up. He has been faking death in order to avoid being killed by Douglas. However, he muses that he really isn't a counterfeit, because surely a dead man is a false representation of the living, while a live man is a perfect example of living. Suddenly realizing that Hotspur may also be shamming death, stabs the body to make certain it is dead, then lifts up Hotspur's corpse onto his back.

Prince Henry and John of Lancaster return to the scene and are shocked to find Falstaff alive. Falstaff claims to have killed Hotspur himself. Prince Henry replies that he killed Hotspur himself. Falstaff responds by saying that both he and Hotspur were merely out of breath and both rose again after Prince Henry had left the scene. He points out the place where he stabbed the body as proof. Prince Henry doesn't argue. The retreat has sounded, and the day has been won. The men return to the field to find out who has survived the fight, and who is dead.

Act 5, Scene 4 Analysis

At last, the true heir and the false heir to King Henry are brought together. However, there can only be one successor to the throne. The two men fight and Hotspur, the false thief, is defeated and dies.

Meanwhile, Falstaff and Douglas fight briefly, both escaping death. Douglas, although on the losing side of the conflict, is a true thief like Falstaff. They are both men who accept their faults and have no difficulty owning up to their identity. After Douglas escapes, Falstaff revives and seeing that Hotspur is dead, decides to "kill" him again. This action emphasizes Falstaff's role as positive character, who despite his failings, can still triumph over a fallen false thief.

Act 5, Scene 5

Act 5, Scene 5 Summary

In another part of the field, King Henry enters with Prince Henry, Lord John of Lancaster, and the Earl of Westmoreland. They bring Worcester and Vernon as their prisoners. King Henry rants against Worcester, who has repaid his offer of peace with treachery and caused the deaths of many through his falseness. Worcester claims that he did what he felt he had to, and does not fear death. King Henry sends Worcester and Vernon to be executed.

Prince Henry reveals that Douglas has been captured and asks to be allowed to dispose of him. The King agrees and Prince Henry tells John of Lancaster to go to Douglas and give him his freedom in respect for his valor.

King Henry divides his forces. John of Lancaster and Westmoreland will go to York. He and Prince Henry will go to Wales, to fight Glendower and the Earl of March. He is confident that the rebellion will be put down.

Act 5, Scene 5 Analysis

In the final scene, Shakespeare resolves the last of the false relationships. Prince Henry and King Henry are now reconciled as true father and son, now that Hotspur is dead. Worcester and Vernon, false friends to Hotspur and his allies are executed. Douglas, although an enemy, has proven to be a true and honorable enemy, and he is pardoned. The false thieves are punished, and the true thieves emerge triumphant.

The final lines of the scene parallel an earlier scene in which Hotspur and his allies planned out the division of the country. King Henry plans out how he will divide his armies in order to finish the civil war. The victors have now entirely usurped the place of the losers.

Characters

Archbishop of York (Richard Scroop, the Archbishop of York):

See Scroop

Archibald (Archibald, Earl of Douglas):

See Douglas

Attendants:

Together with lords, messengers, and officers, these are the play's extras, who have at most very brief speaking parts. They help populate the scenes, contributing when needed to the regal and martial atmosphere of the play.

Bardolph:

He is a frequenter of the Boar's Head Tavern and a companion of Falstaff and Prince Hal. He is one of the four men in II.ii who rob the travellers, only to be robbed soon afterward by the disguised Prince Hal and Poins. At Falstaff's bidding, he and Peto hack their own swords and bloody their noses to make it look as though they had been attacked by dozens of robbers. His face, which is bright red from drink and carbuncles, is the source of continual jokes from Falstaff and Hal. In II.iv.324, Bardolph tells the prince that his red face is a sign of "choler" or a hot temper. Prince Hal's punning reply that a collar or "halter" (a hangman's noose) will be Bardolph's fate is prophetic: In *Henry V* Bardolph is hanged for looting.

Blunt (Sir Walter Blunt):

He is a loyal supporter of King Henry IV but is also deeply admired by the rebel camp. The king describes Blunt as a "dear, a true industrious friend" (I.i.62). Hotspur considers him "a gallant knight" (V.iii.20) arid wishes that he were on the rebels' side rather than the king's (IV.iii.32-37). Blunt does his best to prevent bloodshed on either side. During a meeting convened to discover why Hotspur has withheld his Scottish prisoners, Blunt tries to mediate between the king's anger and Hotspur's excuses (I.iii.70-76). On the eve of battle, Blunt goes to the rebels "with gracious offers from the King" promising amnesty and reconciliation in exchange for peace (IV.iii.30,41-51). After his efforts fail, Blunt disguises himself as one of the king's doubles on the battlefield and is killed by Douglas (V.iii.1-13).

Bullingbrook (King Henry IV of England, formerly known as Bullingbrook):

See Henry

Carriers:

They deliver goods for a living (such as the gammon of bacon and the turkeys mentioned in II.i.24, 26) and are staying at the same inn as the travellers of II.ii. Although they detect Gadshill as a crook in II.i, one of them nevertheless lets slip that they will be accompanied by some wealthy gentlemen wishing to ride with a large group for safety's sake. In II.iv.506-11, one of the carriers arrives with the sheriff to bear witness against Falstaff for highway robbery. Beyond inadvertently supplying Gadshill with details useful in his robbery, the two carriers give us a closer look at the world of the play, providing us with atmosphere and color as they discuss their jobs, complain about fleas and poor service at the inn, and worry about the logistics of their trip.

Chamberlain:

He is a dishonest servant who informs Gadshill in II.i about the traveling plans of wealthy merchants and gentlemen staying at the inn where he works. Gadshill and Falstaff then use this information to rob the travellers on the road in II.ii.

Douglas (Archibald, Earl of Douglas):

Usually referred to in the play as Douglas, he is the leader of the Scottish rebels. In I.i we are told that Douglas has battled with and been defeated by Hotspur, and that Hotspur has taken Scottish prisoners but will not relinquish all of them to the king. This incident acts as a catalyst to the rebellion that is dealt with during the rest of the play: Hotspur's disobedience angers the king, and the king's subsequent refusal to ransom Mortimer from Glendower infuriates Hotspur, who then returns the prisoners to Scotland and allies himself with Douglas against the king. The "brave Archibald, / That ever-valiant and approved Scot," is similar in temperament to Hotspur: both are combative and impetuous (I.i.53-54). In IV.iii, he is as keen as Hotspur is to fight the king's forces at night, and he accuses Vernon of cowardice for recommending that they wait until morning for reinforcements. Douglas fights with and almost kills King Henry in V.iv.25-38, which gives Hal the opportunity to save his father and thus prove his loyalty. At the close of the play Douglas has been captured while retreating, and in V.v.17-31, Prince Hal shows his clemency by recommending that "the noble Scot" be set free without ransom.

Falstaff (Sir John Falstaff):

He is the dishonest but appealing "fat knight" who is Hal's friend and a regular at the Boar's Head Tavern. Given to thievery, drunkenness, and overeating, Falstaff is part of the "rude society" which King Henry accuses of corrupting his son and heir, Prince Hal (III.ii.14); he is also the central focus of most of the comedic scenes in the play and the topic of considerable literary discussion.

Falstaff has been compared to the comic characters which represented vice in the morality plays of the medieval period. (Morality plays taught moral lessons by presenting in human form vices such as gluttony and greed competing for a person's soul against virtues such as temperance and mercy, also represented in human form.) Alternatively, Falstaff has been called a second father to Hal—one who fills in the gaps in experience left by Hal's royal education at Henry IV s court and who helps to, increase the prince's familiarity with the range of people he will eventually govern. Critics have remarked that Falstaff's words and actions frequently parody the serious scenes and characters in the play. (To parody something is to imitate it closely for the purposes of comic effect or ridicule.) In II.iv.373-480, for example, Falstaff engages the prince in a "practice" question-andanswer session which mocks the genuine, serious confrontation between Hal and his father in III.ii. Elsewhere, Falstaff's assessment of his ramshackle bunch of soldiers as "the cankers of a calm world and a long peace" and as "food for [gun]powder" (IV.ii.29-30; 65-66) acts as a comical contrast to Vernon's description in the preceding scene of Hal's troops as "glittering in golden coats like images" and "gorgeous as the sun at midsummer" (IV.i.100, 102). Similarly, Falstaff's famous "catechism" on the uselessness of honor (V.i.127-41) parodies Hotspur's preoccupation throughout the play with honor and glory in battle. And in V.iv, Falstaff mocks an honorable death, first by playing dead after being challenged to combat by Douglas, and then by stabbing Hotspur's corpse and taking credit for actually killing him.

As a parodist, critics note, Falstaff serves as a social commentator, amusing and educating his audience by identifying and poking fun at society's flaws or its tendency toward extremes. Critics have also noted that Falstaff's parodies threaten to destroy the system of values according to which society is run, and that is why Prince Hal indicates in Il.iv.481 that as king, he will banish Falstaff from his company.

It has been argued that Falstaff s mastery of language and brilliant sense of humor are what make him charming in spite of his dishonesty. As proof, critics point to Falstaff's witty disquisition on honor in V.i.127-141 ("Can honor set to a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honor hath no skill in surgery then? No. What is honor? A word... "), as well as to his cleverly invented excuses at the end of the practical joke in II.iv.267-75 ("I was now a coward on instinct"). The insults traded between Falstaff and the prince are likewise engaging for their virtuosity and humor. In II.iv.240-48, Hal's string of invective against Falstaff's fatness and drunkenness ("this sanguine coward, this bed-presser, this horse-backbreaker, this huge hill of flesh□") is rapidly interrupted and bettered by Falstaff's list detailing Hal's thinness: "'Sblood, you starveling, you eelskin, you dried neat's tongue, you bull's pizzle, you stock-fish! .. . you

tailor's yard, you sheath, you bowcase, you vile standing tuck" Falstaff appears again in *Henry IV, Part Two.*

Francis:

He is an apprenticed drawer at the Boar's Head Tavern. It is his job to draw wine from the hogsheads or barrels for the tavern guests. In II.iv.36-86, Prince Hal has fun teasing Francis with the help of Poins. Critics have wondered about the purpose of this scene and the meaning of some of Hal's remarks to Francis. It has been suggested that Hal is simply speaking nonsense in order to confuse and distract the drawer as he is being summoned by Poins. Francis's perpetual response: "Anon, anon, sir" ("I'll be there right away, sir") was apparently typical of servants during the Elizabethan age and thus would be a source of amusement to Shakespeare's audience. Immediately before this episode, the prince jokes with Poins about the friendly and familiar way he was treated while drinking with a group of drawers (one of whom was Francis), thus leading critics to observe that Hal's encounter with Francis is yet another example of the prince's experience with the various social classes of England and his attempts to understand all of the people he will someday govern. It has also been suggested that just as Francis becomes confused when he is called upon by several people at once, so the prince feels overwhelmed by the calls made upon him by his father, the people, and his own desires.

After he has finished questioning Francis, Hal mocks the ambitious and warlike Hotspur, causing some critics to conclude that as the prince examines and rejects other ways of life (in this case, the two very different lives of Francis and Hotspur), he is learning to accept his own destiny.

Gadshill:

He is a thief who plans the robbery on the London road undertaken in II.ii.78-92 by himself, Falstaff, Peto, and Bardolph. On the night before the robbery, he stays at a roadside inn where he gathers useful information about wealthy travellers from a dishonest inn servant and some imprudent, overtalkative carriers.

Glendower (Owen Glendower):

He is the leader of the Welsh forces against King Henry IV. In I.i.37-46, we are told that he has captured Edmund Mortimer, who then marries Glendower's daughter. By III.i, he has allied himself with the Percys against the king. Glendower is a fierce opponent who believes in omens and practices magic. Henry's ally Westmerland calls him "wild;" Falstaff refers to him as a "devil" (I.i.40; II.iv.369). His new son-in-law Mortimer describes him as "a worthy gentleman, / Exceedingly well read, . . . / . . . valiant as a lion, / And wondrous affable, and as bountiful / As mines of India" (III.i.163-67). The fact that "wild Glendower" keeps his temper in the face of Hotspur's rudeness in III.i demonstrates the admiration which "the gallant Hotspur" (I.i.52) inspires in others.

Hotspur's impatience with Glendower's faith in signs and magic comes full circle when, in IV.i. 125-26, Vernon reports that Glendower will not fight for fourteen days because, as the archbishop of York remarks in IV.iv.16-18, he has been "overrul'd by prophecies"; in spite of this bad news, Hotspur is determined to go to battle.

Hal (Prince Henry of Wales, also known as Hal or Harry Monmouth, later King Henry V of England):

See Henry

Henry (King Henry IV of England, formerly known as Bullingbrook):

He is the king of England, the father of Hal, and the title character of the play. Henry rules as a result of the deposition and murder of his predecessor, Richard II, but seems neither secure nor contented in his role. At the beginning of the play, he describes himself as "shaken" and "wan with care" (I.i.l): his reign so far has been clouded by illness, apparent guilt over his responsibility for Richard's death, and rebellions against his rule. In I.i, he renews his intention to go on a long-promised pilgrimage to atone for his sins against Richard, but his plans are stopped by news of Glendower's incursion into England and Hotspur's defiance.

Critical assessment of King Henry's role in the play varies. Although he is the title character, much of the play revolves around his son Prince Hal as well as the actions of the rebel Hotspur. Nevertheless, it has been argued that Henry is the play's protagonist, and that his main goal is to preserve the health and stability of England.

The major obstacle to accomplishing this goal is the fact that Henry is a usurper who is plagued not only by claims against his leadership but also by his own conscience. At the start of his lecture to Hal in III.ii.4-11, the king reveals his feelings of guilt in his worried observation that his son may have been sent by God to punish him:

I know not whether God will have it so

For some displeasing service I have done,

That in his secret doom, out of my blood He'll breed revengement and a scourge for me;

But thou dost in thy passages of life

Make me believe that thou art only mark'd

For the hot vengeance, and the rod of heaven,

To punish my mistreadings.

Some critics argue that as a usurper, Henry is in an impossible position no matter how earnestly he tries to rule well. Because he overturned order and the ritual of succession when he deposed Richard, he is finding it difficult to maintain order and the ritual of succession now that he is king. The Percys—the family that helped him to the throne—have begun treating him with disrespect. Young Henry Percy or Hotspur has withheld prisoners from the king, and in I.iii.10-13, Thomas Percy, earl of Worcester, complains that his family is being mistreated and reminds Henry that his "greatness" depends upon the Percys. King Henry retorts that he is "majesty" or king, and that Worcester should remember that he is merely Henry's "servant" or subject:

Worcester, get thee gone, for I do see

Danger and disobedience in thine eye.

O, sir, your presence is too bold and peremptory,

And majesty might never yet endure

The moody frontier of a servant brow.

(I.iii.15-19)

Meanwhile the king worries that his oldest son and heir, Prince Hal, is not acting as a successor to the throne should, but is instead behaving irresponsibly, much as Richard II had been shortly before he was thrown out of power (III.ii.93-95). In his role as a father, Henry has been described as inflexible and somewhat peevish, and in II.iv.378-481, his son Hal mocks his strictness in his "practice" interview with Falstaff. In I.i.78-90, the king longs for a son like Hotspur, "who is the theme of honor's tongue," and deplores the "riot and dishonor" which "stain the brow" of his own son, and by extension, stain Henry's rule.

In an effort to define Henry's role as king, critics have compared his priorities to those of his son Hal. It has been argued that while Hal (as a result of his association with the common populace of England) stresses justice and mercy, King Henry IV□in his attempt to legitimize his rule□focuses on authority and power. An example of his commanding exercise of power occurs in I.iii. 118-22, where he angrily orders Hotspur to obey, then exits without waiting for an answer:

sirrah, henceforth

Let me not hear you speak of Mortimer.

Send me your prisoners with the speediest means,

Or you shall hear in such a kind from me

As will displease you.

King Henry's authoritativeness, however, does not prevent rebellion.

Henry (Prince Henry of Wales, also known as Prince Hal or Harry Monmouth, afterwards King Henry V of England):

He is the son and heir of King Henry IV. Much of his time is spent away from his responsibilities at court, plotting pranks and robberies in the company of "rude society" at the Boar's Head Tavern (III.ii.14). Prince Hal is described by his rival, Hotspur, as "the nimble-footed madcap Prince of Wales, /.. . that daff'd the world aside / And bid it pass" (IV.i.95-97). His father accuses him of having "inordinate and low desires" unsuitable for a future king (III.ii.12). Sir John Falstaff calls him "sweet wag" and looks forward to the day when Hal will rule England (I.ii.23).

In his soliloquy in I.ii, Hal asserts that his misconduct is strategic: he is behaving irresponsibly now so that he will seem that much more impressive and honorable when he reforms. What is more, his sudden reformation will catch his detractors off guard:

My reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault,

Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes

Than that which hath no foil to set it off.

I'll so offend, to make offense a skill,

Redeeming time when men think least I will.

(I.ii.213-17)

There has been much critical discussion regarding Prince Hal's behavior. It has been pointed out that as the son of a usurper, Hal is burdened with the task of legitimizing his family's rule and with uniting the country around that rule□two things that his father has been unable to do. How the prince undertakes this task has been a source of debate. Some critics refer to his soliloquy in I.ii as proof that Hal needs neither education nor reformation to fulfill his duties as prince, but that he is a pragmatist who is simply waiting for the right moment to shine. Others argue that the time Hal spends in "riotous" living is in fact an opportunity for him to learn how to be a more effective ruler than King Henry is. In this case, Falstaff functions as a second father to Hal, educating him in the ways of the world, while King Henry's court can only teach him politics and protocol. Further,

Hal's irreverent treatment by such shady characters as Falstaff, Bardolph, and Gadshill teaches him humility.

It has also been observed that Hal learns from Hotspur to appreciate honor. Even though he pokes fun in II.iv.101-12 at Hotspur's thirst for glory, Hal acknowledges his rival's worth. In V.i, he praises Hotspur, calling him "valiant," "daring," and "bold," commending him for his "noble deeds," and criticizing himself for having been "a truant.. . to chivalry" (V.i.90, 91, 92, 94).

Hal's apparent love of acting has also been mentioned with regard to his education. In II.ii. 102- 111, for instance, he and Poins disguise themselves as robbers in order to set upon Gadshill, Falstaff, Peto, and Bardolph and steal their loot. In II.iv.l-79, Hal enlists Poins's help in arranging a scene where the two of them confuse the drawer Francis with questions and requests. Shortly afterward, the prince suggests acting out Hotspur's enthusiasm for glory, with himself in the role of Hotspur, and Falstaff (whom Hal refers to as "that damn'd brawn" or pig) to portray Hotspur's wife (II.iv.108-12).

Finally, Hal and Falstaff rehearse a conversation between Hal and his father by acting out the interview that will occur when Hal returns to court (II.iv.373-481). As mocking and sometimes cruel as these performances are, critics observe that they nevertheless work as learning experiences for the prince□increasing his knowledge of himself or teaching him what it feels like to live or think in a certain way□and thus function as useful background for his actual role as king.

Another observation that has been made about Hal is that despite his wild living, he believes in paying debts. After the robbery and escapade at Gadshill, for example, Hal announces that the money stolen from the travellers will "be paid back again with advantage [interest]" (II.iv.547-48). Critics have remarked that toward the end of the play, Prince Hal demonstrates his loyalty to his father by saving him from Douglas (V.iv.39-43). Shortly afterward, he reveals his courage by battling with and defeating Hotspur, then shows his sense of honor by covering the dead Hotspur's face (V.iv.59-101). He displays mercy at the close of the play by declaring that the captured Douglas should be set free (V.v.27-31). He has, in other words, begun to combine the best of what he has learned from his father, from Falstaff, and from Hotspur on his way toward becoming king.

Hotspur (Henry Percy, also known as Hotspur):

See Percy

John (Prince John of Lancaster):

He is King Henry's son and Prince Hal's younger brother. His appearance in the play is brief; he initially serves as a contrast to his older brother. In Li, for example he is at court, while his brother is at the Boar's Head Tavern. In III.ii.32-33, the king complains that John has had to fill in for his reckless brother in affairs of state. John's first, few

words occur in V.iv.1-24, when he is impatient to rejoin the fight against the rebels. Both the king and Prince Hal are inspired by John's courage in this, his first battle; indeed, the prince exclaims of him: "O, this boy / Lends mettle to us all!" (V.iv.23-24). Prince John has a larger role in *Henry IV, Part Two.*

Lords

Together with attendants, messengers, and officers, these are the play's extras, who have at most very brief speaking parts. They help populate the scenes, contributing when needed to the regal and martial atmosphere of the play.

Messengers

Together with attendants, lords, and officers, these are the play's extras, who have at most very brief speaking parts. They help populate the scenes, contributing when needed to the regal and martial atmosphere of the play.

Michael (Sir Michael):

He is a member of Archbishop Richard Scroop's household. His first and only appearance in the play occurs in IV.iv, when he is asked to deliver letters to Scroop's allies. His efforts to reassure the archbishop that Hotspur's diminished army is capable of defeating Henry IV results in a list of the supporters on each side of the contention.

Mistress Quickly:

See Quickly

Mortimer (Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March):

Also known as the earl of March, he is Lady (Kate) Percy's brother and therefore Hotspur's brother- in-law. His name is introduced in I.i.38, when Westmerland announces that "the noble Mortimer" has fought against and been captured by the Welsh rebel Owen Glendower. In I.iii.83-85, we are told that Mortimer has married Glendower's daughter. While the Percys have many grievances against the king, the fate of Edmund Mortimer is a particularly virulent source of conflict between King Henry and Hotspur. When Hotspur agrees to hand over his Scottish prisoners on condition that the king will ransom his brother-in-law from the Welsh, Henry angrily refuses. He insists that "the foolish Mortimer" is a rebel who "hath willfully betray'd / The lives of those that he did lead to fight" against Glendower, and alludes to Mortimer's marriage as proof of his treachery (I.iii.80, 81-82, 84-85).

Hotspur, in contrast, furiously denies that Mortimer is a traitor and suspects instead that the king is afraid of the earl of March. Hotspur's uncle and father confirm his suspicion when they assert that Henry's deposed predecessor, King Richard II, had designated Mortimer (not Henry) as his rightful successor to the throne.

Mortimer and his father-in-law, Glendower, agree to join the Percys in their rebellion against the king. But when Glendower delays his entry into battle for two weeks, Mortimer does so as well.

Mortimer (Lady Mortimer):

She is the daughter of the Welsh leader Owen Glendower and the wife of Edmund Mortimer, who married her after he was captured in battle by her father. She appears in III.i. at her father's castle in Wales, where her husband, Glendower, Worcester, and Hotspur have provisionally divided up England for themselves. As Mortimer tells us in III.i. 190-91, he cannot speak Welsh, and Lady Mortimer cannot speak English, so Glendower must translate for them both. Accompanied by musical spirits summoned by her father, Lady Mortimer sings to her husband while Hotspur and his wife sit listening nearby. The episode provides us with further insight into the character of Hotspur, who ridicules the music and mocks the singer while teasing his wife, Kate: he is a man of practical action who does not hide his contempt for magic or genteel pastimes even at the risk of offending his hosts.

Northumberland (Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland):

See Percy

Officers

Together with attendants, lords, and messengers, these are the play's extras, who have at most very brief speaking parts. They help populate the scenes, contributing when needed to the regal and martial atmosphere of the play.

Ostler

A caretaker of horses at the inn, he is briefly heard but not seen in II.i.4. Although the carriers call for his service, he never appears, and they curse him in frustration.

Percy (Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland):

This Percy, who is also referred to as Northumberland, is Hotspur's father, and as such, Northumberland is envied by King Henry. The king admires Hotspur's courage and

deplores the "riot and dishonor" which "stain the brow" of his own son and heir, Prince Hal (I.i.85).

In Shakespeare's earlier play *Richard II,* Northumberland functions as a chief supporter of Henry IV (then known as Bullingbrook) against King Richard II, whom he holds in contempt. By contrast, his role in *Henry IV, Part One* is brief, and his attitude toward both Henry and Richard has changed. In I.iii. 148-49, he expresses regret for his part in deposing Richard□"the unhappy king /(Whose wrongs in us God pardon!)"□and he appears to consent to his brother Worcester's plot against Henry IV (I.iii.300). However, in IV.i.16, Northumberland sends word to his son that "he is grievous sick" and that neither he nor his army will be able to join Hotspur in his battle against the king. Northumberland appears again in *Henry IV, Pan Two.*

Percy (Henry Percy, also known as Hotspur):

Hotspur is the younger Henry Percy, the son of the earl of Northumberland, and a rival and contemporary of Prince Hal. With the encouragement of his uncle, the earl of Worcester, Hotspur organizes a rebel force against King Henry. He is admired by both sides for his courage and strong sense of honor, but criticized for his hotheadedness.

We first hear of "the gallant Hotspur" in I.i.50-95, after he has fought back an attack by Douglas. King Henry praises Hotspur's bravery even as he condemns "young Percy's pride" in refusing to hand over all but one of his Scottish prisoners. By I.iii, the situation has deteriorated. Henry rejects Hotspur's demand that Mortimer be ransomed from Glendower, insists that Hotspur relinquish all his prisoners, then angrily cuts off the meeting and departs. Enraged, Hotspur declares to his father:

And if the devil come and roar for [the prisoners],

I will not send them. I will after straight

And tell him so, for I will ease my heart,

Albeit I make a hazard of my head.

(I.iii. 125-28)

Although Hotspur considers himself a man of action rather than of words, he makes numerous speeches in the play which reveal his impetuosity and lack of patience. He is intolerant of men whom he considers cowardly, and he disparagingly compares them to women. His initial excuse for not relinquishing his prisoners is that he disliked the king's messenger, who had arrived on the scene of Hotspur's battle "trimly dress'd" and "perfumed like a milliner," complaining about the dead bodies on the field, talking like a "waiting-gentlewoman," and using "lady terms" to question Hotspur about his prisoners (I.iii.33, 36, 55, 46). Similarly, when he receives a letter from a hoped-for ally declining

to join the Percys' rebellion, Hotspur calls him a "cowardly hind" and scoffs, "'zounds, and were I now by this rascal, I could brain him with his lady's fan" (II.iii.15, 22-23).

In III.i Hotspur nearly offends his warlike ally Glendower by responding sarcastically to the Welshman's belief in magic and love of music; later, he complains to Mortimer that Glendower "is as tedious / As a tired horse [and] a railing wife" (III.i.157-58).

His rudeness aside, Hotspur is frequently seen as a charismatic figure, who demonstrates bravery, honesty, and affection for his wife. This last characteristic can be observed in two scenes. In II.iii, after a somewhat playful exchange in which Kate questions her husband about why he must leave so abruptly and about his love for her, Hotspur concludes more seriously "whither I go, thither shall you go too" (II.iii. 115). Later, the two tease each other as Lady Mortimer sings.

Hotspur's relationships to King Henry and to Hal are important to the play. As the king observes in III.ii.96-105, he was once himself a well-admired rebel as Hotspur is now. In the same scene, Hal acknowledges that Hotspur's widespread reputation for bravery and honor are more suitable to a prince.

Hotspur's preoccupation with honor reaches its climax in V.iv.77-86, when, upon receiving his death blow from Prince Hal, he is more distressed about surrendering his "proud titles" to the prince than he is about losing his life.

Percy (Lady Percy, also known as Kate):

She is Hotspur's wife. She first appears in II.iii when her husband is preparing to leave for Wales to meet with fellow rebels Glendower and Mortimer. Kate worries about Hotspur's restlessness and inattentiveness, asking, "For what offense have I this fortnight been / A banish'd woman from my Harry's bed?" (II.iii.38-39). In response, Hotspur teases her, claiming he doesn't love her and refusing to tell her where he is going. Her next and last appearance occurs after the meeting at Glendower's castle (III.i), where she submits once more to her husband's teasing and witnesses his impatience as the two of them listen to Lady Mortimer's singing. Kate's presence in both scenes demonstrates that Hotspur can be affectionate and playful; her presence also underlines his preoccupation with action, battle, and honor at the expense of domestic life. As Hotspur tells Kate in II.iii.91-93, "This is no world / To play with mammets and to tilt with lips. / We must have bloody noses and crack'd crowns." Lady Percy appears again, as a widow, in *Henry IV, Part Two.*

Percy (Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester):

Known as the earl of Worcester□or, simply, Worcester□he is Hotspur's uncle and Northumberland's brother. King Henry IV's supporter Westmerland describes Worcester as "malevolent to [the king] in all aspects" (I.i.97). Westmerland also asserts that Worcester motivated Hotspur to do such disrespectful things as withholding the Scottish prisoners from Henry. Indeed, it is Hotspur's uncle who, in I.iii. 187-93 and 259-76, first

suggests to his nephew an organized plan for overthrowing the king. Worcester's argument for his plot against the king is that Henry dislikes and fears being indebted to the Percy family, who placed him on the throne after helping him usurp his predecessor, Richard II. Worcester further contends that the king will find any excuse to rid himself of the Percys, and that the only way "to save our heads [is] by raising of a head [army]" (I.iii.284). Returning from his parley with Henry, Worcester chooses not to tell his nephew of the king's "liberal and kind offer" of reconciliation (V.ii.2), his reason being that while Henry might indeed forgive "a harebrained Hotspur, govern'd by a spleen" (V.ii.19), he will never genuinely pardon the two older men who "did train [Hotspur] on"namely, Worcester himself and Hotspur's father, Northumberland (V.ii.21).

While he encourages Hotspur's revenge against the king, Worcester also tries to curb his nephew's hot temper and enthusiasm when these feelings are directed at what he considers inappropriate targets. Thus after Hotspur is rude to their ally Gloucester, Worcester counsels him:

You must needs learn, lord, to amend this fault;

Though sometimes it show greatness, courage,

blood

And that's the dearest grace it renders you

Yet oftentimes it doth present harsh rage,

Defect of manners, want of government,

Pride, haughtiness, opinion, and disdain . . .

(III.i.178-83)

And when Hotspur is keen to engage the king's forces in battle at night rather that wait until morning, Worcester exclaims, "the number of the King exceedeth our. / For God's sake, cousin, stay till all come in" (IV.iii.28-29).

Finally, it has been argued that Worcester and King Henry are the play's central antagonists, with Hotspur and Hal functioning as instruments for deciding their conflict. When the two encounter each other at the meeting in I.iii, it is Worcester who blames the king for being unfair to the Percy family, and the king's angry response is to order Worcester out of the room, preferring to meet only with Northumberland and Hotspur, who are not being as "bold and peremptory" toward the king as Worcester is (I.iii. 17).

At the close of the play, Worcester is captured by the king's forces and, after condemning him for not delivering to Hotspur his offer of reconciliation, Henry IV sentences Worcester to execution.

Peto

He is one of Prince Hal's companions at the Boar's Head Tavern. Along with Gadshill, Bardolph, and Falstaff, he robs the travellers and, like them, is later hoodwinked by the prince and Poins into giving up the booty. It has been pointed out that Peto replaces Poins as Hal's gentleman-in-waiting in II.iv.526-549 and in III.iii, when Poins drops out of the play. Peto appears again in *Henry IV, Part Two.* Poins (Edward Poins, also called Ned Poins):

He is Prince Hal's gentleman-in-waiting and a willing participant in Hal's escapades. In I.ii, it is Poins who devises the practical joke which he and the prince play on Falstaff and his fellow highwaymen in II.ii. At the tavern, he agrees to help the prince tease Francis, in order□as the prince puts it□"to drive away the time till Falstaff come" (II.iv.28-29). When Falstaff does arrive, Ned joins Hal in goading the fat knight as he lies about the details of his being robbed of his loot. Poins drops out of the play near the end of II.iv; he reappears in *Henry IV, Part Two.*

Quickly (Mistress Quickly):

She is the hostess of the Boar's Head Tavern, the meeting place for Prince Hal and his drinking companions Falstaff, Peto, Poins, and Bardolph. She enters twice in II.iv, the first time to inform the prince that a messenger from his father has come to speak with him, and the second time to warn him that the sheriff has come to search for Falstaff. Both the sheriff and the king's man□who has been sent to call Hal back to the king's court□function as insistent reminders of the respectable outside world to which the prince must inevitably return. Mistress Quickly's longest speeches occur in Ill.iii, after Falstaff has complained that his pockets were picked in her tavern. (In fact, it was the prince who emptied his pockets as he slept behind the arras in II.iv.) Her response to Falstaff's accusation is one of outrage: "I know you, Sir John," she tells him, "you owe me money, Sir John, arid now you pick a quarrel to beguile me of it" (III.iii.66-67). As her angry excitement increases, she becomes the butt of Falstaff's jokes.

Scroop (Richard Scroop, the Archbishop of York):

He is the archbishop of York and a supporter of the Percy family. In IV.iv, he worries that without Northumberland and Glendower, Hotspur will not be able to defeat the king, so Scroop musters forces and allies in preparation against the day when Henry will march north to York to fight him. At the close of the play (V.v.35-38), Henry does indeed send an army north to deal with him. The archbishop appears again as the king's enemy (and with a larger role) in *Henry IV, Part Two.*

Sheriff:

He comes to the Boar's Head Tavern in II.iv to arrest Falstaff for the robbery at Gadshill. Prince Hal sends the sheriff away with a false alibi for Falstaff. When the sheriff bids the prince "good night," Hal points out that it is in fact morning: he and his friends have been up all night (II.iv.523-25). This incident makes clear how close the "madcap" world of drinking and practical jokes is to the grim realities of life, for the highway robbery committed by Falstaff is, as he himself points out, punishable by hanging.

Travellers:

They are robbed by Gadshill, Falstaff, Bardolph, and Peto on the London road near a hill known as Gadshill which was infamous as a site for robberies. They probably include one or both of the carriers of II.i, as well as the money-ladened franklin and auditor referred to by the chamberlain in II.i.53-60.

Vernon (Sir Richard Vernon):

He is an ally of the Percys. He arrives at Hotspur's camp in IV.i.86 to report on the advancing armies of the king and to convey the bad news that Owen Glendower's army will be delayed for two weeks. In IV.iii he joins with Worcester as the voice of moderation, counseling Hotspur and Douglas against their sudden urgency to battle the king's forces at night. When Worcester goes to parley with the king, Vernon accompanies him and later resignedly consents to Worcester's decision not to tell Hotspur about the king's offer of clemency (V.ii.26-27).

Vernon's admiration for the reformed Prince Hal annoys Hotspur. His description of Hal and his advancing troops as "Glittering in golden coats like images, / As full of spirit as the month of May, / And gorgeous as the sun at midsummer," provokes Hotspur to retort, "No more, no more! worse than the sun in March, / This praise does nourish agues" (IV.i.100-03; 111-12). Likewise in V.ii, Vernon is so full of praise for Hal's gentlemanly offer of single combat in lieu of war that Hotspur sneers, "Cousin, I think thou art enamored / On [Prince Hal's] follies" (V.ii.69-70).

At the close of the play Vernon is captured by the king's forces and sentenced to death (V.v.14).

Vintner:

He works at the Boar's Head Tavern and he is master to the indentured drawer, Francis. He adds to Francis' confusion in II.i-v.80-81 by scolding him for his slowness, but the main reason for his appearance is to inform Prince Hal that Falstaff has arrived, thus preparing the way for the comical episode where Falstaff exaggerates the details of his attack.

Westmerland (Earl of Westmerland):

He is one of King Henry's advisors. His function in the play is primarily an informational and supportive one. Most of his lines occur in Li, where he recounts the battle between Glendower and Mortimer, and reports what he has so far heard about the fighting between Hotspur and Douglas. In IV.ii, he and Prince Hal cast doubtful eyes on Falstaff's "beggarly" bunch of soldiers; in V.iv, he tries, at the king's request, to lead the wounded prince away from battle. He also appears in *Henry IV, Part Two.*

Worcester (Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester):

See Percy

Character Studies

King Henry IV

Henry appears in the first scene of the play discussing his decision not to visit the Holy Land due to the civil unrest in his kingdom. (He had made the decision to go on the journey at the end of *Richard II* when he vowed to atone for the guilt he felt when Richard was murdered by Sir Pierce of Exton. Sir Pierce, an associate of Henry, then Bolingbroke, acted upon Henry's comment that the death of Richard would ease his fears.) Henry refuses to give in to Hotspur's demand that Edmund Mortimer be ransomed. Rather, he presents his own demand that Hotspur's Scottish prisoners be turned over to him. Hotspur refuses.

Henry then begins to prepare for war with the Percys, who have shown themselves to be rebels against the crown. This preparation includes Henry's successful attempt to reclaim his son, Hal, from the negative influence of Sir John Falstaff. After Hal promises his father that he will redeem his reputation through battle with Hotspur, Henry awards him command of a division of die royal army. During the battle of Shrewsbury, Hal saves his father's life. After the battle, father and son depart in search of Glendower and Mortimer.

Few critics acknowledge that Henry has more than a supporting role in the play, with many critics claiming that Hal is the protagonist, despite the play's title, Others have argued for Henry's prominence, showing how he influences all of the major events within the play.

Most critics also agree that Henry's character is somewhat mysterious, that he leaves much unsaid or only hinted at. Some say that Shakespeare's indirect characterization of Henry allows the reader to understand the King through what others say about him, and through what Henry leaves unsaid. Also, most critics seem to agree that despite this indirect characterization, it is plain to see that Henry is a Machiavel, that he uses any means to achieve his political goals.

Hal

Hal appears in the first act of the play, plotting with Falstaff and company to rob a group of travelers. Hal decides to playa practical joke on Falstaff, and with Ned Poins, robs Falstaff of the loot stolen from the travelers. Back at the Boar's Head Tavern, he reveals the practical joke to Falstaff. He is soon called away to court where he is confronted by his father. Henry chastises his son for his crude behavior. Hal asks for forgiveness, but the king continues with his lecture, in which he praises Hotspur's ambition and valor. At this, Hal promises to change his ways, to put down Hotspur, and, in making such vows, wins his father's favor. Hal proceeds to lead his troops in the battle of Shrewsbury, where he saves his father's life and kills Hotspur.

Hal's motivation to behave the way he does-first irresponsibly participating in illegal activities and tarnishing his reputation as a nobleman and prince and later making a radical transformation, so impressive that Henry allows him to command troops in warfare-is a subject of much debate. Many critics argue that Hal's motives are Machiavellian, that his political ambitions are such that he can coldly use Falstaff to make his transformation from careless youth to responsible prince seem dramatic, deeply impressive, and well-timed. Other critics take a similar approach but argue that Hal's manipulation of Falstaff is for the purpose of gaining knowledge about the people he will one day rule. Still other critics believe that Hal actually learns a great deal from Falstaff and that the Prince's transformation is not staged but quite sincere. Finally, some believe that Hal has to deal with two conflicting natures within himself-the carefree youth and the ambitious prince, His ambition is strong and he understands his responsibilities as heir, and so suppresses his easy-going, laid back nature in order to assume those responsibilities.

Falstaff

Falstaff, often called a tempter or a corrupting force, is first seen living up to these accusations. In the first act of the play, he cajoles Hal into joining him in a robbery, But Falstaff is duped by Hal and Ned Poins, who attack Falstaff after lie has robbed the travelers. Back at the tavern, Falstaff tells everyone that he was attacked by a group of men (in the course of his story-telling, Falstaff changes the number of men in this group repeatedly, finally agreeing that there were eleven men involved), and that he fought them all. Hal finally lets Falstaff in on the joke. Later, Falstaff and Hal jokingly portray Hal and his father discussing Hal's association with Falstaff, with Hal playing the part of Henry and Falstaff playing the part of Hal. In this exchange, Hal admits that he would banish Falstaff from his company, Although Hal is acting the part of his father, Falstaff seems to understand that there is some truth in Hal's words, that Hal indeed would leave his company.

When the action moves to the battle of Shrewsbury, where Falstaff is in command of a troop of foot soldiers, Falstaff attempts to joke with the Prince. Hal asks Falstaff to lend him his sword, Falstaff tells the Prince that he has a pistol in his holster that Hal is welcome to use, but when Hal reaches for the pistol, he finds a bottle of sack (a type of wine) in the holster instead, The Prince, caught up in the seriousness of the battle, takes the bottle and throws it at Falstaff. Later, Douglas appears and attacks Falstaff, who falls down and pretends to be dead. He lies there while Hal, nearby, kills Hotspur. After Hal leaves the scene, Falstaff stabs the dead Hotspur. Hal returns with his brother and is surprised to see Falstaff alive. Falstaff then takes credit for killing Hotspur, while Hal protests little to the lie. Falstaff exits the scene carrying Hotspur's body and looking forward to the award he expects to receive.

Falstaff's primary motivation throughout the play, some would argue, is his cowardice. These Critics cite Falstaff's hiding when the Sheriff is looking for him, his running away from his attackers after the Gadshill robbery and then lying about what really happened, his playing dead at the battle, and his stabbing of the dead Hotspur then claiming that

he had killed him, as examples of Falstaff's cowardice. Other critics claim that Falstaff only appears to be a coward. They argue that he is actually a courageous figure.

Falstaff is also analyzed in terms of his relationship with Hal and his commentary on Hotspur's character, especially Hotspur's honor. Some critics have observed that Falstaff's influence over Hal diminishes gradually throughout the play and that by the play's end, even Falstaff's role as a comic figure has been severely diminished.

Hotspur

Hotspur first appears in the playas a hot-headed soldier, boldly demanding that the King ransom Edmund Mortimer in exchange for Hotspur's release of the Scottish prisoners to the crown. When Henry refuses, Hotspur returns home with his uncle and father and begins to plot a rebellion against the "vile politician" (Henry). Despite the tension among the rebel forces, especially between Hotspur and Glendower, they agree on a plan of attack and begin to plan the division of the kingdom. Later, the rebels listen to Lady Mortimer sing. During this performance, Hotspur and his wife playfully engage in a verbal sparring match. Shortly before the battle, Hotspur learns that his father and Glendower have claimed to be ill and are unable to join the rebels, but Hotspur decides to fight the royal army anyway. During the battle, Hotspur is killed by the Prince.

Many critics admire Hotspur's sense of honor, and some argue that his obsession with it is foolish and deadly. Hotspur is also charged with being childishly unable to control his passions, with being a central force in the disorder in the world of *Henry IV; Part One,* and with failing to mature or change during the course of the play. Despite these criticisms, Hotspur's passionate nature, his impulsiveness, and his youthful need for action are the qualities that attract audiences and critics alike to him.

Conclusion

Increasingly, criticism on *Henry IV; Part One* has shifted from an emphasis on character studies and the historical sources from which Shakespeare drew to define his characters and plot to an emphasis on the language and structure of the play. The debate over the exact relationship between the two parts of *Henry IV* has intensified during the twentieth century as well, although an understanding of the conjectures on this topic is not necessary to understand and enjoy either play. *Henry IV, Part One* is considered to be one of the more controversial and popular of Shakespeare's histories, partly due to the political and moral implications as well as to the fascinating nature of the characters struggling for power in the play. It is enjoyed by many due to the comic relie provided by Falstaff. Additionally, many audiences and readers can relate to the situation Hal and his father find themselves in, in which an exasperated parent disapproves of a child's behavior and friends and the child struggles to find a balance between winning parental approval and finding his or her own identity.

(See also *Shakespearean Criticism* , Vols. 1 and 14)

Themes

Language

The study of the language of *Henry IV, Part One* has focussed primarily on the use of prose and verse. Critics have examined how the use of prose and verse helps differentiate between the two worlds of the play. In the world of the tavern, Falstaff's world, prose is spoken, and in the world of the court, also identified as the historical world, verse is spoken. Hal, at ease in both worlds, uses the appropriate language when in the tavern or at court. Falstaff, in complete opposition to the courtly world, speaks only in prose. It has been noted that Hotspur speaks the best verse in the play. His speeches, like Hotspur himself, are straightforward and hard.

The use of oaths, or promises, has also been examined, as has the frequent manipulation of language in the play, Oaths, which are contradicted repeatedly by many characters including Falstaff, can be used to evaluate character as they indicate the possible moral superiority of characters who remain true to their word. Hal learns how to manipulate language and some critics have pointed out that his skill is a significant part of Hal's education. He learns how to speak like Hotspur when necessary, to speak like a commoner, to speak like a king, and to speak like himself.

Honor

In *Henry IV, Part One* Hal and Hotspur represent two distinct versions of honor. Hotspur's honor is achieved through warfare, and is marked by chivalrous action. It has been argued that Hotspur's aggressive pursuit of honor shows his disregard for human life. Some critics have maintained that this view of honor, prevalent throughout the play and not just in Hotspur's character, runs deeper than warfare and chivalry; that in fact, it emphasizes family loyalty as well as patriotism.

Many commentators have noted that Hotspur's conception of honor is an outdated one and the Hal's view is more in line with what Elizabethans would have been familiar with and approving of. Scholars cite two Elizabethan sources *(The Courtier* and *The Governour)* as containing references to the type of honor represented by Hal, which is sometimes labeled "courtesy." Hal's honor is demonstrated, some critics maintain, by his loyalty to his father, to his country, and to his fellowman. Some commentators have noted that Hal's sense of honor is more humane than Hotspur's in that Hal does not seek warfare, but fights when necessary against rebellion in order to preserve the nation's unity.

In examinations of the theme of honor in *Henry IV, Part One,* some interest has been paid to Falstaff. Scholars studying the subject have maintained that Falstaff serves as a commentator on the futility of honor, and that this is especially true during the battle scene in the last act of the play. Falstaff seems to recognize the human cost of honor, at

least of honor as Hotspur views it. Other critics argue that Falstaff represents a complete rejection of honor.

Fathers and Sons

The father-son relationship is played out in three different ways in *Henry IV, Part One.* It can be seen in the relationship between Henry and Hal, between Henry and Hotspur, and between Falstaff and Hal. Falstaff serves as a father-figure to Hal in that he teaches Hal about the world of commoners, the people Hal will one day rule; Falstaff also teaches Hal some of the useful "skills" he has learned in this world, including drinking and high-way robbery. Critics have argued that Hal rejects Falstaff's teachings, just as he rejects those of his own father. Others maintain that Henry's instruction of Hal is crucial to the Prince's success as a ruler. One of the most significant lessons that Henry teaches Hal, some commentators have pointed out, is that kingship is not inherited; it must be earned.

In the process of instructing Hal in his responsibilities as heir, Henry expresses his impression that Hotspur would be a more deserving heir than Hal. At one point, Henry even states his wish that Hotspur were his son instead of Hal. Henry feels as though he has more in common with Hotspur than Hal in that he sees himself and Hotspur as clear-thinking, passionate leaders, Henry also aligns himself with Hotspur because he also led a rebellion against the King,

It should also be noted that Hal's journey through Falstaff's world and back to the world of is father has been compared to that of the Biblical Prodigal Son, who returns home and wins his father's favor after a period of wanton living.

Time

There are numerous references to time in *Henry IV, Part One.* The one most frequently studied appears at the end of the second scene in Act I when Hal says that he will "redeem time," Many editors of the text of the play have noted that by this Hal means he will attempt to make up for the time he has spent unwisely or carelessly. Other critics argue that Hal means that he plans to begin spending his time well, that he will waste no more of it. References in Elizabethan religious literature seem to support the belief during that period that misspent time cannot be made up for.

In addition to analyzing references to time made by the main characters, critics have discussed the views on the nature of time held by these characters. These critics demonstrate Henry's fear of and frequent misreading of time. They point out that Hal seems to have a firm understanding of the importance of good timing, that Hotspur is driven to action and uses up time, and that Falstaff, to whom it seems that time is completely irrelevant, fails to use time well, first by avoiding having to deal with its consequences, then by trying to make up lost time.

Modern Connections

Much of *Henry IV, Part One* has to do with the king's power struggle against the Percys, a noble family who once supported him but who now accuses him of arrogance and ingratitude. Yet that aspect of the play which is perhaps most interesting to modern audiences is the conflict that occurs between a father (King Henry) and his oldest son (Prince Hal).

Henry IV repeatedly expresses his disappointment with his first-born son, who spends his time in "rude society," frequenting taverns and brothels when he should be at court or on the battlefield preparing himself to succeed his father as king (III.ii. 14). So dissatisfied is the king with Hal that in I.i.86-90 he openly wishes it might somehow turn out that Hotspur and Hal had been switched at birth, and that the brave and clean-living Hotspur were in fact his son and heir.

It is true that the king needs a reliable successor to help legitimize his own claim to the throne (Henry IV usurped King Richard II), but his impatience with his son appears to be personal as well as political. On the eve of his battle with the Percys, Henry delivers a stern lecture to Hal which—although it occurs between a king and a prince and thus concerns affairs of state—is similar in tone to one that might be given today by a father to a rebellious teenager, for the advice is mixed with anger and hurt feelings (III.ii.4-161). Henry begins his lecture by wondering whether God had sent him a bad child as punishment for his own misdeeds. Next, he complains that Hal does not measure up to his ancestors or even to his younger brother, John. He warns his son that everyone believes he's headed for disaster. He advises Hal to stop cheapening his royal worth by consorting with lowlifes and behaving as though he were a commoner. While his final, grim warning is purely political (mend your ways or your rival Hotspur will someday usurp you as I replaced King Richard), his closing comment in which he suggests that his son is capable of committing treason against his own father is bitterly mixed with hurt feelings:

Why, Harry, do I tell thee of my foes,

Which art my nearest and dearest enemy?

Thou that art like enough, through vassal fear,

Base inclination, and, the start of spleen,

To fight against me under Percy's pay .. .

(III.ii. 122-26)

Two remarks in particular show the extent to which Henry's emotions as a parent are involved. In one instance he angrily accuses Hal of being his "nearest and dearest enemy," and one quite possibly capable of joining the rebels' cause against his own

father (III.ii. 123-26). In another instance, he reproaches Hal for spending too much time away from court and, close to tears, he observes that:

Not an eye

But is a-weary of thy common sight,

Save mine, which hath desir'd to see thee more,

Which now doth that I would not have it do,

Make blind itself with foolish tenderness.

(III.ii.87-91)

Hal's response to this lecture from his father is to admit his "intemperance" or dissolute behavior, to apologize for the "wounds" it has caused to King Henry's feelings, and to swear that he will prove himself to be more honorable than his rival, Hotspur (III.ii. 129-59).

Another aspect of *Henry IV, Part One* which appeals to modern audiences is the natural, conversational tone of many of its scenes. Critics have called this play a milestone in Shakespeare's development as a dramatist, noting his skillfulness in bringing together in the same play the formal, weighty concerns of the monarchy and the comic, frequently raunchy goings-on of tavern and street life, using Hal as the link between these two worlds. The resulting connection means that the serious and comic scenes rub off on each other, and we get a more varied, realistic portrayal of life□one that today's audiences can still appreciate. This realism affects the play's language. While modern audiences frequently think of Shakespeare's words as alien and incomprehensible, some of the conversations in *Henry IV, Part One* reveal similarities to the ways in which our own conversations work today. The verbal exchanges which most often come to mind are those which occur at the Boar's Head Tavern as Hal and Falstaff trade good-natured insults, but there are also moments in the play's more serious scenes where the conversations sound□ in tone if not in content□as though they could occur today.

One such conversation occurs in I.iii. 130-302 between Hotspur, his father (the earl of Northumberland), and his uncle (the earl of Worcester). Here, Hotspur is reacting to the king's absolute refusal to ransom his brother-in-law, Edmund Mortimer. So enraged is Hotspur with the king that he can hardly contain himself: his words rush out as he imagines all sorts of insults that he will use against Henry IV. In response, for example, to the king's injunction against speaking Mortimer's name in his presence, Hotspur decides that he will teach a bird "to speak / Nothing but 'Mortimer,' and give it [to Henry IV] / To keep his anger still in motion" (I.iii.224-26). He is so completely beside himself that he ignores or misinterprets the comments of his listeners, provoking his uncle at last to exclaim, "Farewell, kinsman! I'll talk to you / When you are better temper'd to attend" (I.iii.234-35).

Even after Worcester's rebuke, Hotspur needs more time to cool off before he can hear what his father and his uncle have to say. He is so enraged that his memory is affected, and he interrupts himself and swears in frustration as he tries to remember the name of a place (Berkeley castle), as well as of a person (the duke of York), until his father finally remembers for him:

Hotspur: In Richard's time□what do you call the place?□

A plague upon it, it is in Gloucestershire□

'Twas where the madcap duke his uncle kept□

His uncle York□where first I bow'd my knee

Unto this king of smiles, this Bullingbrook□

'Sblood!

When you and he came back from Ravenspurgh□

Northumberland:At Berkeley castle.

Hotspur.You say true.

(I.iii.242-50)

This sort of sputtering, head-on language is not unusual today from people who are very angry, and Shakespeare accomplishes this natural reaction even while writing in verse, as he has done in the above passage.

Overviews

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3
- Critical Essay #4
- Critical Essay #5
- Critical Essay #6
- Critical Essay #7
- Critical Essay #8
- Critical Essay #9
- Critical Essay #10
- Critical Essay #11
- Critical Essay #12
- Critical Essay #13
- Critical Essay #14
- Critical Essay #15
- Critical Essay #16
- Critical Essay #17
- Critical Essay #18

Critical Essay #1

Source: In an introduction to *The History of Henry IV, Part One,* by William Shakespeare, edited by Maynard Mack, New American Library, 1965, pp. xxiii-xxxvi.

[Mack provides basic information about the play, discussing the dates it was written, performed, and published. In identifying the historical sources Shakespeare used to write Henry IV, Part One, *Mack points out some of the historical facts that Shakespeare alters. The critic explains why* topics covered in the play such as the succession of English *monarchs, were of interest to Elizabethan audiences.]*

The *First Part of Henry IV* was published in 1598; it was probably written and acted in 1596-97. There are some topical allusions in the play to these years, notably the Second Carrier's reference to the high cost of oats that killed Robin Ostler (II.i.12). Topical in a more important sense, during the whole 0 the 1590's, was the play's general subject matter. Though contemporary concern about succession to the throne need not (though it may) have influenced Shakespeare's choice of materials for his English histories, it inevitably gave them an extra dimension. Elizabeth was now in her sixties, and there was no assured heir, only a multiplicity of candidates, including her sometimes favorite, the Earl of Essex. Many recalled anxiously the chaos in times past when the center of power in the monarchical system had ceased to be sharply defined and clearly visible. This had occurred to an extent after Henry VIII's death, and earlier after Henry V's, and still earlier after the murder of Richard II.

If Shakespeare was at all influenced by these anxieties, his rendering of them is on the whole buoyant and optimistic in his second English tetralogy and especially so in 1 *Henry IV.* True, the England seen in this play and its immediate successor is far from reassuring, It has even been described as . . . an England, on the one side, of bawdy house and thieves'-kitchen, of waylaid merchants, badgered and bewildered Justices, and a peasantry wretched, betrayed, and recruited for the wars, an England, on the other side, of the chivalrous wolf pack of Hotspur and Douglas, and of state sponsored treachery in the person of Prince John the whole presided over by a sick King, hagridden by conscience, dreaming of a Crusade to the Holy Land as M. Remorse [i.e., Falstaff] thinks of slimming and repentance [Danby, J.F., *Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature: A Study of King Lear,* 1949].

But this is only half the picture. Beside it, for the first Henry IV pla y we must place the warmth, wit, and high spirits of the tavern scenes, the impetuous charm of Hotspur, the amusing domesticities of Kate and Glendower's daughter, the touching loyalty of Francis, the affections that (along with sponging) bind Falstaff to Hal, and Hal's own magnanimity and self command. For both the first and second plays, we must weigh heavily into the account the character of the story told. This, the greatest of monarchical success stories in English popular history, traces the evolution of an engaging scapegrace [rascal] into one of the most admired of English kings. Chicanery [trickery] and appetite in the first play, apathy and corruption in the second, form an effective theatrical background against which the oncoming sun-bright majesty of the future

Henry V may shine more brightly-as we are assured precisely that it will do on our first meeting with him (I.ii).

When Shakespeare turned to this subject in 1596-97, he found in his historical sources, mainly Holinshed's *Chronicles,* two dominant motifs. One was the moral and theological interpretation of the troubles attending Henry IV *'s* reign in consequence of his usurpa tion. . . .

The other was the legend of the madcap youth of Henry's son and heir-a legend already exploited in an anonymous play of which we have today only a debased and possibly abbreviated text: *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth.* The *Famous Victories* contributes to 1 *Henry IV* the germ of the robbery incident (though the Prince's involvement in a thieving episode is found in the chronicles as well); the germ of the tavern high jinks and parodying of authority; the germ of the expectation of Hal's reign as a golden age of rascals; and the germ of the reconciliation scene between the Prince and his father. The extent to which these hints are fleshed out and transfigured by Shakespeare's imagination may be seen in the character of Mistress Quickly. Her entire original in the *Famous Victories* is a sentence spoken by the Prince, favoring a rendezvous at "the old tavern in Eastcheap" because "there is a pretty wench that can talk well."

From the *Famous Victories* come also the names Gad's Hill (for the arranger of the robbery), Ned (our Ned Poins), and Jockey Oldcastle. The last was Shakespeare's name for Falstaff when the play was first performed, as references throughout die early seventeenth century show; Hal's addressing him as "my old lad of the castle" in the playas we have it (I.ii.4344) is a survival from this. By the time the play was printed, the name had been altered to Falstaff for reasons that can now only be guessed at. Possibly there had been a protest by Oldcastle's descendants, one of whom was Lord Chamberlain during part of 1596-97. How the historical Oldcastle (d.1417), a man of character who was made High Sheriff of Herefordshire and eventually Lord Cobham, came to be metamorphosed into the roisterer of the *Famous Victories* is also an unsolved mystery, though no more mysterious than the dramatic imagination that exalted this dull stage roisterer, lacking eloquence, wit, mendacity, thirst, and fat, into the Falstaff we know.

On Holinshed and minor sources like Samuel Daniel's epic *The First Four Books of the Civil Wars between the Two Houses of Lancaster and York* [1595], Shakespeare based his treatment of the Percy rebellion, recasting the materials to give them an inner coherence, The Hotspur of histOry, for example, was twenty-three years older than Hal and two years older than the King himself, who at the date of the battle of Shrewsbury was only thirty-seven, his eldest son being then sixteen, and Prince John thirteen. Shakespeare followed the lead of Daniel and made Hotspur a youth, in order to establish dramatic rivalry between him and Hal. He then aged Henry rapidly so that by the time of the battle die King can speak of crushing his "old limbs in ungentle steel" and be the more appropriately rescued (this episode is also derived from Daniel) by his vigorous heir. For the same dramatic purpose, he assigned to Hal the triumph over Hotspur-though the inspiration for this may have come from misreading an ambiguous

sentence in Holinshed. The reconciliation of Prince and King, touched on in the chronicles and dramatized briefly in the *Famous Victories* as occurring in Henry's latter years, he moved forward to a position before Shrewsbury, in order to enhance the human drama of father and son and further sharpen our anticipation of Hal's meeting with Hotspur. Hotspur's blunt uncourtly humor, the conception of Glendower as scholar and poet fired by a Celtic imagination, the entertaining clash of temperament and mood that this makes possible at Glendower's house, not only between Welshman and Englishman, but between romantic lovers and seasoned man and wife-all this again is Shakespeare's invention. His transformation of Holinshed, like his transformation of the *Famous Victories,* may best be indicated by a specific example. All of Hotspur's deliciously impetuous speech about the popinjay lord who came to Holmedon to demand his prisoners, not to mention the wonderfully ebullient scene In which it occurs, has behind it in Holinshed only seventeen words: "the King demanded of the Earl and hIS son such Scottish prisoners as were taken at Homeldon. . . ."

Hal's triumphant journey from tippling in taverns to glory on tlie fiel of battle derives from one other "source," more influential than any yet mentioned here. This is the *psychomachia* of the morality plays-that is, the struggle of virtues and vices for possession of a man's soul, a theme acted again and again in the plays of the early sixteenth century, which the drama of Marlowe and Shakespeare superseded. In these plays, youthful virtue is beset by temptations and misleaders but customarily sees the true light at last and is saved. In the same general manner, Prince Hal "has to choose, Morality-fashion, between Sloth or Vanity, to which he is drawn by his bad companions, and Chivalry, to which he is drawn by his father and brothers. And he chooses Chivalry" [Tillyard, E. M. W. *Shakespeare's History Plays,* 1944].

Critical Essay #2

Source: "The Histories," in *The Friendly Shakespeare: A Thoroughly Painless Guide to the Best of the Bard,* Viking, 1993, pp. 156-235.

[Epstein offers a definition of the history play, comments on the themes typically covered in history Plays, and offers, in historical order, an account of the events that take place in Shakespeare's histories.]

The terms "history" and "chronicle" plays refer to the two tetralogies, or the eight plays covering the reigns of English monarchs from that of Richard IT to that of Richard III, roughly from the late 1390s through the establishment of the Tudor dynasty in 1485. The cycle begins with the abdication of Richard II and ends with the death of Richard III. Shakespeare also wrote two other history plays that don't fall within this time span, *King John* and *Henry VIII,* but they won't immediately concern us, since *John* isn't all that interesting and *Henry VIII* was written with a collaborator. Shakespeare probably invented this genre, and there is nothing like it today, although the old historical movie epics come close. The plays are a wonderful mix of battlefield heroics, familial relationships, feisty characters, power politics, and covert scheming.

Shakespeare's histories have been compared with "Dallas" and "Dynasty," but they also are a Tudor version of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous." Like these television shows, the history plays are about royalty and other moneyed people in high places, and their struggle for power. The Wars of the Roses, between the Houses of Lancaster and York, are nothing more than an elaborate family feud over the crown. By substituting a major corporation for England, the plot of, say, *Richard III* could easily be a miniseries about two warring scions fighting for corporate control. Thematically, however, the history plays perhaps most closely resemble the movie *The Godfather;* both are concerned with the father-son relationship, family honor, and the acquisition of power. More important, they both examine the question of dynastic succession-a particularly weighty issue for the Elizabethans, who had an aging virgin queen on the throne and no heir in sight.

Although the history plays can be-and often are enjoyed as separate dramas, they are more fully understood when seen as a whole, since each play forms part of an ongoing saga. In each tetralogy, charac ters appear, rise to power, and are killed, only to be replaced by their descendants, who in turn emerge, rise to power, and are killed.

Outline of Events

Here is a chronology of the history plays-not in the order Shakespeare wrote them, but according to the events they describe:

Richard II: Richard II renounces his throne and is later murdered, an act that divides the succession into two dynastic strains, Lancaster and York, primary contenders for the crown in the Wars of the Roses. Henry IV, formerly called Bolingbroke, is crowned.

Henry IV, Part 1: Henry's old supporters, the Percys, raise forces against him. Relations between Henry and his heir, Hal, are strained; Hal comes of age when he valiantly fights in his father's cause.

Henry IV, Part 2: Civil disruptions continue as Henry struggles to maintain his throne; he dies and is succeeded by his son, Hal, who becomes Henry V.

Henry V: Henry V conquers France and woos the French princess Katherine. The first tetralogy concludes with civil peace, triumph, and a royal marriage.

Henry VI, Part 1: Henry V dies while Henry VI is still an infant; uncles vie for power; civil war is imminent; France is lost.

Henry VI, Part 2: Henry VI grows up to become a weak and ineffectual ruler; the Wars of the Roses begin. (Henry is a Lancastrian.)

Henry VI, Part 3: Henry is defeated; the House of

York triumphs. Edward III, brother of Richard of

Gloucester (soon Richard III), is crowned.

Richard III: Edward III dies; Richard, fourth in line for the throne, removes all obstacles and is crowned. At the Battle of Bosworth, he is slain by Henry Richmond, later Henry VII, the first Tudor king and Elizabeth's grandfather.

There is supposedly a moment in a grade B historical epic when a character yells, "Come on, men! Let's go fight the Hundred Years' War!" This ironic, retrospective view of history must have been similar to what the Elizabethans felt as they watched their own past being enacted on stage. The Wars of the Roses were still vivid in the minds of Shakespeare's audience; they knew the outcome of the plot and the fates of all the major characters. Lancaster and York were household names, with all the familiarity and appeal of the name Kennedy today. The members of the audience could smile at the irony of Richard III's boast of power, since they knew that in Act V he would be defeated at the hands of Henry Richmond. This double perspective allowed them to observe the past while knowing its outcome-both in history and on stage. Thus the characters' words were given an extra level of meaning that is lost to us today.

The Elizabethans loved watching their past come alive, and the histories were among Shakespeare's most popular plays. The *Henry VI* trilogy was a box-office smash that turned an unremarkable actor named William Shakespeare into the most successful playwright of the day.

Language

The study of the language of *Henry IV; Part One* has included an examination of the puns used in the play as well as analyses of unfamiliar words and phrases. Criticism has largely focused on the use of prose and verse within the play, Milton Crane, Brian

Vickers, and others have studied this issue. Crane shows how the use of prose and verse by the main characters in the play differentiates between the worlds of the court and the tavern and helps flesh out each character's role within the play. Vickers maintains that Falstaff's "very existence depends on prose" but that Hal easily uses prose and verse. Other critics, including Ronald R. MacDonald have examined the frequency of the use of oaths in the play and how the use of oaths can be used to evaluate character. MacDonald also offers an analysis of the means by which language is manipulated by various characters and how the exploitation of language is an integral part of Hal's education.

Critical Essay #3

Source: "Shakespeare: The Comedies," in *Shake. speare's Prose,* The University of Chicago Press, 1951, pp, 66-127.

[Crane examines the use of prose and verse in the play and shows how the two modes of speech differentiate between the two worlds of the play-the world of the court and Falstaff's world. Crane demonstrates how Falstaff mimics the play's serious action through his use of prose. Falstaff's world, argues Crane, is in complete opposition to the world of the court; therefore it is appropriate that he never speaks in verse, the language of the court. Crane also shows how Hal moves easily from one world to the other, speaking prose in the tavern and verse in court. Crane analyzes Hotspur's speech as well, arguing that he speaks the best verse in the play.]

Nowhere in Shakespeare are the boundaries of two worlds so clearly delimited by the use of prose and verse as in the *Henry IV* plays (1597, 1598). The scenes relating to the historical matter are in verse, the scenes of Falstaff and his followers in prose. There are trifling exceptions: the conventional usages, as in Hotspur's letter (II, iii); Hotspur's short comic dialogue with his lady (III, i), with its startling shifts between prose and verse; and the mock verse of Pistol. [All references to Shakespeare's text are to George Lyman Kittredge's *The Complete Works of Shakespeare,* 1936.] One can hardly say of plays which fall so neatly into two actions and two spheres of influence that the form of either action is basic and the form of the other is the exception. Between the two worlds lies a huge and fundamental opposition, but each is autonomous within itself; Pistol's verse in the Boar's Head tavern is burlesque, not a sadly distorted recollection that the "serious business" of the play is going on elsewhere in verse.

Falstaff is Shakespeare's most brilliant speaker of comic prose, as Hamlet is his most gifted speaker of a prose which defies categories. But why does Falstaff speak prose? This may seem an idle question: Falstaff is a clown, although a nobleman, and must therefore speak prose; he must, furthermore, represent "the whole world" that Hal has to banish before he can become England's Harry, and Falstaff must therefore be opposed in every conceivable way to the world of high action and noble verse in which Hal is destined to move. But beyond all this, Falstaff speaks prose because it is inconceivable that he should speak anything else. . . .

Burlesque [a form of comedy, typically mockery or ridiculous exaggeration] lies near the heart of Shakespearean comedy, from *The Comedy of Errors* to *As You Like It.* In the two *Henry IV* plays, the Falstaff plot offers the broadest conceivable burlesque on the serious action, Falstaff derides the chivalric ideal, the forms of noble behavior, the law itself; he robs the travelers, suffers himself to be robbed in turn without fighting, and at last lies grossly and complacently about the whole affair and is totally unabashed at being found out. He is an unrepentant sinner, and, notwithstanding, is handsomely rewarded for his evil life until the moment of his banishment. He is a particularly noisome stench in the nostrils of the godly. His burlesque of their world is conducted on every plane: he robs them, flouts their ideals, and corrupts their prince. And, because he

is in such constant opposition to their world, it is only fitting that he should never really speak its language. The powerful contrast is expressed on the level of speech as on every other, and thus Falstaff speaks prose because of what he represents as well as what he is, most of the characters can be assigned easily enough to one group or the other-Hal's position remaining always ambiguous-but Hotspur's case is somewhat odd. He accepts the code completely; he is honor's fool, and is killed for it. But he is a very downright man, whose hard and realistic common sense makes him impatient with both poetry and milk-and-water oaths; language must speak clearly, directly, and forcefully, or he will have none of it. It is therefore inevitable that he should speak the very best of language, and that especially in verse. His verse is so hard, colloquial, and simple that he really has no need for prose. George Rylands [in *Words and Poetry,* 1928] says that Hotspur's speech marks an important stage in the development of Shakespeare's verse style, a stage at which Shakespeare incorporated into his verse many of the qualities of his prose. And yet one feels that Shakespeare must have known what he was about when he made Hotspur speak much more verse than prose. Hotspur belongs, after all, to the world of the knights, and he must speak their idiom even if only to mock them in it. Occasionally he uses prose, and very well, as in the prose letter in II, iii-a furious stream of prose: letter, comment, and vituperation, all well jumbled together. But as soon as Lady Percy enters, we have verse dialogue. The prose of this first long monologue should perhaps be put down to a combination of conventional epistolary prose and the dramatic necessity for continuing the letter scene in prose, even after the reading of the letter is finished.

In III, i, where Hotspur taunts and enrages the fiery Glendower, he begins in broken verse:

Lord Mortimer, and cousin Glendower, Will you sit down?
And uncle Worcester. A plague upon it!
I have forgot the map.
(III, i, 3-5)

Glendower's reply has been rearranged as most irregular verse by Pope from the prose of the Quartos. Hotspur's next speech is in prose, whereas Glendower at once breaks into the pompous, inflated verse so characteristic of him. Hotspur then varies between prose and verse; the length of the individual speech appears to be the only determinant. Thus he says at first:

Why, so it would have done at the same
season, if your mother's cat
had but kitten'd, though yourself had never
been born.
(18-20).

But, a moment later, he goes on:

And I say the earth was not of my mind,
If you suppose as fearing you it shook.

0, then the earth shook to see the heavens
on fire,
And not in fear of your nativity.
Diseased nature oftentimes breaks forth
In strange eruptions; oft the teeming earth
Is with a kind of colic pinch'd and vex'd
By the imprisoning of unruly wind
Within her womb, which, for enlargement
striving,
Shakes the old beldame earth and topples
down Steeples and mossgrown towers.
At your birth Our grandam earth, having this
distemp'rature,
In passion shook.
(22-23, 25-34)

After Glendower's reply, Hotspur returns to prose for a two-line retort, and, a little later, speaks verse again. Hotspur's prose in this scene appears to be restricted to short gibes, whereas he speaks verse when he becomes aroused.

He uses prose again, briefly, toward the end of the scene, when he jokes with his wife and reproaches her for her genteel swearing. It is difficult to assign any specific reason for this prose, largely because of the general uncertainty of media in thiS passage (227-265). Hotspur speaks prose, then verse, then prose again; after the Welsh lady's song, Hotspur's protest against his lady's "in good sooth" begins in prose and drops suddenly into verse. His last speech is again in prose. . . .

The Prince, in general, takes his cue from his company, speaking prose in the tavern and verse in the court with equal facility. His one violation of this division is, consequently, all the more striking. He enters in V, iii, to find Falstaff moralizing over the corpse of Sir Walter Blunt. Hal is now no longer the boon companion, but the valiant knight, and reproves Falstaff in straightforward verse. Falstaff replies with a jest in prose, and the rest of the scene-a matter of a half dozen speeches-is wound up in prose. But Falstaff himself has brought his prose into a verse scene, one of noble words and deeds, and he has used Sir Walter's "grinning honour" as a telling proof of his conclusions in his own catechism of honor. The scene thus contains a double contrast between prose and verse, and the old use of prose and verse characters within a single scene is here given a new and effective turn.

In V, i, Falstaff is for the first time brought mto the world of the court, and at once sets about his favorite task of deriding it. Worcester pleads his innocence, and to the King's ironic question about the rebellion, "You have not sought it! How comes it then?" (I. , i, 27), Falstaff interjects a reply: "Rebellion lay in his way, and he found it." Only Hal's injunction to remain quiet keeps Falstaff from making further comments on the action of the scene. He must needs hold his peace until the nobles have left, but immediately thereafter rediscovers his vein. Halls short with him, for he is keenly aware of the seriousness of the situation. And so Falstaff must wait for even Hal to leave before he

can make his most devastating comment on the ideals of a world he so ambiguously serves.

Shakespeare was too keen a dramatist not to have understood that the most powerful impression a scene creates in the mind of an audience is the final one. The first scene of Act V begins with King Henry, Worcester and the rest; but it ends with Falstaff. The *dramatic* point of the scene is well made and the main action is appreciably advanced. But at the side, and attempting always to intrude, is Falstaff, and when the rest have left, he has the stage entirely to himself, The net effect is produced not by the heroics of the nobles, but by the cynical realism of Falstaff. This is not to say that Falstaff dominates the playas he dominates this scene; as Professor Van Doren has well expressed it [in *Shakespeare,* 1939]: "History is enlarged here to make room for taverns and trollops and potations of sack, and the heroic drama is modified by gigantic mockery, by the roared voice of truth; but the result is more rather than less reality, just as a cathedral, instead of being demolished by merriment among its aisles, stands more august."

Hal must, as he says, "imitate the sun," and Falstaff's charm must be made so great as to convince the spectator that Hal's enjoyment of low life is not caused by a natural preference for the stew or the alehouse. But so charming (to use the word strictly) is Falstaff that Hal's necessary renunciation of him cannot be anything but priggish. . . .

Critical Essay #4

Source: "Uneasy Lies: Language and History in Shakespeare's Lancastrian Tetralogy," in *Shakespeare Quarterly,* Vol. 35, No.1, Spring, 1984, pp, 22-39.

[MacDonald explores the use and manipulation of language in Henry IV, Part One. *He shows how oaths are made and contradicted and how the use of oaths indicates the moral superiority of characters in the play, MacDonald goes on to show how the exploitation of language has become a necessity in the new world, that* is, *the world created when Henry usurped Richard II. MacDonald argues that much of Hal's education* is *devoted to his learning how to manipulate language.]*

. . . Here is a sampling of oaths, selected not quite at random from the literally hundreds that stuff the language of *Henry IV:*

1 By the Lord, and I do not, I am a villain.
(I.ii.96)
2. I'll make one, an' I do not, call me Villain
and baffle me.
(I.II.100-10 1)
3. By God, he shall not have a Scot of them,
No, if a Scot would save his soul, he
shall not!
(I.iii.214-15)
4. An' it be not four by the day, I'll be
hang'd.
(II.i.1-2)

I choose these because they represent a situation, not at all uncommon in the play, where an oath is given and then immediately contravened [contradicted]. The first two, and the clearest examples, are Falstaff's. With the first he swears to reform his wicked ways; with the second, a mere five lines later, he swears to join Hal in stealing a purse. Falstaff makes the outrageous contradiction highly visible by invoking the same penalty (being reduced to the rank of villain) on two incompatible performances. We should be exceedingly wary of believing (as Hal seems to do here) that Falstaff has been caught out, that the contradiction is inadvertent. He *displays* the contradiction, invites our attention to it, precisely in the way he will later underscore a patent fabrication by multiplying men in buckram suits (II.iv.191 ff,). In that later instance Hal will accuse him with some heat of lying about his exploits. The accusation imprudently overlooks the fact that Falstaff's exaggerations are clearly designed to be seen through. He isn't lying, he claims implicitly, but spinning a yarn, and to accuse a yarn-spinner of lying, is to make yourself look something of a sore-headed spoilsport. One of the weakest kinds of triumph is to think you have caught a man in a lie, and then have him show that he was only trying to entertain you. The stakes are perhaps somewhat lower in the matter of Falstaff's contradictory oaths, but the principles are similar: catch him out, and you become a killjoy; let the contradiction pass unremarked, and you seem to connive in

degrading the whole institution of promising. This real dilemma, conjured up with a couple of apparently casual oaths, suggests that Falstaff's verbal skill is of a very high order.

Not so with the next oath in our sample, which belongs to Hotspur. He is denying his Scottish prisoners to King Henry, and doing this with some force; but fifty lines later, when Worcester has broached the conspiracy against the King, he agrees without demur to deliver them up unransomed. He is by no means aware of the contradiction; he has simply forgotten, in his characteristically hare-brained way, that he has promised anything at all.

The shrewd man may very well break a promise: this is the case with our last oath, which belongs to the unnamed carrier in II.i. He swears that it is four o'clock in the morning (if it is not, he will be hanged); he even offers supporting astronomical evidence: "Charles' wain is over the new chimney" (1. 1-2). Yet when the thief Gadshill, about whom the carrier has every reason to be suspicious, asks him the time, he says "I think it be two a' clock" (1. 33). He is very wisely denying a potential highjacker information about a time when he may expect to find portable property on the road. This is clearly more important in the circumstances than the very remote possibility that anyone will actually offer to hang him for contravening his initial oath. Perhaps the worst that can hap pen is that Gadshill will glance at Charles's wain over the new chimney and conclude that the carrier is lying. But that risk is certainly worth taking: if it succeeds, the advantage gained is real; if it fails, the consequences are trivial.

But no such careful calculation informs the promises that Hotspur makes and breaks. It may be argued that genuinely to forget a promise is not the same as to break it, and that the forgetful man enjoys a certain moral superiority over the consciously duplicitous one. But there is, for all that, a very high price to be paid for this moral superiority, for you deliver yourself over, body and soul, to those with a deeper understanding of the institution of promising, to those who are more than willing to suffer your old-fashioned talk about honor and justice and right, and then let you pay, for an hour or so of chivalric masquerading at Shrewsbury, with your life. The day belongs, even as it did in Richard's time, to the man who thinks in and through the language he speaks, and not to the man who allows that language to think in him.

The day belongs, in short, at least in the world of 1 *Henry IV,* to Falstaff. He has fully mastered one of the lessons that Richard has to teach, that weakness, properly managed, may result in real power. Another characteristic locutionary [location refers to a particular way of expressing oneself] act in the play, one closely related to the oath, is the boast, an assertion of personal power peculiarly vulnerable to deflation:

Gadshill We steal as in a castle, cock-sure;
we have the receipt of fern-seed, we walk invisible.
Chamberlain Nay, by my faith, I think you are more beholding to the night than to fern-seed for your walking invisible.
(II.i.85-90)
Glendower I can call spirits from the vasty deep.

Hotspur Why, so can I, or so can any man,
But will they come when you do call for them?
(Ill.i.52-54)
Falstaff But, as the devil would have it, three misbegotten knaves in Kendal green came at my back and let drive at me, for it was so dark, Hal, that thou couldest not see thy hand.
Prince These lies are like their father that begets them, gross as a mountain, open, palpable.
(II.iv.221-26)

The difference between Falstaff's boast and those of Gadshill and Glendower is simply that Falstaff offers his in full awareness of the way in which it renders him vulnerable. Indeed, his vulnerability is so obvious that the prudent man will be wary of it, and suspect that it conceals a trap. . . .

To speak effectively in the new world created by the usurpation [Bolingbroke's (Henry IV) stealing the Crown from Richard II] requires the exploitation of all the figurative resources of language, of irony, of understatement, of wary hyperbole [wild exaggeration] and deft paronomasia [puns; a pun is a play on words]. The days are gone when simple grandiloquence of the "This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land" kind will do. When in the deposition scene of *Richard II* Bullingbrook asks Richard if he is contented to resign the crown, Richard's riddling reply, "Ay, no, no ay" (IV.i.201), is something more than idle play with the homophones [words that sound alike but have different meanings or spellings] "ay" and "I." Richard has come to realize that a language that can only speak of either/or, that can generate no discourse governing the in-between, is inadequate to cover the complex of feelings he is now experiencing.

His equivocation is the true expression of his inabilIty to answer Bullingbrook's bald question with anything like the clarity Bullingbrook seems to require.

The changes of history demand changes of language, and to survive in the world of the two parts of *Henry IV* is to learn to speak in ways that are adequate to the occasion. Much of Hal's "education" in the course of the plays, if that is what it is, may be described as his attempt to master new languages, to be able to "drink with any tinker in his own language" (II.iv.19); to be able to speak like Hotspur ("'Give my roan horse a drench,' says he, and answers, 'Some fourteen,' an hour after; 'a trifle, a trifle,'" IT.iv,106-8); to speak like a king; or to speak like himself:

I know you all, and will a while uphold
The unyok'd humor of your idleness,
Yet herein will I imitate the sun.
(1 *Henry IV,* I.ii.195-97)
The homophonic play (which at this early stage, when Hal tends to sound a bit smug, may not be fully conscious) suggests "imitate the son." The real task, in the shifting and ambiguous world created by the usurpation, is to be yourself. This is not a matter of the "naturalness" of manner tirelessly recommended in books of etiquette and treatises on how to succeed. It is a rigorous process of learning the languages of others and

inventing a language of your own. When in the first reconciliation scene, Hal replies to his father's long sermon on the proper behavior exemplified by his aristocratic ancestors, his reply is anything but casual: "I shall hereafter, my thrice-gracious lord, / *Be more myself*" (III.ii.92-93). And we will not be surprised to find him at the very end of *Henry V* learning yet another language, this time the French of his affianced Kate.

It is those who do not grow in language, who do not submit themselves to its shifting substance and stubborn materiality, who are defeated by history in the world of the Henry IV plays. Hotspur is first in this group, because, for all his eloquence, he has a thoroughly naive relation to the language he speaks. There is so much in him to remind us of the new order that it is easy to underestimate the extent to which he abandons himself to the aristocratic myths of the old order. Yet his gaze is basically retrospective, and it is in his casualness with language, and particularly in his unreflective relation to the institution of promising, that we can discover his allegiances most clearly. Here is Hotspur in soliloquy, congratulating himself warmly on the excellence of the anti-Lancastrian conspiracy:

By the Lord, our plot is a good plot as ever was laid, our friends true and constant; a good plot, good friends, and full of expectation, an excellent plot, very good friends. . .. Is there not my father, my uncle, and myself? Lord Edmund Mortimer, my Lord of York, and Owen Glendower? is there not besides the Douglas? have I not all their letters to meet me in arms by ninth of the next month, (1 *Henry IV,* ll.iii.15-19, 23-28)

We should be suspicious of Hotspur's way of upping the verbal ante here ("a good plot, good friends. . . . an excellent plot, very good friends"), for, as the example of Richard made clear, you can't make a thing so by saying it, nor a friend true by heaping him with honorific adjectives. Wishes are not horses, they are words, and that is why beggars have to walk, Hotspur's touching faith in the Written promises of his fellow conspirators, in the letters he has in hand, is rather cruelly rewarded when, of the good friends he mentions here, all but two fail to show up and do battle.

BOOKRAGS

Critical Essay #5

The theme of honor in *Henry IV, Part One* is most often examined by critics as it relates to Hal, Hotspur, and Falstaff. Critics such as Moody E. Prior argue that Falstaff represents a rejection of honor. Gordon Zeeveld maintains that Falstaff does not cynically respond to honor, he simply and realistically recognizes that warfare (pursued by Hotspur in the name of honor) is inhumane. Similarly, Carmen Rogers points out that Falstaff observes and comments on "false honor" as represented by Hotspur. Most critics, including Paul Siegel, G. M. Pinciss, and Prior, generally agree that the honor so enthusiastically pursued by Hotspur is related primarily to chivalry and warfare. Zeeveld comments that this pursuit demonstrates Hotspur's blatant disregard for human life. Siegel and Pinciss also demonstrate how this sense of honor is, in the world of *Henry IV, Part One,* an outdated one. Hal is most often associated with what critics like Rogers refer to as "true honor." Zeeveld shows how this sense of honor is entirely humane, unlike Hotspur's view of honor. Siegel discusses Hal's honor as a striving for "Christian humanism" which is demonstrated by Hal's virtuous and loyal service to his countrymen. Pinciss states that Hal is actually a representative of a more modern (in Elizabethan terms) version of honor: courtesy. While many critics speculate on how Shakespeare's portrayal of these different views on honor may indicate what the playwright's own feelings on the subject were, PatricK Cruttwell asserts that Shakespeare does not favor any of these views; he simply presents all the options.

Source: "Ideas of History: *Richard II,* 1 and 2 *Henry Iv; Henry V,"* in *The Drama of Power: Studies in Shakespeare's History Plays,* Northwestern University Press, 1973, pp, 199-218,

[Prior examines the place of honor in the disorderly world of Henry IV, Part One. *On the surface, argues Prior, honor appears to serve only in the context of chivalry and warfare. Prior shows how a closer examination reveals that Hotspur, Hal, and Henry have a deeper understanding of the concept of honor. Prior also illuminates the limitations of honor. He first focusses on how little attention is paid in the play to the broken promises and rebellion related to Henry's road to kingship. Next, Prior notes that Falstaff denies "the reality of honor" by seeing honor only as an intangible, valueless result of bravery in battle. Prior contrasts Hotspur's extravagant desire for honor with Falstaff's rejection of honor, commenting that Falstaff overlooks those aspects of honor which are unrelated to warfare and which could therefore be useful to him. Finally, Prior discusses Hal's conception of honor, showing it to be demonstrated by Hal's loyalty to the King and to the nation.]*

The word "honor" occurs frequently in Part 1, and its presence has raised some troublesome questions, What place can honor have in a world in which subjects rebel against a usurper whom they placed in office, the prince plays at robbery with a dissolute knight, and the contending parties in government seem guided by "policy" rather than principle? Superficially, the answer appears to be that honor has little to do with the conduct of most of the characters, and where it *is* invoked the concept often seems narrow. At first glance honor seems to mean no more than a reputa tion for

prowess and skill in arms gained in battle by noblemen and knights. That is the implication when the word first appears in the opening scene, in which the king contrasts the victorious Hotspur, "the theme of honor's tongue," with his son, who was not at the battle and whose brow is stained with "riot and dishonor" (1.1.80, 84), and also when, later in the play, the king upbraids the prince, comparing his son's dissoluteness and negligence with the boldness of young Hotspur leading his rebellious followers "to bloody battles and to bruising arms" and to the "never-dying honor" which he gained against Douglas (3.2.105-6). It is also the prince's meaning when he promises to redeem his bad reputation against the "child of honor and renown" and exchange his own shames "for every honor sitting on his helm" (3.2.139, 142). Hotspur glorifies the honor to be gained in battle against worthy foes, and the more hazardous the enterprise the greater the chance of gaining honor. The extravagance of his speech about plucking "bright honor from the pale-faced moon" and "drowned honor by the locks" (1.3.199 ff.) is inspired by Worcester's warning that the matter he is about to reveal is "deep and dangerous" (1,3.188),

Even in this narrow military context, however, honor demands from these warriors something more than bravery and success in battle. This is a society in which the nobility constitutes an elite expected to bear arms, and honor stands for the special virtues which distinguish this class in the exercise of its vocation-gallantry in combat with a worthy foe, adherence to the accepted code of arms, and individual loyalty to friends, family, and comrades in arms. These qualities are taken seriously and have currency in *I Henry IV,* even though men accuse each other of breaking their solemn word, rebellions are plotted, and warriors fight for something less than the highest moral principles and national glory. It says something for the world of *I Henry IV* that *such* distinctions can be made. . .. The battle of Shrewsbury is a deadly serious affair, yet the prince can call Hotspur "a valiant rebel of that name" before engaging him in fair fight to the death.

There are further shades of meaning which extend the idea of honor in *I Henry IV* beyond the demands of chivalry and war. Even for Hotspur honor can mean something more than meeting dangers and triumphing over great warriors in battle. His first use of the word *is,* in fact, not in connection with warfare at all. He upbraids his father and uncle for having dishonored themselves by putting down Richard, setting the crown on Bolingbroke, and having to endure the humiliation of being discarded by him now that he is Henry IV. From these shames, he urges,

time serves wherein you may redeem
Your banished honors and restore yourselves
Into the good thoughts of the world again.
(1.3.178-80)

The dishonor that the king attributes to his son is not simply that he failed to distinguish himself in battle, but that by indulging in riot and bad company at a time when the king's interest was in danger he failed in a principal obligation of a prince. The king rejoices when his son joins him, not only because Hal has promised to use Hotspur's glory to

redeem his own, but because he has returned to his proper princely role. "A hundred thousand rebels die in this,"

Henry exclaims (3.2.160).
Honor, then, goes beyond
chivalry and military fame.

Nevertheless, at its broadest it is a concept with serious limitations. Henry's perjury is a case in point. It is charged against him by his former supporters that in taking the crown from Richard II he had broken an oath which he made to them on returning from exile, that he had come only to claim his inheritance; but, in spite of the gravity of this charge, little enough is made of it, because the oath was taken for expedient reasons and broken with the connivance of his then allies, now his enemies. And yet for most of the characters, including the king, honor is a serious matter. Judgment of conduct is referred to it, and it is invoked to bind men to a cause and to inspire the exercise of such private virtues as are demanded by one's public obligations. Its prominence is thus a mark of the secular atmosphere of *I Henry IV,* in which the characters do not normally look beyond the immediate present to a cosmic scheme of justice or expect the wrath of God for neglecting a solemn obligation. In a world of politics and civil war it functions as a substitute for moral principle. It is not a static or a univocal concept, however; in the changing patterns of the p lay its merits are revealed, its limitations expose, and in due course even the reality of honor is questioned,

The most direct, and indeed the only, denial of the reality of honor comes from Falstaff. His soliloquy on honor is a virtuoso performance of clever negation. It comes just after the king has ended his interview with the rebel leaders and the royal party awaits the almost certain sign for battle. Falstaff, the realist, says ap prehensively, "I would 'twere bedtime, Hal, and al well." The prince's casual reply, "Why, thou owest God a death," provides the cue to the opening line of Falstaff's reflections, "'Tis not due yet, I would be loath to pay him before his day" (5.1.125-28), Restricting honor to its limited sense of the intangible rewards for valor in battle, Falstaff rejects it as empty and valueless, incapable of repairing wounds or surviving detraction after death. The sight of Sir Walter Blunt dead on the field of battle confirms him in his views-"There's honor for you" (5.3.32-33)and it leads him to his final word on the subject: "I like not such grinning honor as Sir Walter hath. Give me life, which if I can save, so; if not, honor comes unlooked for, and there's an end" (5.3.58-61). "'Tis not due yet," "Give me life" -these phrases sum up Falstaff's determination to hold on to life as the final good, even if it is only a precarious hold defiantly maintained against the decay of youth and the coming of age, the loss of moral virtue and of the world's esteem. The direct opposite of this is summed up in Hotspur's remarks shortly before the battle. A messenger comes with letters and Hotspur dismisses them" I cannot read them now"; and as though this incident has suddenly brought home to him the realization that nothing matters now until the dangerous business is over, he continues,

0 gentlemen, the time of life is short!
To spend that shortness basely were too long

If life did ride upon a dial's point,
Still ending at the arrival of an hour.
(5.2.81-84)

There are things which are more important to Hotspur than life. Though addressing his men, Hotspur seems in these lines almost to be speaking to himself, surprised by the circumstances into a moment of self revelation which suggests something of the depth of feeling that underlies his earlier extravagant sentiments about honor or the apparent flippancy of his comment when he learns of the big odds against them in the battle, "Doomsday is near; die all, die merrily" (4.1.134).

Shakespeare has made both of these spokesmen for opposing attitudes attractive, each in his own extraordinary way. They have, moreover, some basic traits in common. Both conduct their lives and make their choices in accordance with a settled principle. Both have a distaste for the reserve and calculation of official public life. Their loyalties are narrow. Falstaff's loyalty is to himself and his cronies when they are useful, and Hotspur's is personal and clannish. Both reveal a lively extravagance at times when they feel challenged or aroused, and both display a trace of desperation in seeking to extract the full measure of gratification out of life. Both men have a zest for life, though Falstaff's inclinations carry him to dissoluteness and even degeneracy, and Hotspur's valor and sense of personal integrity sometimes express themselves in discourtesy, eccentricity, and foolhardiness. It is in the aberration of qualities which can enhance life that the danger lies in these two men Hotspur's sense of honor which makes him despise Henry as a "vile politician" and a "king of smiles" also makes him the victim of politicians who need his virtues to glamorize a rebellion, and his wholly personal coveting of honor "without corrival" inspires him to seek out occasions to exercise his youth and virtues in the destructive enterprise of war. Falstaff's ridicule of honor is a corollary of his guiding principle, "give me life," as he understands it; honor at Shrewsbury involves the danger of self-sacrifice, and so he will not seek it. If we see his position as a reply to the extravagances of Hotspur, we may be inclined to agree with him that honor is an empty illusion-Falstaff would not have ordered the charge of the Light Brigade, But by strictly limiting the scope of the term, Falstaff excludes its usefulness in defining a secular idea of loyalty and of dedication to the best demands of a serious calling, and thus as a means of maintaining one's self-esteem. Oddly enough, Falstaff has not completely lost the need for some modicum of that last quality. When they decide to do a play extempore and the prince proposes, "the argument shall be thy running away," Falstaff replies, "Ah, no more of that, Hal, and thou lovest me" (2.4.277-78). But Falstaff's chief use for the respectable world is to exploit it for his own purposes. He welcomes the rebellion as an opportunity to replenish his purse: "Well, God be thanked for these rebels, they offend none but the virtuous; I laud them, I praise them" (3.3.189-91). Lacking a sense of honor, he is capable of leading his wretched recruits to the thick of the battle where most of them will be killed so that he can keep their pay for himself. . .

The prince, early in the play, shows a distaste for the questing after military victory that is the bad side of Hotspur's love of honor:

I am not yet of Percy's mind, the Hotspur of the North, he that kills me some six or seven dozen of Scots at a breakfast, washes his hands, and says to his wife, "Fie upon this quiet life, I want work." "0 my sweet Harry," says she, "how many hast thou killed today?" "Give my roan horse a drench," says he, and answers, "Some fourteen," an hour after, "a trifle, a trifle." (2.4.99-106)

Just before this he had described a drinking bout with a group of tapsters at the inn, and tells Poins, "I tell thee, Ned, thou hast lost much honor that thou wert not with me in this action" (2.4.19-21). This fleering use of "honor" may represent an indirect attempt to justify his present truancy, but the use of the military term "this action" to describe the heavy drinking and the "honor" gained by staying with it may also express some impatience with the cant of the warrior class. In comparison with Hotspur, Hal's attitude toward honor may be likened to Starbuck's attitude toward courage in *Moby Dick-"one* of the great staple outfits of the ship in their hazardous work of whaling, thought Starbuck, and, like her beer and bread, not to be wasted." The prince accepts the idea of honor as a mark of the warrior when he promises to exchange his shames for Hotspur's honors, but it is not an exact exchange. There are certain features of Hotspur's code which Hal does not take on. He does not nave an excessive craving for military exploits or gloat publicly over his success-he is willing, for the sake of a joke, to allow Falstaff to claim credit for killing Hotspur; and his sense of loyalty is not as clannish as Hotspur's nor as provincial ("this Northern youth" [3.2.145], he calls him)-it is to his father as king and therefore to the nation. It is an idea of honor more befitting a London courtier than a northern earl, and more useful to a national king than to a feudal lord. Hal appreciates Hotspur's gallantry-he honors the dead Hotspur by placing his "favors" on the body of his adversary; and in this connection Falstaff shows up to disadvantage, for we see him dishonoring Hotspur's corpse with a coarse comic bravado that is as unpleasant as it is funny.

This view of the significance of the scheme of multiple comparisons is in keeping with the way the conflicts are resolved at the end. The victory of the king's party seems the only acceptable conclusion-not merely the one imposed by history-and even the most unsympathetic critics do not express offense at the defeat of the rebels at Shrewsbury as they do, for instance, at the sophistry of Prince John at Gaultree or the rejection of Falstaff in Part 2. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether Shakespeare ever fully redresses the balance in favor of Henry and his son in *I Henry IV;* for the rebels are not pictured in a wholly reprehensible light. Once the rebellion gets under way, Hotspur's leadership lends it an air of gallantry and glamor. Aside from Worcester, who seems incapable of controlling the enterprise of which he was the political engineer, the others all have an almost amateurish quality which contributes to their undoing. This comes out in the one scene in which they all assemble to map out their strategy (3.1); they quarrel and show themselves more eager to divide the spoils of a hoped-for victory than to resolve the divisions within the kingdom, and hence appear as a worse choice politically than the king. Nevertheless, the conclusion which Shakespeare contrives for this episode comes as a surprising close to a scene of rebellious plotting. Glendower ushers in their wives, and there follows an engaging exchange of sentiments between Mortimer and his Welsh wife, with Glendower acting as interpreter, the contrasting affectionate sparring of Hotspur and his Kate, and finally the ethereal music invoked by Glendower

which accompanies the Welsh song sung by Mortimer's wife. And these are the men who are threatening the center of order in the kingdom! There is nothing in the whole play that associates the king or the prince with as much charm and genial humanity. . . .

Critical Essay #6

Source: "The Old Honor and the New Courtesy.

Henry IV," in *Shakespeare Survey: An Annual Survey of Shakespearian Study and Production,* Vol. 31, 1978, pp. 85-91.

[Pinciss argues that while Hotspur is *primarily concerned with honor throughout the play, Hal represents a comparable virtue: courtesy. Prior bases his examination of honor and courtesy on two books that were commonly read at the time Shakespeare wrote* Henry IV, Part One. The Courtier, *Written by Castiglione and translated from Italian in* 1561, *and* The Governour, *written by Sir Thomas Elyot in* 1531, *were guides to the proper manners and behavior for upper class gentleman, or nobleman. Pinciss shows that Hotspur fads as a nobleman when measured against these standards. His code of honor* is *that of a solder, and it* is *obsolete compared to Hal's courtesy. Hal's manners are approved of by these sources. Pinciss points out that without knowing that in Shakespeare's time the virtues represented by Hal were more highly valued than those represented by Hotspur, readers might be likely to misunderstand the two characters and what happens to them in the play.]*

Central to any reading of 1 *Henry IV* is the dramatic opposition of the Prince of Wales with his arch-rival Henry Percy: the seriousness, energy, and courage of Hotspur are held up against the frivolous, bored, and irresponsible behavior of Hal. In large measure, the two young men, whom Shakespeare has intentionally portrayed as comparable in age, behave differently because they value differing codes of conduct. For Hotspur honor is of over-riding concern; by contrast, Hal acts as chief spokesman of another virtue, one especially appropriate for a Renaissance prince: courtesy. By analyzing the actions of both men according to the two most influential Elizabethan handbooks on courtly manners, we may arrive at a more precise evaluation of these two virtues and of those qualities that, it seems, ultimately mark Hal superior to Hotspur.

The two most prominent Elizabethan guides to courtly behavior were Castiglione's *The Courtier,* especially as translated by Sir Thomas Hoby in 1561, and the English version of Italian manner books, Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Governour* (1531). Something of a national character shaped the priorities of each writer: Castiglione and his countrymen, for example, stress personal perfection and aesthetic matters; Elyot and his readers place greater weight on civil usefulness and moral considerations, Nevertheless, the two works have more in common between them than either shares, with a medieval manual on knightly conduct and they agree on the manners that characterize a Renaissance gentleman.

Hotspur's behavior and ethics are ultimately associated with the striving for honor. He is the 'king of honour'; according to the envious Bolingbroke, lie is the 'son who is the theme of honour's tongue'. For him public acclaim and reputation are to be earned chiefly by performance as a soldier-if not for, then against the crown. He is first mentioned at the very opening of the play in connection with a major victory over the

Scots at Holmedon and the impressive list of his prisoners is described to the king as an 'honourable spoil'. At his first appearance in scene iii Hotspur displays something of his warrior nature, for he is plain-dealing, quick-tempered, and fearless, all those traits common to the best Elizabethan soldier stereotype: something of his nature can be found in men like Kent, or Enobarbus, or Othello. As Hal satirizes him, the young Percy 'kills me some six or seven dozen Scots at a breakfast, washes his hands, and says to his wife, "Fie upon this quiet life, I want work."' There is more than a grain of truth in this exaggeration of Hotspur's aggressive determination.

Hotspur is also concerned with the king's treatment of his family since this, too, reflects on his honor. Bolingbroke's refusal to ransom Hotspur's brotherin-law Mortimer, to consult with his father and uncle on matters of state, and to acknowledge the assistance of the Percys in taking the throne from Richard II are cited as particular reasons for rebelling. But all of these causes should be subsumed under one heading: his desire to 'pluck bright honour from the pale faced moon'. . .. Exasperated by Bolingbroke's tactics and encouraged to rebellion by his uncle, Hotspur in act II no longer supports the crown against the Scots but joins them and the Welsh in an effort to unseat the king. He calls this 'so honourable an action', an action by which his father and uncle 'may redeem your banished honours'.

Hotspur is not interested in material profit. And Shakespeare takes great pains to make this clear. In response to Sir Walter Blunt's hope that he will negotiate a peaceful settlement and accept an offer full of 'grace and love' from Bolingbroke, Hotspur answers, 'And maybe so we shall'. Indeed, Hotspur's motivation is so pure and his reply to Sir Walter so honest, that Worcester, Hotspur's uncle, never tells him of 'the liberal and kind offer of the king'. Worcester persuades his companion, Sir Richard Vernon, perhaps wisely, that his nephew must never learn what Bolingbroke promised. Unlike the open and rather naive and gullible Hotspur, it is Worcester who truly understands that the politic Bolingbroke knows 'at what time to promise, when to pay'. But actually, Hotspur's honesty and directness, although laudable and appealing to us, are not entirely praiseworthy traits for a Renaissance courtier. To attain the kind of reputation Hotspur is seeking, both craftiness and calculation are occasionally excusable practices.

As a Renaissance courtier Hotspur is inept. Shakespeare systematically displays his failures in the many skills, talents, and graces that every sixteenth-century nobleman should exhibit. And the deficiencies in Hotspur's nature are repeatedly displayed to the audience not only by his own actions but also by pointed comment from others. In his very first speech he confesses to the court that he answered the king's messenger 'neglectingly, I know not what. . . for he made me mad'. Although his conduct might be excusable in special circumstances, it is hardly correct or controlled behavior. Hotspur then proceeds to contradict Bolingbroke flatly, using neither the Retort Courteous nor the Quip Modest, but the Countercheck Quarrelsome and the Lie Direct. Men of good sense like Touchstone or his equally argumentative opponent stop short of such an offensive reply-from which there is no retreating without an 'if'. Bolingbroke in fury orders the Percys away. Finally, unable still to control his anger, Hotspur cannot allow his uncle to hold the floor without behaving like a 'waspstung and impatient fool. . . Tying thine ear

to no tongue but thine own!' All this in his opening scene. Surely we are watching a young man lacking patience, moderation, and prudence, those virtues Elyot thought so essential in one who looked for a place at court.

Like Elyot, Castiglione, too, would have observed several deficIencies in Hotspur's behavior. His impetuous nature and quick tongue are obviously liabilities at the council table, but in the pleasures of civilized life he is equally undeveloped ana uninterested. Glendower, the Welsh chieftain, boasts that he has composed English lyrics, 'a virtue that was never seen' in Hotspur. But the younger man has no shame at his deafness to the beauties of language:

I had rather be a kitten and cry 'mew'
Than one of these same metre ballad
mongers.
I had rather hear a brazen canstick turn'd Or a dry wheel grate on the axle-tree,

And that would set my teeth nothing on
edge,
Nothing so much as mincing poetry.
(III, I, 123-8) [References are to the Arden
Edition, ed. A. R. Humphreys, (1960)]

Obstinate in his ways, he takes delight neither in verse nor music. A lady's song is a subject for teasing his wife, and a lullaby in Welsh is less pleasing to him than the howling of his Irish wolf-hound; p resumably neither the music nor the language hel appeal. Had he followed the advice of Castiglione, Hotspur would have known how untutored (and French!) was his insistence on knowing 'onely the nobleness of armes'. A true courtier should exercise him selfe in Poets, and no lesse in Oratours and Historiogaphers, and also in writing both rime and prose, and especially in this our vulgar tongue. For beside the contentation that hee snail receive thereby him selfe, hee shall by this means never want pleasant intertainements with women which ordinarily love such matters.

And like the great warrior Achilles, taught to play the harp by Chiron, a soldier is no less heroic for his talent with music. Castiglione insists that such skill is not effeminate: 'musicke is not an ornament, but also necessarie for a Courtier'.

Hotspur's weaknesses are more than implied, His peccadilloes and his faults are named by his uncle lest we overlook them. Shakespeare must have suspected that Hotspur with his candor and spirit would draw our applause so whole-heartedly, especially when we discover him surrounded by intriguers, that we would tend to ignore his *serious* defects. Although Worcester may not appear the ideal teacher, his experience at dealing with men is unquestionably greater than his nephew's and his admonition is worth the heeding:

In faith, my lord, you are too wilful-blame,
You must needs learn, lord, to amend this
fault.
Though sometimes it show greatness,
courage,
blood
And that's the dearest grace it renders you
Yet oftentimes it doth present harsh rage,
Defect of manners, want of government,
Pride, haughtiness, opinion, and disdain,
The least of which haunting a nobleman
Loseth men's hearts, and leaves behind a
stain
Upon the beauty of all parts besides,
Beguiling them of commendation.
(III, i, 171, 174-83)

The charges Worcester recites sum up a rather complete bill of particulars against Hotspur. But there still remains at least one fact about the young man's attitude that shows to what an extent it is uncharacteristic of his time. When he learns that his father is unable to bring his support to the confrontation with Bolingbroke, Hotspur argues that 'It lends a larger dare to our great enterprise'. When he learns that Glendower, too, will be unable to join them, Hotspur still insists on rushing into battle. His courage and enthusiasm are admirable; his eagerness to encounter an enemy who vastly outnumbers him-'Die all, die merrily' -reveals the extent of his idealism. But rushing into battle, rejoicing to display bravery, enduring suffering and loss or even meeting death gladly as a reward for valor are the actions of a medieval knight demonstrating the code of chivalry. Such deeds, however, are not those of a Renaissance gentleman; the ideal performance of a crusader in a romance is not the same as that of a courtier in a sixteenth-century manners book and the behavior of a hero in a tale by Malory hardly agrees with Castiglione's recommendation: it is behoveful both for himselfe and for his friendes, that he have a foresight in the quarrels and controversies that may happen, and let hime beware of the vantages, declaring alwaies in everie point both courage and wisedom. Neither let him runne rashly to these combats. ,. for beside the great daunger that is in the doubtfullot, he that goeth headlong to these thinges deserveth great blame.

On this subject it is interesting to review the career of the Douglas, Hotspur's Scots ally. Before the battle of Shrewsbury, Hotspur praises him as the best of soldiers, 'a braver place / In my heart's love hath no man than yourself'. And, indeed, the Douglas urges a speedy confrontation with Bolingbroke, actively seeks him in battle, and systematically attempts to kill each of those dressed like the king. His fight with the real king, however, is interrupted by Prince Hal who comes to aid hIs failing father. Rather than meet death at Hal's hand, the Douglas flees. All of this, of course, serves to enhance Hal's reputation in his father's and his audience's eyes. None of it is unexpected until Hal's very last speech in the play. In this, he instructs his brother John to free the imprisoned Douglas without ransom, for

His valours shown upon our crests today
Have taught us how to cherish such high
deeds
Even in the bosom of our adversaries.
(v, v, 29-31)

That Hal would commit a public act reflecting what Prince John calls 'high courtesy' is not unlikely, but that Hal would praise for his courage an enemy who ran away when he saw defeat and death approaching is a little startling if one considers what Hotspur might have said had he seen it all! By and large it seems that

Hotspur's values are not the same as those of his enemies or his friends, for unlike him both Hal and the Douglas approve of that advice that teaches one to flee when one is outnumbered or outclassed.

Hotspur's chief virtue-and he is called the 'king of honour' by the Douglas-is defined by a code of manners that is obsolete; he represents an age that is past or passing. Prince Hal on the other hand embodies the new virtues: even before he inherits the kingdom from his father he is dubbed the 'king of courtesy'.

Courtesy, Hal's most distinctive attribute, is considered by both English and Italian authorities a necessary quality for a nobleman's temperament; one so central to the concept that Spenser devoted a whole book of *The Faeie Queene* to it. Courtesy is exercised by knowing what is fitting for oneself and others, and for enacting this with graciousness. One's conduct, then, is affected in part by awareness of class and the lines between classes and in part by the desire to draw praise and admiration for the grace of one's behavior, especially from one's equals and betters, Such a person in Elyot's terms possesses 'a gentil and familiare visage' able to procure men's love, and 'a beautie or comelynesse in his countenance, langage, and gesture apt to his dignitie, and accomodate to time, place, and company'. When a leash of drawers name him the 'king of courtesy' and promise he 'shall command all the good lads of Eastcheap', the Prince of Wales has proven something of his real worth. He is both truthful and slyly ironic when he says to Poins, 'thou hast lost much honour that thou wert not with me in this action'. Drinking-deep and sounding the very bass string of humility are evidence of his princeliness, for Hal has followed Castiglione's injunction:

in companie with men and women of al degrees, in sporting, in laughing, and in jesting, he hath in him certaine sweetnes, and so comely demeanours, that who so speaketh with him, or yet beholdeth him, must needs beare him an affection for ever.

In fact, Hal satisfies most of Castiglione's criteria for courtesy: he is noble by birth, witty by nature, comely in person and countenance, and attractive with 'a certaine grace, and (as they say) a hewe, that shall make him at the first sight acceptable and loving unto who so beholdeth him'. These aspects of courtesy are perhaps more gifts of nature than manners consciously learned and artificially cultivated, but such gifts, as one might expect, are part of the legacy of a royal offspring.

Recognizing Hal's natural courtesy and his supremacy in this virtue allows us to reinterpret the claims of others. For example, Hotspur's threat that Hal will 'shrink under my courtesy' seems a hollow boast when one realizes Hal's true value, and his father's criticism of Hal's conduct should also be regarded with some skepticism. Bolingbroke has 'majesty', the quality that impresses his public; but this is only half of what Elyot finds necessary for courtesy. The king never gains his public's affection, lacking what Elyot would have called 'affability', the other component of courtesy. In fact, Bolingbroke is a fraud; like Macbeth in borrowed robes, he 'dressed' himself ill humility to pluck allegiance from men's hearts, and 'stole all courtesy from heaven'. His rebuke to his son, a parallel to Worcester's reprimanding Hotspur, reflects Bolingbroke's own obtuseness. Even Sir Rich ard Vernon, who could scarcely be expected to think favorably of Bolingbroke's heir, appreciates Hal's innate graciousness of manner and speech. He describes to Hotspur how the Prince delivered his offer of single combat:

I never in my life
Did hear a challenge urg'd more modestly,
Unless a brother should a brother dare
To gentle exercise and proof of arms.
He gave you all the duties of a man;
Trimm'd up your praises with a princely
tongue,
Spoke your deservings like a chronicle,
Making you ever better than his praise
By still dispraising praise valu'd with you,
And, which became him like a prince indeed,
He made a blushing cital of himself,
And chid his truant youth with such a grace
As if he mast'red there a double spirit
Of teaching and of learning instantly.
(V, ii, 51-64)

From Vernon's account it is clear that Hal can act with modesty, ease, and charm. . . .

Indeed, Hal's princely challenge to fight Hotspur alone, made before the leaders of the opposing parties, is in accordance with Castiglione's precepts for winning 'most estimation' in time of war; Hal's proposal is effective in 'separating him selfe from the multitude' and in offering to 'undertake notable and bolde feates'.

The Prince of Wales doth join with all the world
In praise of Henry Percy: by my hopes,
This present enterprise set off his head,
I do not think a braver gentleman,
More active-valiant or more valiant-young,
More daring or more bold, is now alive
To grace this latter age with noble deeds,
For my part, I may speak *it* to my shame,
I have a truant been to chivalry,

And so I hear he doth account me too.
Yet this before my father's majesty
I am content that he shall take the odds
Of his great name and estimation,
And will, to save the blood on either side,
Try fortune with him in a single fight.
(V, i, 86-100)

In addition, his language reveals what Castiglione calls

a simplicitie of such meekenesse of minde, that a man would weene nature her selfe spake to make them tender and (as it were) dronken with sweetnes; and with such conveyance of easinesse, that who so heareth him, may conceive a good opinion of him selfe and thinke that he also. . . mighte attaine to that perfection.

That he is 'facile or easie to be spoken unto' by all except poor Francis, the puny drawer, who can barely speak at all, is half of Hal's attraction; the other half is his talent for speaking 'courtaisely, with a swere speche or countenance, wherewith the herers (as it were with a delicate odour) be refressed, and alured to loue hym in whom is this most delectable qualitie'.

Even what appears Hal's failing must be reconsidered by the criteria for behavior that Castiglione and Elyot describe: one should not expect that all Hal's vices will metamorphose into virtues, but at least the mold of form will be defined by the expectancy of Shakespeare's times. Bolingbroke and Hotspur both criticize Hal for his friends: he has acted like a 'sword and buckler Prince of Wales' and has 'mingled his royalty with capering fools'. But both of Hal's critics are unsympathetic to the importance of public affection, and, as we have noted, both are out of touch with the advice published in the best Renaissanceguides. Castiglione, for example, believes if 'the Courtier in jesting and speaking merry conceites have a respect to the time, to the persons, to his degree, and not use it too often. . . hee may be called pleasant and' a man of humor. That Hal knows something of this is clear when in the last act he scolds Falstaff for his impertinent answer to Bolingbroke's question about the reasons for the rebellion, or again when Hal on the field of battle asks his fat friend rhetorically, 'What, is it a time to jest and dally now?' Perhaps Hal is excessively given to the frivolous, but even his taste for practical jokes merits some approval: according to *The Courtier* 'a merrie prancke is nothing els, but a friendly deceite in matters that offend not at al or very little'.

Indeed, Hal's worst faults can be used to display the basic goodness of his nature, Elyot illustrates the importance of 'placability' by relating the story of Hal, the madcap prince, and the chief justice who put him in prison. By obeying the court, Hal

a prince and sonne and heire of the kynge, in the middes of his furye, more considered Ins iuell example, and the luges constance in *iustice,* than his owne astate or wylfull appetite. .. Wherefore I conclude that nothing is more honorable, or to be desired in a prince or noble man, than placabilitie.

Finally, Hal's horsemanship symbolizes his prowess as a Renaissance prince, for it offers the most hyperbolic image of the wastrel turned courtly hero in the play. On horseback he emerges completely cleansed from the stains of riot and dishonor, appearing as Bellerophon, glittering in a golden coat:

I saw young Harry with his beaver on,
His cushes on his thighs, gallantlyarm'd,
Rise from the ground like feather'd Mercury,
And vaulted with such ease into his seat
As if an angel dropp'd down from the clouds
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,
And witch the world with noble horsemanship.
(IV, 1, 104-10)

Such skills as Hal exhibits he might have practised at the recommendation of either Elyot or Castiglione. Elyot endorses the ability 'to ryde surely and clene on a great horse and a roughe' as 'the most honorable exercise, in myne opinion, and that besemeth the astate of euery noble persone'. *The Governour* also commends as 'a ryght good exercise which is also expendient to lerne, whiche is named the vauntynge of a horse: that is to lepe on him at euery side without stirroppe or other helpe, specially whiles the horse is

goynge'. For his part, Castiglione would have a Courtier 'a perfect horseman for everie saddle. And beside the skill in horses. . . let him set all his delight and diligence to wade in everie thmg a little farther than other men' while accompanying 'all his motion with a certaine good judgment and grace'.

To sum up this argument, we discover that judged by the standards of conduct recommended in *The Courtier* and *The Governour,* the two most influential manners books in sixteenth-century England, Hal is not truly a wastrel [a wild, extravagent person] nor Hotspur a paragon [a model of excellent behavior]. In fact, the behavior of the Prince at Shrewsbury and even his subsequent career as king are simply the further development of those character and personality traits which Castiglione and Elyot had considered essential for success. Indeed, it is not surprising that Hal, as one of England's greatest rulers, should embody the talents and skills Elizabethans looked for in the best representatives of nobility. What is surprising is that judged by these standards Hal proves a young man of more promise and Hotspur of less than we today might appreciate without such guides to courtly behavior, for without these handbooks for reference we might well overvalue Hotspur's virtues and underrate Hal's.

Critical Essay #7

The conflict between father and son, an issue examined by many critics, is outlined by Ernst Kris. Kris points to the relationships analyzed in most discussions of this issue: the relationships between Henry and Hal; Henry and Hotspur; and Falstaff and Hal. Falstaff, many critics agree, is a father-figure to Hal in the sense that he teaches the Prince the wars of the world, or at least the ways of *his* (Falstaff's) world. Kris argues that Hal rejects this guidance, just as Hal rejects his own father as a paternal image. Critics such as Barabara Baines, however, attempt to show that Hal takes his father's advice at significant moments in the play and that Henry's teachings contribute substantially to Hal's success, Other critics, including M. M. Reese, highlight Henry's failure to relate to his son. George Ian Duthie and John Lawlor continue the analysis of the father/son conflict with an examination of Hotspur's role as a surrogate son to Henry, Duthie argues that Henry wishes Hotspur were his son, seeing him as a more worthy heir than Hal, and as a person very much like himself. Critics such as Robert B. Pierce view the relationship between Henry and Hal as central to an understanding of the play. Pierce argues that familial order, as demonstrated by Henry and Hal, is presented as a means of grasping the political structure and issues conveyed in the play.

Source: "Prince Hal's Conflict," in *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly,* Vol. XVII, No.4, 1948, pp. 487-506.

[Kris observes that the conflict between fathers and sons appears in three different versions in Henry IV, Part One: *in the conflict between* 1) *Henry and Hal;* 2) *Henry and Hotspur; and* 3) *Falstaff and Hal. Kris discusses how these relationships are brought to the attention of the reader and how In order to present the conflict in this manner, Shakespeare deviated from his historical sources. Kris demonstrates Hal's rejection of both Falstaff and Henry as "unsatisfactory" father-figures.]*

The conflict between father and son appears in Part I of Henry IV in three versions, each time enacted by one central and two related characters. The theme is manifestly stated by the King in the introductory scene of the trilogy, when he compares Henry of Monmouth [Prince Hal] to Henry Percy [Hotspur].

Yea, there thou makest me sad and makest
me sin
In envy that my Lord Northumberland
Should be the father to so blest a son,
A son who is the theme of honour's tongue;
Amongst a grove, the very straightest plant,
Who is sweet fortune's minion and her
pride:
Whilst I, by looking on the praise of him,
See riot and dishonour Slain the brow
Of my young Harry, of that it could be
prov'd

That some night-tripping fairy had exchang'd
In cradle-clothes our children where they lay,
And called mine Percy, his Plantagene!
Then would I have his Harry, and he mine.
[King Henry IV, Part 1, Act 1, Sc. 1.]

The position of the Prince between Falstaff and the King is almost as explicitly stated; he has two fathers, as the King has two sons. When he enacts with Falstaff his forthcoming interview with his father, the theme is brought into the open. It is not limited to court and tavern, the centers of the 'double plot', as W. Empson calls it, but extends to the rebel camp. Henry Percy stands between a weak father, Northumberland, who is prevented by illness from participating in the decisive battle, and a scheming uncle, Worcester, who plans the rebellion, conceals from Percy that the King offers reconciliation and drives him thus to battle and to death.

The three versions of the father-son conflict compelled Shakespeare to deviate from his sources and thereby to enrich the stage: he sharpened the report of the chronicles on the rebellion of the Percies in order to create the contrast of Worcester and Northumberland; he reduced Henry Percy's age from a slightly older contemporary of Henry IV to a somewhat older contemporary of the Prince-and he invented Falstaff.

The triangular relationships are not only similar to each other, since they all contain variations of the theme of good and bad fathers and sons, but within each triangle the parallel figures are closely interconnected; thus the two Harrys, whom Henry IV compares, form a unit; Hotspur's rebellion represents also Prince Hal's unconscious parricidal impulses. Hotspur is the Prince's double. Impulses pertaining to one situation have thus been divided between two personages; but though in the triangles the characters are paired and contrasted, each of the play's personages transcends the bondage to his function in this thematic configuration. They have all out-grown the symmetry which they serve, into the fullness of life.

To appraise Falstaff as a depreciated father figure is to grasp the superficial aspect of a character who, more than any other of Shakespeare, has enchanted readers and audiences since his creation. Franz finds two principal psychoanalytic explanations for this universal enchantment: Falstaff's hedonism, he says, represents the uninhibited gratification of an infantile and narcissistic quest for pleasure, a craving alive to some extent in everyone of us; this hedonism, moreover, is made acceptable by contrast: one turns with relief from the court or the rebel camp to the tavern. In accordance with the last is the traditional antithesis of 'tragic King and comic people' (Empson) used by Shakespeare to emphasize a moral antithesis. From Prince Hal's point of view, Falstaff is a contrast to the King, who represents another version of the unsatisfactory paternal image. Henry IV succeeded his cousin Richard II by rebellion and regicide.

BOOKRAGS

Critical Essay #8

Source: "The Henry IV Plays," in *Shakespeare's History Plays: The Family and the State,* Ohio State University Press, 1971, pp. 171-224.

[Pierce maintains that in Henry IV, Part One, *personal, familial order is presented as a way of understanding the larger, political structure in the play. He shows how the basic conflicts in the play-the struggle of Henry, and the nation, to create harmony from Civil war, the struggle of Prince Hal to mature from a careless youth into an independent king-illuminate the larger conflict-the struggle to create order from disorder-being examined. Pierce shows how the pray is essentially divided between the public story of rebellion and the private story of Hal's adventures with Falstaff and how the additional plot of Hal's estrangement from Henry links the play's public and private worlds,]*

Shakespeare's Henry IV plays explore the theme of political order with a new depth and subtlety. Not only does the state pass through civil war to harmony, but Prince Hal develops into a king fit to lead his newly united state in war against France. Although political order is central to the plays, Shakespeare uses a more personal order, that of the family, to illuminate his theme. In the early history plays harmony and strife in family relationships become symbols of order and disorder in the kingdom. This device expresses political ideas by analogy with another realm of experience. But in the two Henry IV plays the symbol merges with its referent; Shakespeare displays the quest for political order as fundamentally like the quest for personal order within the family. The values are the same, the problems the same; only the scale is different.

In Hal and his father the historical given of Shakespeare's plot combines the two levels: prince and king, son and father. While Henry IV struggles to keep his throne and the rebels to replace him, England is hungry for renewed order. Though he is in many ways a good ruler, he cannot be the hero-king who compels loyalty as well as submission. Prince Hal is to be such a king, but before he can assume his destined role, he must attain personal maturity. He must find a viable order for his own life, one centered on his duty to become England's king. Only thus will he be saved from self-destruction or personal insignificance, and only thus will England be saved (for a time) from civil war.

Finding in his sources the legend of Hal the wild prince, Shakespeare turns it into an expression of this theme. Like any young man reaching maturity, Hal must emulate his father's role, but at the same time he must escape his father in order to establish his autonomy. Even in the ideal family this task is difficult. In 1 *Henry VI* young Talbot must defy his father's command to flee the battlefield so that he may be like his father and hence show a family loyalty deeper than explicit obedience. But Hal's father is a guilty man, one whose piety is tainted by Richard II's blood on his hands. In his personal inheritance from his father, Hal faces the same problem as the realm, how to generate an ordered future out of a disordered present. He must transcend his inheritance without denying it. It is part of the extraordinary scope of the Henry IV plays to study this spiritual process. An abstractly conceived Providence can bring peace to the England of *Richard III* because the process is exter nal to Richard, but only a newly personal and

psychological drama can show Hal's development into the king who will lead England to unity and glory,

The portrayal of Hal's growth follows a popular motif in Elizabethan drama, the Prodigal Son story. Hal leaves his responsibilities and his father for a life of tavern brawls, behavior typical of the prodigal, though Hal avoids contamination with the worst evils around him, reckless gambling, wenching, and such. Falstaff, "that villainous abominable misleader of youth" (II.iv.456), parallels a Vice-figure [a stock character in the morality play who, as a tempter, has both evil and comic qualities]. . .. Henry IV has much in common with the typical father, noble and sententious but somewhat ineffectual toward his son. . . . Appropriately enough, the parable of the Prodigal Son occurs among Falstaff's frequent allusions to scripture. This theme extends through both plays, since Hal is not completely reconciled to his father until the end of 2 *Henry IV.*

In one sense Shakespeare is burlesquing an old dramatic form. . .. After all, It is the prodigal who mischievously denounces his tempter as "that reverend vice, that grey iniquity, that father ruffian, that vani in years" 1 *Henry IV,* II.iv.447-49 . And Falstaff himself delights in acting the prodigal, corrupted by his evil companions: "Before I knew thee, Hal, I knew nothing, and now am I, if a man should speak truly, little better than one of the wicked" (1 *Henry Iv;* I.ii.90-92). This lightheartedness suggests even more clearly than Hal's soliloquy at the end of I.ii that he will not be significantly corrupted. Yet at the same time Falstaff is a serious threat to Hal's maturity, and the reconciliation with his father is a necessary step in his growth.

. . . For all Shakespeare's modifications to burlesque the pattern and to make it psychologically plausible, he uses the religious theme embodied in it. In the parable the Prodigal Son restored to his father is man restored to God, and in the Elizabethan system of correspondences the king is to his kingdom as God is to the universe. Hal's reconciliation with his father symbolizes a larger commitment to all that is good and orderly in the world.

The first of the two plays has an obvious division into two levels, the public story of the rebellion of the Percies and the private story of Hal's dissipations [self. indulgent activities] with Falstaff. Part of what raises this play above the typical Elizabethan two-plot drama is the ingenuity with which the two are interwoven, so that the Falstaff scenes parody many of the episodes and characters of the serious scenes. However, there is a third plot, less extended than the other two, that helps to mediate between them. It is the story of Hal's estrangement from his father and their reconciliation. Only in this plot is Hal clearly the central figure, though all three contribute to the most important theme of this and the next play, Hal's preparation for kingship over a united England. The rebellion of the Percies provides the battlefield on which he can prove his chivalric merit; and Hotspur, the dominant figure of the Percy camp, gives a dramatic contrast that illuminates Hal's growth. The scenes with Falstaff show Hal avoiding his duty, but they also help to educate him in the whole order (and disorder) of his future kingdom. Although Shakespeare allows us to glimpse the domestic life of the Percies, they live primarily in a public world, a world of treaties and defiances and battles, of blank verse. Although Falstaff appears, ludicrously out of place, at Shrewsbury, his is

essentially a private world without clocks, a world of sack and tavern jestS and highway robbery, of prose.

What gives the relationship of Henry IV and Hal special complexity is that in it the public and private worlds merge. As king and prince they embody all the political ideas implied in that relationship throughout the history plays. Hal must inherit the heroic and regal virtues of his father so that he may be a king worthy of his Lancastrian forebears. To teach Hal this lesson, Henry points to the ominous example of Richard II, who betrayed the heritage of the Black Prince with a frivolity that Henry sees in Hal too. Also the public theme of inherited guilt is an important one. Henry fears that his crime in deposing Richard will infect the kingdom even after his death (and Hal in *Henry V* shares that fear). As a public figure Henry IV has a double significance. He is the king, the center of order and virtue in the realm and hence the *prime* object of Hal's duty, But at the same time he is guilty; all the conscious piety of his life cannot entirely justify him, even to himself.

If Henry were simply a public figure, an emblem like John of Gaunt in *Richard II,* this ambiguity of meaning would destroy him as a dramatic character. What saves him is that he is given a private identity, an individual nature that expresses itSelf apart from his public stance. A public symbol cannot be ambiguous, but a man can be so various as to evoke two different symbolisms. In the same way Hal can both laugh at and be the Prodigal Son because he has a private identity that transcends both burlesque and symbolism. Henry IV and Hal are not only king and prince; they are also a very concrete father and son, going through all the painful misunderstanding that fathers and sons have always faced.

Henry appears first of all as king. As John Dover Wilson points out [in *The First Part of the History of Henry IV,* 1946, in a note at I. i. 1], he speaks for himself and the kingdom in his opening words:

So shaken as we are, so wan with care,
Find we a time for frighted peace to pant,
And breathe short-winded accents of new
broils
To be commenc'd in stronds afar remote:
No more the thirsty entrance of this soil
Shall daub her lips with her own children's
blood.
(l.i.1-6)

The sense of powers declining under strain, the desperate longing for peace, and the vague hope for glory in foreign wars-all these Henry shares with his land. It is a sign of his worthiness as a king that he expresses so accurately the spirit of his realm. The stark family image of lines 5-6, with its biblical echo, is typical of the severe formality of the speech. Henry's language shows the tightly linked world of Elizabethan correspondences, in which the state is a family and civil war opposes those "of one substance bred," so that they war" Against acquaintance, kindred, and allies" (11, 16).

Since most of the audience must have known that this was to be a play about civil war, they would notice the self-deception in Henry's prediction of peace; and it soon emerges that he is willfully deceiving himself, because he knows that England is still wracked with strife and even that the Percies show ominous signs of disloyalty. Henry represents a generation of Englishmen who have fought each other and will go on l'ighting until they can hardly remember the purpose of the battles and can only say:

We are all diseas'd,
And with our surfeiting, and wanton hours,
Have brought ourselves into a burning fever,
And we must bleed for it.
(2 *Henry IV;* IV.i.54-57)

After his description of civil war in terms of violence within the family, there is irony in Henry's turning to speak with pain of his son's degeneracy. At the moment he seems unconscious of any connection between public and familial disorder. It may seem like a heartless repudiation of *family* bonds when he wishes:

O that it could be prov'd
That some night-tripping fairy had exchang'd
In cradle-clothes our children where they lay,
And call'd mine Percy, his Plantagenet!
(85-88)

But the suffering is clear enough behind the petulant rejection. It is "my young Harry" (85) whose dishonor he feels; the repeated "mine" of the passage shows the grief of an estranged father, not unfeeling repudiation. If the audience perceived the irony of his wish to go to the Holy Land, they must also have seen the happier irony of his despair at the character of the future hero-king, the legendary example of wildness reformed. This speech establishes a contrast between the two young men that runs through the play and reaches its climax in their confrontation at Shrewsbury.

If in the first scene Henry IV seems like an old man, tired and sick from the strains of rule, It soon becomes apparent that he has not lost the strength of will and imposing presence that won him the crown. He sends for the Percies to explain their holding back the Scottish prisoners, and when Worcester shows signs of more pride than is fitting in a subject, Henry abruptly banishes him from the court. Questionable though his accession is, he is a royal king, and Hal can learn only from him the dignity that a king must have. The curious episode of the men in Hen *ry's* coats whom Douglas slays at Shrewsbury raises the issue of who is really king when Douglas challenges Henry:

What an thou
That counterfeit'st the person of a king?
(V.iv.26-27)
But Douglas himself gives a worthy answer:
I fear thou art another counterfeit,
And yet, in faith, thou bearest thee like a

king.
(34-35)

By a great act of will Henry is able to bear himself like a king. If the effort gradually saps his strength, there is little external evidence of his decline until his sickness in 2 *Henry IV.* Only in one scene of this play does he fully reveal the private man behind the king, when he is alone with his son in III.ii. The sense of tension, of a will kept forcibly taut in his public appearances, suggests the terrible penalty of being king.

In contrast with his father in the opening scene, Hal in the second appears young, full of vitality, and gaily irresponsible. While his father wrestles with the problems of state, Falstaff and Hal can jest about how he will behave as king. "I prithee sweet wag, when thou art king, as God save thy Grace-Majesty I should say, for grace thou wilt have none" (I.ii,16-18). The fact that the major theme of Hal's development toward the ideal king can be suggested in a pun shows the characteristic tone of the scene. When he comes to this world where time is irrelevant and chivalry no more than the code of the highwayman, he is escaping from the court, from his father, and from his own place as heir apparent.

One can take too solemnly his assertion of virtue in the much-discussed soliloquy that closes the scene. The speech may seem priggish, as though Hal were condescending to sport with Falstaff even while maintaining a severe inner virtue. He says, "I know you all" (I.ii.190), implying that Falstaff's sinfulness is no threat to his self-confident virtue. However, direct exposition of one's moral state is characteristic of Elizabethan soliloquies. It is dangerous to read too much self-consciousness into Hal's proclamation of his own worth. Many critics note that this soliloquy is primarily a device to assure the audience of Hal's final reformation, an assurance especially needed just after he has agreed to join in a highway robbery. And his treatment of Falstaff is not really condescending; he too obviously *rejoices* in the battle of wits that keeps them on equal terms.

On the other hand, the fact that the soliloquy is a conventional device need not compel one to take it as absolutely true. Only someone determined to believe in Hal's spotless virtue (or his priggishness) could accept at face value the argument that a king gains his people's loyalty from having been a youthful sinner. No doubt Hal plans to *reform,* but he has not undertaken his sins in order to abandon them with a spectacular public gesture. There is an undertone to his argument that suggests his main reason for avoiding the court:

If all the year were playing holidays,
To spon would be as tedious as to work;
But when they seldom come, they wish'd-for
come,
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.
(199-202)

Explicitly he is arguing that the contrast between a dissolute youth and a *reformed* king heightens the latter, just as the contrast with working days makes holidays pleasant. Yet at the same time he half-admits to snatching a few last bits of pleasure before assuming the heavy duties of kingship. . . .

Hal's sport with Falstaff is not only a young man's escape from responsibility, however. The public world of the play is one of disorder and treachery. Hotspur is caught in the political schemes of his father and uncle and manipulated by them. Henry IV is a nobler man than his former allies (except for Hotspur), but even he is trapped by his dubious past into suspicion and cold scheming. His projected crusade to the Holy Land is never more titan a dream of expiation. Thus Hal escapes a tainted atmosphere by leaving the court. The evils of the tavern to which he turns are "like their father that begets them, gross as a mountain, open, palpable" (II.iv.220-21). Even though Falstaff's company sometimes parodies the public world, it is not corrupted by the pervasive disorder of the kingdom. "A plague upon it when thieves cannot be true one to another!" (II.ii.27-28). Falstaff's complaint foreshadows the disintegration among the rebels, but in fact the disloyalty in his band of "thieves" is harmless and even illusory.

In general the vices of Falstaff's group are timeless; the characters themselves are an anachronism brought into the play from Elizabethan life. This habit is not unusual among low-comedy scenes in Tudor drama, but here it is significant in that it provides an escape from the political disorder of the public scenes. In the three parts of *Henry VI* disorder spreads out from the court to infect the whole kingdom, but in 1 *Henry IV* the life of England goes on in spite of treachery and rebellion among the governors. Hostlers worry about the price of oats, and Falstaff about the purity of sack. Leaving the court, Hal finds England with all its vices and jests, but also its abiding strength. What Faulconbridge brings to the court of King John, Hal reaches by going out into London.

Yet if Hal can gain strength from contact with English life, there is also the threat of forgetting his special role as England's future king. Just as he must escape from the court and his father to grow beyond them, so he must escape the unreasonable claims on him of his London companions. "0 for a fine thief of the age of two and twenty or thereabouts: I am heinously unprovided," says Falstaff (III.iii.187-89). He is unprovided because Hal has kept himself a king's son on a lark. His characteristic defense against Falstaff is his irony, an amused detachment from whatever he is doing, Curiously enough, it is the same quality that allows him to show no concern for the deed when he proves his chivalric merit by killing Hotspur, the key symbolic act of the play. His nature is not "subdued / To what it works in" (Sonnet 111), whether he rubs elbows with Falstaff or tights against Hotspur,

Critics find this ironic detachment offensive in Hal . . . when it rebuffs Falstaff's claims to intimacy. There is unconscious humor in the fugitive and cloistered vice of literary scholars who condemn Hal for repudiating the free life of a tavern roisterer and highway robber; one explanation of such a view is the absence in our day of much feeling for the importance of calling, Hal is called to be the next king of England, and so he cannot be an ordinary man. He is not denying his humanity in accepting his duty to prepare for royalty, because a man's vocation is the center of his manhood. In this play his calling is

defined by his rivalry with Hotspur. He must demonstrate to his father and all the land that he is the true prince, not only in title but in worth. Thus he can turn from the boyish jest of giving Falstaff a company of foot soldiers to a vigorous assertion of his family's destiny:

The land is burning, Percy stands on high,
And either we or they must lower lie.
(III.iii.202-3)

Henry IV and his son come together for the first time at III.ii. Ironically, Shakespeare has just shown the charming domesticity of the rebel camp when he turns to the estrangement of the king and crown prince. Henry's speeches to his son are curiously poised between his typical stiff formality and a father's anxious sincerity. His opening words are full of the traditional doctrines of the family. Thus for the first time he acknowledges that Hal's wildness may be punishment for "my mistreadings" (11). He measures Hal against the ideal of aristocratic inheritance, askins.. how he can reconcile "the greatness of thy blood" (16) with such low pursuits. He misunderstands his son, since he assumes that Hal is "match'd withal, and grafted to" these pleasures (15), the imagery suggesting that their corruption has entered the fibers of his being. But this speech is so formal that it suggests only abstract parenthood, and Hal's reply is in the same vein. They have expressed their abstract relationship, but little of the personal feeling in it.

Up to this point Henry has hidden the intensity of his emotions behind a mask of formality, but in his next speech his grief precariously warps the formality. After an affectionate "Harry" in line 29, he quickly pulls back into the commonplaces of aristocratic inheritance. He again charges Hal with betraying the tradition of his ancestors and losing the affection of his kinsmen. The king's hurt ego swings around to brood on his own past successes as he compares Hal with Richard II. He asserts that Hal has repudiated the moral heritage of the Lancastrians for Richard's corrupted "line" (85). (Primarily the word means "category" here, but it suggests the whole idea of a station in life established by birth.) His emotion gradually rises during the speech until he suddenly finds himself weeping as he complains of his son's neglect in what is no longer a king's reproof but the complaint of a lonely father.

Hal's reply to this display of emotion is embarrassed and terse, though it may reveal a deeper contrition than did his first speech. But the tide of Henry's grief cannot stop, and so he returns to comparing Hal with Richard. Now he raises the most irritating comparison, that with Hotspur, He contrasts Hal's dynastic inheritance with Hotspur's supposed moral superiority:

Now by my sceptre, and my soul to boot,
He hath more worthy interest to the state
Than thou the shadow of succession.
(97-99)

This pragmatic king has learned that even a title as unstained as Richard II's is only a shadow without *virtue,* the quality that he thinks he sees in Hotspur.

The way that he associates Hotspur with himself hints that he wishes Hotspur were his heir, but that wish is no more than a desperate evasion of his parental grief, as the petulance of his next few lines indicates. He even charges that Hal will fight under Percy against his own family.

This final turn allows Hal to feel a cleansing anger. His characteristic irony overcome by hurt love and pride, he makes his most complete and open declaration of aims. The abrupt, almost non-metrical beginning suggests his anger: "Do not think so, you shall not find it so" (129). And the next few lines illuminate its cause; if Hotspur is the barrier between Hal and Henry's love, then Hotspur must die. By Henry's own standard the warrior ideal is the measure of moral worth, and Hal means to establish himself before his father and the kingdom. Already the duel of Act V is foreshadowed and weighted with public and private meaning. Conquering Hotspur will cleanse Hal's name and make him a hero worthy of royalty, but at the same time it will complete the reconciliation of this father and son. Hence the angry reproach of Hal's contrast between "This gallant Hotspur, this all-praised knight, / And your unthought-of Harry" (140-41).

Like most fathers Henry is only too eager to be reconciled. Delighted by his son's heroic zeal and by the affection implied in Hal's hurt feelings, he regains his kingly dignity and his confidence together:

A hundred thousand rebels die in this
Thou shalt have charge and sovereign trust herein.
(160-61)

Now that he knows the cleavage in his own house to be healed, he can face the challenge of the Percy rebellion with poise. When Blunt reports the gathering of the enemy, Henry gives orders with brisk efficiency and assigns Hal an important place in the plans. This father and son standing together are a symbol of unity in the realm, just as in 1 *Henry VI* Talbot and his son fighting together stand for the unity that will die with them. But because Shakespeare has shown their reconciliation in an intensely personal scene, Henry and Hal are more than just symbols of order. Above all, the scene is a step in Hal's growth toward full readiness for kingship, but it also reveals Henry's human struggle to endure the weight of kingly office. The symbol of Unity is there, but it is surrounded by a richness of meanings such as the early Shakespeare never achieved.

The king and Hal appear together again at Shrewsbury, now in perfect harmony. Henry is so full of confidence that he can laugh at the ill omen of a gloomy morning. Throughout the day Hal is the picture of a true prince, extorting praise even from his enemies. With becoming humility in his words, he challenges Hotspur to single combat. Henry forbids that, perhaps because of still-continuing doubts in his son, but mainly because it would be foolish to give up the advantage of superior numbers. In the battle Hal shows brotherly pride at Prince John's valor, and afterward he allows his brother the honor of giving Douglas his freedom. When Hal saves his father's life from Douglas, the

king recalls the charges that Hal has sought his death. The sincerity of Hail's indignation is supported by his deeds, and in fact only the king's remark makes him point out the significance of his act. Finally Hotspur, Hal's rival, dies under his sword, and the last picture of the prince is with his family on the battlefield won by their united valor. If the expression of this newly firm tie between the king and his son is almost entirely public and formal at Shrewsbury, those qualities make the last scenes complementary to the personal reconciliation of 111.11. Shrewsbury establishes the forces of order as dominant in the kingdom, and its final moment is this public symbol of unity, a king and his crown prince, reconciled and victorious.

The path of Hal's growth is a great arc, He must move away from his father and the court so that he may find his personal autonomy. He must revitalize the Lancastrian line by renewed contact with the source of all political power, the commonwealth itself. Yet there is peril in this Journey. If he plunges too deeply into the world of Falstaff and his companions, he will lose contact with his own heritage, with the birth that calls him to prepare himself for England's throne. And so the arc turns back. Hal must return to his father and prove his worthiness to be the Lancastrian heir. Now he must act for himself, yet to defend the primacy of the House of Lancaster. Only half-understanding what has happened to his son, Henry IV senses the ardor and enthusiasm that Hal has brought with him. The returned prodigal is the new hope of the forces of order, and especially of the king his father. "For this my son was dead, and is alive again: he was lost and is found." Hal, and with him the Lancastrian line, are renewed.

Critical Essay #9

Henry IV is perhaps the play's most mysterious character. A few critics, including Ann Marie McNamara, maintain that Henry is the protagonist and a hero. Most other critics view the King's claim to being the central character as weak, with most critics seeing Hal as the protagonist, and some arguing in favor of Falstaff or Hotspur. Robert J. Fehrenbach sides with the scholars who believe Henry is a secondary character in the play. He argues that Shakespeare's indirect characterization of Henry offers some insight into the King's thinking and motivation, but also inhibits the reader's gaining a real understanding of Henry. Most critics agree that Henry is a Machiavel, that is, that Henry uses whatever means necessary, including deceit and manipulation, to achieve his political goals. Critics such as John Dover Wilson and A. R. Humphrey's agree with this assessment to a degree, but also believe that Henry is not truly a villain. For further analysis of Henry's character, see the essays by Ernst Kris and Robert B. Pierce in the Father and Sons section.

Source: *"Henry IV:* The King as Protagonist," in *Shakespeare Quarterly,* Vol. X, No.3, Summer, 1959, pp. 423-31.

[McNamara examines Henry IV, Part One *as a history play and argues that if the work is seen as such, there can be no debate over who the protagonist is; it must be Henry IV. McNamara outlines the differences between history plays and tragedies, and reasons that other critics overlook Henry as the main character because they are viewing the playas a tragedy. McNamara goes on to discount the legitimacy of claims that Hal, Falstaff, or Hotspur are the protagonists of the drama. Finally, she demonstrates Henry's prominence throughout the play.]*

In discussions of the problems of unity and of structural relationship between the two Parts of Shakespeare's *Henry IV;* the dominance of the titular character has been unaccountably neglected. Yet, according to the avowed nature, function, and theme of the history play, he is the only possible protagonist.

The Tudor history play, like all kinds of historical writing in the English Renaissance, was primarily didactic. Functioning specifically to teach lessons of patriotism to Englishmen, it had its own special method, the method of drama. . .. Specifically, it taught through historical examples the political lessons that the Tudors thought necessary and proper for all Englishmen to learn, lessons of the duties of ruler and subject in a divinely organized hierarchy of degree, the preservation of which was the only guard against the reversion of man's world to chaos. In particular, these lessons were, for the ruler, precepts of responsibility to God and to His people, and for the subject, those of obedience to the ruler as God's deputy. Through this scale or chain of rule and submission the maintenance of order in God's earthly kingdom would be assured, The Tudor state was built on such a theocratic conception of society. God was King of all. The reigning king of the realm was God's regent on earth, manifesting His providence and justice. The King's magistrates participated in God's direction of His world by substituting for His chief representative in less important offices. Subjects were bound to

obey God and His deputies on earth. All human beings were bound to perform duties conducive to the maintenance of harmony and peace.

The famous *Mirrour for Magistrates,* which ran through seven editions in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, exemplifies the didactic quality and use of historical writing in which the history play participated. It is crucial for our purpose to notice that in each of its accounts of the downfall of rulers and the destruction of subjects the cause of the ruin is *political* sin, that is, sin of commission or omission against the good of the nation, and that the emphasis is placed on the inevitability of the strict vengeance of God on those who fail to fulfill their prescribed roles in God's plan for men and nations. Although the *Mirrour* presents a group of individuals chosen from history to illustrate the destruction attendant upon the willful disruption of this plan, its focus is the state, not the individual. It is always concerned with public, never with private, sin, Its voices are those of rulers who failed to execute God's justice against rebellious subjects and those of subjects who opposed God's representatives, the king or the king's magistrates. Its laments are always for sins against the public weal. The history play, sharing this general function of Renaissance historical writing, aimed to teach nations, rulers, and subjects how to avoid unhappiness, destruction, and infamous report in the future by moving obediently in their appointed orbits in the universe.

The concept of the nature and function of the Tudor history play, here very briefly recalled, prescribes the theme of the genre: "questions of good government and national patriotism" (so says Brooke) *[The Tudor Drama,* 1911], or "the welfare of a nation as a nation (so says Charlton) *[Shakespeare, Politics, and Politicians,* 1929]. It is the fortunes of a *nation* that form the theme of the history plays. It is, therefore, the fortunes of England in a particular time and under a particular ruler that constitute the theme of anyone of Shakespeare's history plays.

Just as the nature and function of such plays should not be confused with those of tragedy, so the theme of the plays, with its public and political concern, should not be construed as that of tragedy, the concern of which is private and ethical. Indeed, the dramatic representation of a succession of public events involving a group of individuals in a political context is not at all the same thing as the dramatic representation of a private individual working out a personal problem in an ethical context. In a word, history is not tragedy. *Henry IV* is not *King Lear.*

This distinction should lie at the very heart of the problem in any discussion of Shakespeare's history plays, It seems to me to demand an approach on grounds relevant to the nature, function, and theme of the genre, to forbid an approach on any other terms, and to reject the validity of any conclusion about the structure of the history plays that is arrived at in ignorance, defiance, or neglect of the genre. Surely, one would shrink from discussing tragedy in terms of comedy as instinctively as he would from trying to determine the structure of a lyric poem by applying to it criteria which are relevant only to an epic. Yet some commentators do examine the Shakespearian history play in the patently irrelevant terms of tragedy or of a strange hybrid genre that can only be designated as "history-comedy". Moreover, analyses of the history plays are too often analyses of the *characters* in the history plays. They are concerned with the rise

and fall of individuals rather than with the change in fortune of a nation. We are asked to study the Elizabethan history play by examining it as if it were something other than it is.

That such misapprehension of the genre is disastrous to criticism of the history plays is evident in the naming of the protagonist in the play we are about to consider, *Henry IV.* By some commentators the role is assigned to Prince Hal, by others to Hotspur, by still others to Falstaff. One critic names two protagonists, Hal and Hotspur, Another speaks of Hotspur and Falstaff as "two other chief characters" in addition to Hal. As far as I know, no one names the most obvious candidate-to my mind the only possible choice-the titular character, the one whose reign is the matter and the theme of the play, the King, King Henry IV.

I propose that Prince Hal is not the protagonist and that the theme of the play is not "the education of the Prince", I disagree with the assertion that "it must be remembered that the entire plot turns on Hal and Hotspur". I suggest that it is not accurate to speak of *I Henry IV* as an "induction to the treatment of the hero's [prince Hal's] triumphant reign" and as a play "devoted to the prince's preparation for sovereignty. . . ." I suggest that it is incorrect to say that *"Henry* Wis no more than a label. They [the two Parts] are *Falstaff, Parts I and II."-a* flat statement that Falstaff is the hero. Naturally, I do not deny that Prince Hal is an important figure in the play or that his "preparation" for kingship goes on, but I cannot consider his "preparation" the central theme. I do not deny that Hotspur is an important figure in the play, but I think that his importance is controlled by that of the character with whom he is in conflict, the King. I do not deny that Falstaff is an important figure in the play, but I think that he is important because he is a formidable obstacle in the path of the King in his efforts to fulfill the prescribed duties of royalty. Yet I am prohibited from accepting Hal, Hotspur, or Falstaff as protagonist in this play by my awareness of the nature and function of its genre. My contention is that the sole protagonist of *Henry IV, Part I,* and of *Henry IV, Part II,* is the titular character, the King, and that the theme of each of the two Parts is his successful effort to maintain the well-being of England. I believe that the King must be the hero, for in the history-play the center of interest is the fate of a nation, and to an Elizabethan "the welfare of England was in the hands of its sovereign. "

It is against the background that I have very briefly presented that I wish to attempt a structural analysis of Henry IV, Part I, "the best of the histories", "perhaps the fullest and richest of all the histories", one of the "perfect specimens. . . of a dramatic type which, even in an age of creative dramatists, only Shakespeare's genius could invent" ,-as a history-play. "Perhaps no one but Shakespeare wrote the History Play proper", says Charlton. "Others made plays on historical themes [but] almost all serious plays on historical subjects are tragedies, not history plays. . ." (p.7).

The uniqueness of the genre suggests a reason for the lack of some "standard" pattern for an analysis of its plot. A. C. Bradley has p rovided the classical conception of the structure 0 tragedy. For comedy there are less dependable guides. But for the history-play, as Professor Cain has reminded us, there seems to be no pattern for plot analysis at all. My approach is through the postulate that the King is the central figure and that his actions control the plot. We must follow the King, then, from his initiation of the

action of the play through the complication of forces brought about by opposition to him, through crisis, through climax, to denouement.

The King figures in each of the five acts and in eighteen of the nineteen scenes into which *Henry IV; Part I,* is separated [All references to the text of *Henry IV, Part I* are to the edition of George Lyman Kittredge: *The Complete Works of Shakespeare,* 1936]. In six of the eighteen scenes he is present and active (I.i; I.iii; III.ii; V.i; V.iv; V.v). In twelve, he is mentioned and acted against, either directly or indirectly, but more frequently directly (in ten scenes) than indirectly (in two scenes). In only one scene is there no reference of any kind to him, the Rochester innyard scene (II.i), in which Gadshill and the chamberlain set up the robbery for the Poins-Falstaff-Hal group. In five of the six scenes in which the King is present and active, he is the dominant and directive force (I.i; I.iii; ITI.ii; V.i; V.v). In the one exception (V,iv) he may seem to be weak, but his appearance of weakness should not be misconstrued: the King is figuring in an action (the Douglas-King-Hal episode) by whicn the necessity of his leadership and the sacredness of his person as King are emphasized. It is my task now to illustrate these statistics and to elucidate their significance by a reading of the text.

The play of ens with the King's order for a report of his Counci on his projected expedition to the Holy Land. Informed by Westmoreland that the Council's consideration of it had been interrupted by news from Wales that Mortimer had been captured by Glendower and by news from the North that Harry Percy had fought with the Scots to an uncertain Issue, the King is not disturbed. He has a report from an eye-witness that Harry Percy [Hotspur] has successfully overcome the Scots and has taken several honorable prisoners. His pleasure in Hotspur's success is impaired, however, by Westmoreland's use of the term "prince" in his concurrence in the praise of Hotspur; "In faith / It is a conquest for a prince to boast of" (76-77). The word impels the King to a regretful contrast between Hotspur's "honour" (81) and Prince Hal's "riot and dishonour" (85). But he dismisses the contrast from his mind to call into question the refusal of Hotspur to send to London all but one of his noble prisoners (92-96). The King has already acted upon Hotspur's "pride" (92) by sending for him to explain his recalcitrance (100), which Westmoreland attributes to the unfriendliness towards the Crown of Hotspur's uncle, Worcester. The King therefore defers all plans for his pilgrimage to the Holy Land and calls a Council for the following Wednesday to hear and settle Hotspur's apparent disobedience. Thus, the King initiates the action of the play.

The King opens the investigation by interrogating Hotspur (I.iii), charging that the Percies have strained his patience and asserting that he will henceforth show them his authority and power as their ruler (1-9). Reminded by Worcester that the Percies were instrumental in his gaining that power and authority and therefore do not deserve harsh treatment, the King orders him from his presence as a threat of "danger and disobedience" (16) to "majesty" (18). Explanations by Northumberland and spirited denials by Hotspur (both attempting mitigation on the plea of misunderstanding) and mediatory efforts by Blunt to conclude the meeting amicably prove unavailing. The King sharply rejects them, putting his finger on the price of Hotspur's obedience, the ransom of Mortimer, his brother-in-law, by the Crown. This the King flatly refuses on the grounds that Mortimer is a traitor (86). He declares unequivocably that he will not ransom him

and insists that anyone who asks this favor brands himself as unfriendly. To Hotspur's heated defence of Mortimer's loyalty, the King gives the lie (113-118), forbids any further mention of Mortimer, and, ordering Hotspur to deliver his prisoners immediately under threat of punishment (120-122), he dismisses the Percies. Repeating his threatening demand for Hotspur's obedience, he leaves the meeting-room. At his departure, the Percies hatch a plot against him, justifying their revolt in a rehearsal of the King's ingratitude for their past assistance and of his fear of their present power to unsettle his right to the throne (130-300). Thus, the King sets himself in potential conflict with opponents of his authority.

In III.ii, the King is in action to protect the throne against an active and dangerous rebellion, The preparation and progress of the Percy plot have been made known to him. He moves against his enemies by making his ally one whom up to this time he has had sufficient cause to nominate (as he later says) his "nearest and dearest enemy" (123), It is the heir apparent to the throne, Harry Monmouth, Prince Hal. To win him, the King moves with expert shrewdness. He has summoned the Prince to the Palace from the young man's undesirable haunt in Eastcheap among companions ill-suited to one of royal blood. He dismisses his councillors that he may confront his son in private. He appraises Hal's irresponsible conduct as a probable judgment of God against him (the King) "to punish my mistreadings" (11).

In answer to the Prince's immediate suggestion of malice in the reports of many of his irregularities and his expression of regret for his real offences, the King makes his second move. Taking advantage of the Prince's rueful attitude, the King paints a full portrait of the Prince as he appears to the Court and the public. He asserts that Prince Hal seems temperamentally disinclined from the interests of all his forebears, that is, from political interests (29-31). He presents the evidence: the Prince has lost his Council seat to his younger brother, Prince John (32-33); he has lost the goodwill of his relatives and the confidence of the Court (34-35); he has caused direful prophecies about his future "fall" (38). In a word, he has become a very unpromising heir-apparent. His irresponsibility for affairs of state augurs his failure when he succeeds to the throne. The King is acutely aware of these disturbing facts and prophecies, The strong possibility of the fall of his line from power urges him to move on to repair its strength by retrieving and invigorating this weak heir. The immediate exigency of the brewing rebellion of the Percies presents a cause through which he may strike for a double *coup,* the quelling of the northern rebels against his kingly power and the quelling of the youthful revolt of his son against his princely responsibilities.

The King now shows himself an excellent strategist. He enters upon a telling contrast between himself as a youthful aspirant to the throne and his son at this moment (39-84). He emphasizes the Prince's deviation from political propriety by recalling his own early attitude as Bolingbroke (39-45): he was sparing in his public appearance (46); he was therefore sought after on his occasional appearances (47-49); he acted with utmost regard for rank, position, hierarchy ("courtesy") (50); he thus won approbation and allegiance from men even in the presence of King Richard IT (50-54). In contrast to this restraint, Richard was constantly in public, indulged in frivolity with worthless companions, adulterated his kingliness by promiscuous and indiscriminate association,

and devoted himself to popularity (60-69). As a result, men surfeited with Richard; men loathed him; men finally disregarded him. They lost their respect for him, "being with his presence glutted, gorg'd, and full" (84).

Bluntly, the King presses the point of application on the pride of Prince Hal.

And in that very line,

Harry, standest thou;
For thou hast lost thy princely privilege
With vile participation.
Not an eye
But is aweary of thy common sight. . . .
(85-88)

Shrewdly, he turns it to the young man's sentiment:

Not an eye
But is aweary of thy common sight,
Save mine, which hath desir'd to see thee
more....
[Critic's emphasis]
Wisely, he weeps. Then, he continues:
Save mine, which hath desired to see thee
more;
Which now doth that I would not have it do
Make blind itself with foolish tenderness.
(88-91)
The King wins ground.
For the Prince answers,
I shall hereafter my thrice-gracious lord
Be more myself.
(92-93)

He will act hereafter like a prince and heir to the throne of England.

But the King is not satisfied. He is fighting for a full victory. He must have more than conventional contrition. He does not comment on the Prince's reply. He has achieved a promise of his son's future attention to the dignity of his position as a prince and heir-apparent. But there is an immediate need: the promise of Hal's active and enthusiastic support of the throne in the forthcoming struggle with the rebellious Percies. His strategy in the first stage of his attempt was the contrasting of a successful aspirant (himself as Bolingbroke) and an unsuccessful incumbent (Richard II) in order to emphasize the probability of Hal's failure as a king. His strategy in the second stage of his plan is equally clever. Beside the unimpressive figure of Richard, he places Hal:

For all the world,
As thou art to this hour, was Richard then

BOOKRAGS

When I from France set foot at
Ravenspurgh. . . .
(93-95)

Quickly, he draws into the pattern the one person calculated to stir the young Prince's pride, Harry Percy, Hotspur. With this fiery young Northerner, the King identifies his own youthful spirit: "And even as I was then is Percy now." He goads Hal with praise of Hotspur's reputation, his "worthy interest to the state" (98), his leadership, his honor in battle against the renowned warrior, Douglas (107). He hurls at Hal this undeniable proof of Hotspur's valor: at this very moment, Hotspur, with his father, Northumberland, Douglas, Mortimer, and the Archbishop of York, is in arms against the throne. The peace and safety of the realm are in jeopardy (117-120). Then, artfully, he sorrowfully questions the use of revealing all his troubles to this son, who, he implies, has no interest in the welfare of his kingdom. Suddenly, he names his son his "nearest and . . . dearest enemy" (123) and assails him with a bitter accusation of likely defection to Percy through fear, low inclinations, latent anger, and craven spite against his father (124-128). "Do not think so. You shall not find it so," cries Hal. He capitulates.

The King thus wins a critical encounter. He hears the Prince, stung by his taunts, pour out promises of the redemption of his name and valor. He hears him swear to God the sincerity of his reunion with his father against the Percy rebellion (132-159). He acknowledges Hal's protestations and his own victory by an approving shout: "A hundred thousand rebels die in this!" (160). This is the result for which he has planned and fought. In it he sees the death of the Percy rebellion and of Hal's inner revolt, immediately, he places his complete confidence in his newly-won ally. He promises him a military command. His plans against the rebels are already made. With Hal's assumption of his proper role, the unification of the Crown's forces is accomplished. Henry IV -the King of England is ready to fulfill his duty' as monarch of the realm: to maintain on the field of battle, if necessary, the authority of the King against rebellion.

In V.i, the King significantly displays his sense of the authority and dignity of his position. He refuses the offer of Prince Hal to settle the differences between the rebels and the Crown by a single combat with Hotspur. His reason is clear: it is the King's duty to put down rebellion:

Rebuke and dread correction wait on us,
And they shall do their office.
(111-112)

This uprising cannot be settled by a private contest on the field of chivalry. It is a public thing. A public demonstration of revolt has been made and it must be publicly rebuked. It is a threat against the Crown and the King, not the Prince, wears the Crown. He orders all to their posts. He declares the justice of the cause of the Crown.

On the battlefield of Shrewsbury (V.iii) the primacy of the King as leader and symbol is clear. It is the *King* who is sought by Douglas. The death of the *King* is the desire of the rebels. The preservation of the life of the *King* is the concern of the loyal lords. "The

King hath many marching in his coats" (25) for a very good reason: *his* person will be the center of attack. When Douglas mistakenly thinks that he has killed the King, he shouts that the battle is over: "All's done, all's won. Here breathless lies the King" (16). In V.iv, the King's concern for Prince Hal's wounds causes him to withdraw temporarily from the battle. But the Prince urges him to go back, lest the men become confused without his (the King's) leadership.

I do beseech your Majesty make up,
Lest your retirement do amaze your friends.
(5-6)

The King is the leader of the national defence and the symbol of unity in the battle. When his identity is finally discovered by Douglas-"Thou bearest thee like a king" (36)-he fights with him and is in danger at the hands of this renowned warrior (III.ii.108-111). The strongest of the rebels has sought out the King and is determined to destroy him. Prince Hal intervenes, engages Douglas, and drives him off. The King's person, symbol of the Crown and of the realm, has been saved.

In V.v, as the battle of Shrewsbury is won by the royal armies, the King brings to a successful conclusion the action which he initiated at the beginning of the play when he saw "disobedience and danger" in the unfriendly eyes of the Percies. He sentences the chief rebels to death. "Thus ever did rebellion find rebuke" (1). Action to preserve order and peace in the kingdom has been his one concern. His words to Worcester in the camp at Shrewsbury on the eve of battle had that burden:

. . .. Will you again unknit
This churlish knot of all-abhorred war,
And move in that obedient orb again
Where you did give a fair and natural light,
And be no more an exhal'd meteor,
A prodigy of fear, and a portent
Of broached mischief to the unborn times?
(V.i.15-21)

His last words at Shrewsbury at the favorable conclusion of the battle are a sober emphasis of the purpose which has impelled him from the beginning:

Rebellion in this land shall lose his sway
Meeting the check of such another day. . . .
(V.v.41-42)

This is a statement not only of the successful accomplishment of determined action incumbent on a King but also of sober realization that such action must be repeated if that duty is to be completely fulfilled. For there is more mischief afoot. Scroop and Northumberland are up in arms. They must now be put down. The Percy rebellion has been crushed. The rebellion in the north must be similarly crushed. England-embodied in the King-will not brook rebellion.

The problems of structural unity and of relationship between Part I and Part II seem to me less vexing when they are approached with the assumption that the King is the protagonist. It seems clear, for example, that Part I is a complete and separate play-a dramatic entity: " . . . this business so fair is done. . ." (V.v,45). This action is at an end. The drama initiated by the King when he moved against the Percies' threat to the throne (Act 1) has been completed by his victory over them (Act V). It seems clear, too, that Part II is a complete and separate play-a dramatic entity in itself:

Rebellion in this land shall lose his sway,
Meeting the check of such another day another action, another victory, another enemy, on another day.

This centering of our study on the King as protagonist and on his action as the plot of the history play need not preclude our awareness of all the other elements present and operative in it. The "honour" theme, the "preparation" theme, the "reparation" theme, the "vengeance" theme may all be present, but they are present in a larger reference and as adumbrations of future plays rather than as primary forces in this one. No one of them can possibly be the central theme here. Similarly, the characters other than King Henry IV, whose specific actions we have followed, are indeed important. It is true that Hotspur, Falstaff, and Prince Hal play indispensable parts. But they are indispensable because they are all antagonists of the King. Hotspur, the fiery rebel, is his antagonist in the formation of the major conflict. Falstaff, the old opportunist, is his antagonist in the conflict for Hal's allegiance. The Prince, the young escapist, is his antagonist in "the long grown wounds of . . . intemperance", but his is an antagonism of youth-more seeming than real-and he transforms it to fealty as he joins the King and assists him at Shrewsbury. That the Prince is an embryonic hero cannot be denied, but he is a prospective hero of a prospective play, one which will bear *his* name and concern the affairs of *his* reign. Here he is the ally and support of his father the King against the Percies, just as his brother, Prince John, is the ally and support of his father the King in another play about another group of rebels, *Henry IV, Part II.* No one of these characters, it seems to me, can possibly claim the major role in this play. No one of them holds the position which the hero of the English history-play must hold to fulfill the requirements of its genre, the position of embodiment of England and of guardian and director of the fortunes of England. . . .

Critical Essay #10

Source: "The Characterization of the King in 1 *Henry Iv;"* in *Shakespeare Quarterly,* Vol. 30, No.1, Winter, 1979, pp. 42-50.

[Fehrenbach argues that Henry is not the protagonist of the play. He states that, unlike Hal, Hotspur, and Falstaff, the King is characterized by indirect means. Fehrenbach shows that Shakespeare teaches the reader about Henry not through Henry's words and actions, but through the words and actions of other characters. Pointing to the criticisms made of Henry by Hotspur and Worcester and to the scene in which Hal and Falstaff take turns playacting as Henry, Fehrenbach analyzes what these scenes say about how the reader should interpret Henry's character. Fehrenbach, urging the reader not to take anything Henry says at face value, maintains that there is much to learn about Henry by examining what he doesn't say. The critic gives special attention to the fact that throughout the play, Henry avoids discussing how he became King.]

Despite the play's title, critics generally regard the central figure of 1 *Henry IV* as just about anybody except Henry IV. The usual candidates, of course, are Hal and Falstaff, but one also finds an occasional scholar asserting that Hotspur all but runs away with the playas the appealingly passionate quasi-tragic figure. Now and again someone will argue for the elevation of Henry to his rightful place as chief protagonist of his playas against those usurpers Hal, Hotspur, and Falstaff; but these departures from the critical tradition are rare and usually are not as revolutionary as they might first seem.

Relegation of the King to the status of a secondary character is understandable: when compared to Hal, Hotspur, and Falstaff, he has fewer speeches and fewer lines; he is generally less active in the play and arouses less interest in the audience. As Bolingbroke in *Richard II,* a significant and immensely interesting antagonist, he has been the subject of considerable study. But as King in 1 *Henry IV;* Henry has received little attention, and virtually nothing has been written on the method employed by Shakespeare to make his character. This inattention is unfortunate, for Shakespeare's method of creating Henry is instructive. It illustrates how a master playwright marries characterization with character.

In a successfully constructed drama-and 1 *Henry IV* has always been considered one of Shakespeare's best plays-one expects to find methods of characterization appropriate to the characters depicted. This expectation is not disappointed in 1 *Henry IV.* The excessively passionate and open Hotspur is primarily revealed by honest and direct, if immature and unguarded, speeches, by active movement, and only incidentally by the more indirect method of description, which generally supports the characterization already created by what the young nobleman says and does. Falstaff, too, is an open book. His actions and statements on their face reveal a vain, irresponsible, and indulgent, if nonetheless likable, personality-a characterization supported by the less direct method of characterization: statements by others. Thanks to his famous soliloquy at the end of Act I, scene ii, Hal is also an open book. To be sure, he appears to be the profligate-and to a considerable degree he is a lover of good times-but owing to his

soliloquy we know him to be a responsible and serious, even calculating prince. The several unfavorable comments about his character are made by men who lack the perspective of the audience; none of these comments coincides with Hal's true personality. Primarily by his actions and by his statements-which occasionally contain an irony clearly apparent to the audience because of the soliloquy in I. ii-and only to a small degree by the descriptions of others, do we understand the person of the Prince of Wales.

King Henry is a different kind of person, and his characterization is formed differently. He is by no means an open book; he is secretive and distant, more guessed at than known. He is a man we know but do not know, a man we watch but are not sure of. For reasons as selfless and politically necessary as they are self-serving and ambitious, Henry is a private man and a Machiavellian king, alone with his own thoughts of political responsibility and personal guilt. While Hal, Hotspur, and Falstaff are primarily created by direct means-appropriate to their open characters-Henry is formed primarily by indirect means-appropriate to his close character. For example, in contrast to the ways in which the speeches and actions of Hal, Hotspur, and Falstaff inform the audience about them, Henry's speeches and actions say more about him through indirection, through irony, and through a peculiar emphasis on what is left unsaid. Also, in a play abounding in character foils, Henry's person is especially dependent upon other characters, juxtaposed and compared to him, for his characterization. At the same time, descriptions of the King playa much larger role in creating the person Shakespeare intends us to know than do descriptions of the other three major figures. In short, to portray King Henry IV, Shakespeare employs methods of characterization that appropriately deny us intimacy with this necessarily private man, this troubled ruler who in his dual struggle against past sins and present threats must always be the masker. However advantageous masking is to Henry the King ruling a beleaguered state, it does not make Henry the man a warm and sympathetic figure.

Occasionally, Henry's speeches and actions can be trusted to be literal and accurate presentations of his character. For example, his expression of concern about his son's apparent profligacy in I. i. 78-90 and his agonizing, nearly confessional conference with Hal in III. ii convey his sincere fears for England and for the throne. [All Shakespeare quotations are from *The Complete Works of Shakespeare,* eds. Hardin Craig and David Bevington, rev. ed., 1973.] His comment before the battle of Shrewsbury that "nothing can seem foul to those that win" (V. i. 8), along with his orders preparing for war in III. ii. 170-80 and those speeches and actions throughout Act V with which he directs his forces and swiftly metes out justice after Shrewsbury, reveal the King to be an adroit, efficient ruler and a no-nonsense military leader.

Usually, however, the King says or does little that can be taken at face value, little that does not ironically reveal an otherwise hidden part of his character. But the kind of irony associated with Henry IV is not the same as the dramatic irony surrounding Hal's words and deeds. Because of the Prince's soliloquy in I. ii, the audience enjoys a peculiar and intimate relationship with him, a relationship that allows us generally to know how to respond to him at particular moments. The irony surrounding Henry's words causes us

to suspect and to guess, not really to know. There remains a distance between us and the King, and because we never get close to him we can never feel sure of him.

In his opening statement to the court in Act I, scene i, Henry would have us believe that now, tired of war but pleased with the end of civil strife, he would give thanks to God by traveling to Jerusalem on a crusade. Consider this pious vow in terms of the rest of that scene, especially Henry's subsequent speeches. The long-delayed crusade, if he sincerely wishes to organize one, is an act of penance for a sin Henry scrupulously and characteristically avoids mentioning (his responsibility for the murder of Richard 11), but by the end of the scene we must question his guilt-born intention. It is likely that Henry has known all through his speech that the wars are not really over-in which case his call for a crusade becomes only a show of kingly piety. His haste in vowing to go to the Holy Land is matched only by his haste to "Brake off" (I. i. 48) the intended crusade, which he "must neglect" (I. i. 101) until the matter of Hotspur's refusal to send him the prisoners captured at the battle of Holmedon is settled. Certainly die King had known of the battles in the North and of Hotspur's refusal when he made his public call for a crusade, for Henry himself relates to the court the details of young Percy's acts from news brought to him by Sir Walter Blunt. Before Henry made his vow to go on the crusade, he had already sent for Hotspur to provide an explanation for his decision to keep the prisoners (I. i. 100-102). Henry's penitential speech is, therefore, difficult to take at face value, and consequently we soon find ourselves suspecting the King's public expression of Christian commitment.

Henry's statement to Westmoreland which closes this first scene

But come yourself with speed to us again;
For more is to be said and to be done
Than out of anger can be uttered
(I. i. 105-7)

-clearly tells the audience that the King does not consider a public, open discussion of Hotspur's rebuff *(utter* carries the Elizabethan meaning, "to make public") to be the most effective way of preparing for his confrontation with the Percy family. In secret, therefore, he and Westmoreland will prepare a strategy to counter the Percies.

When Henry next appears (I. iii), his plan has been determined and put into action. He now plays the role of a long-suffering ruler whose patience has been mistaken for weakness by his subjects. But a perceptive audience will probably laugh silently at such a picture of Henry. His characterization of himself as "smooth as oil, soft as y oung down" (I. iii. 7), and "Unapt" to have his "col and temperate" blood stirred (I. iii. 1-2), only serves to disclose to the audience, through irony, an imperious nature and a real anger. If Henry has lost the "title of respect" as he says (I, iii. 8), the loss has hardly occurred because he has been too humble and malleable. Though Henry's words may deceive the Percies, Shakespeare reveals to the audience by ironic indirection that the King is angered, yet controlled, and, above all, that Henry is a subtle defender when crossed or threatened.

The royal dismissal of Worcester continues the indirect characterization of Henry. The King would have it understood that he dismisses Worcester because of the Earl's impertinence to "majesty," but what must equally offend him is Worcester's implicit reference to Henry's usurpation by reminding the King that the Percies aided him in gaining the throne:

Our house, my sovereign liege, little deserves
The scourge of greatness to be us'd on it;
And that same greatness too which our own
hands
Have holp to make so portly.
(I. iii. 10-13)

Henry's testy reaction and his dismissal of Worcester with a self-serving statement about his majesty call our attention to his extreme sensitivity to the history of his climb to the throne-a subject he scrupulously avoids speaking about candidly throughout the entire play. Though Worcester's statement is uncomfortably pointed, his charge that the Percy house is being oppressed is substantiated by the facts. In requiring Hotspur to turn over all his prisoners to the crown, the King is demanding more than military custom allows. However accurately Henry judges Worcester to be a danger, therefore, the temper of the King's reaction, his defensive imperiousness, reveals that the Earl has touched a sensitive nerve and that one subtle plotter has recognized the threat of another almost intuitively.

The rest of this important scene finds Henry insisting that Edmund Mortimer, the Earl of March and brother-in-law to Hotspur, traitorously surrendered to Glendower during the recent civil wars. This charge is not accepted by the Percies, nor is it accepted unequivocally by Shakespeare's sources: Holinshed's *Chronicles* and Samuel Daniel's *Civil Wars.* Holinshed, Daniel, and Shakespeare all agree (historically inaccurate though we know them to have been) that Mortimer was Richard IT's designated successor, a fact known by Worcester and Northumberland and, one must assume, by Henry-though in keeping with his close nature the King never openly refers to that line of succession. More important, the Percies and Shakespeare's sources agree that when Henry charges Mortimer with treason, making him a traitor not deserving ransom, his objective is to avoid enlarging a rival to the throne. Although the audience is not likely to know Holinshed or Daniel, the force of the Percies' argument-the dramatic expression of the authority of the playwright's sources-causes us to suspect the King's motives to be politically self-serving *(see* I. iii. 145-59). Henry's speeches in these two early scenes arouse our skepticism not so much by what they say as by what they leave unsaid. The King's real motives, his true feelings, are kept at a remove from the audience, but they are not as well hidden as he would wish.

Appearing next in Act III, scene ii, Henry once again ironically and indirectly reveals what he, but not the dramatist, would hide. A. R. Humphreys has noted that Henry IV *'s* expression of sadness at Hal's behavior indicates a "covert sense of guilt," guilt about his usurpation to which he will not openly admit and on which he attempts to put a good face for Hal. Moreover, as he compares himself to Hotspur in praising the young man's

leadership and prowess in battle, Henry ironically and unintentionally identifies himself with a plotter against the throne:

For all the world
As thou art to thus hour was Richard then
When I from France set foot at Ravenspurgh,
And even as I was then is Percy now.
(III. ii. 93-96)

Later in this scene, Henry says that Hal is morally capable of joining the rebels, allying with the Percies to fight against his own father. Such an unfair attack reveals by indirection the King's own values and his own covert guilt. This is the "politician" talking, the man who views ambition for the throne as paramount and as a motive annihilating all other considerations. However profligate Hal may appear to the King, there is nothing in the son's actions to warrant the charge of treason and perfidy which the father lays against him.

After an absence of several scenes, Henry next enters in Act V, scene i. There he engages in an interesting exchange with the man who has become his archenemy: Worcester. The hostility between these men can be explained as much by their similar personalities as by their different goals. Worcester, who seeks Henry's dethronement as earnestly as the King seeks to retain his position, is as subtle and shrewd as the King himself. He is therefore more dangerous to Henry than the passionate, open, and frequently foolish Hotspur. The King attempts to disarm Worcester with statements. When they do not work, he treats Worcester with disdain, making an offer he must know Worcester will reject for the very reason the Earl has hinted at earlier: distrust of Henry.

Henry's self-serving description of Worcester's disruption of the King's peace and his call for his cousin's obedience, to say nothing of his attempt to elicit sympathy as an aging man reluctantly but dutifully suffering the discomforts of war (V. i. 9-21), contrasts sharply with Worcester's detailed, substantive charge that Henry is responsible for the civil strife because he broke faith with his early supporters:

Whereby we stand opposed by such means
As you yourself have forg'd against yourself
By unkind usage, dangerous countenance,
And violation of all faith and troth
Sworn to us in your younger enterprise.
(V. I. 67-71)

Worcester's accusation cannot be entirely dismissed as an *argumentum ex nihilo* [argument from nothing] after what we have seen of Henry's relationship with the Percies earlier in the play and heard in Henry's private conversation with Hal. As usual, Henry will not actually deny the accusation; rather, from the position of majesty, he disdainfully and sarcastically charges that Worcester has merely found a deceptively plausible justification for rebellion (V. i. 72-82). To be sure,Henry does not want war, but the peace must be on his terms. His offer of pardon, capped with the contemptuous and

peremptory "So, be gone; / We will not now be troubled with reply: / We offer fair; take it advisedly" (V. i. 112-14), must be taken in context with his refusal to deal with the substance of Worcester's argument, no small part of which is the Earl's belief that the King cannot be trusted to keep his word. For the second time in the play Henry curtly dismisses Worcester. None of this is to suggest that Worcester's view of the King is the entire story or that his rebellious attitude is wholly without fault. But again, Shakespeare, through indirection, causes us to see more of the person of Henry than the close King would allow. What Henry leaves unsaid suggests more than what he says informs.

In the end, Henry is understandably indignant with Worcester in his public chastisement of the Earl for not conveying the royal offer of pardon (V. v. 1-10), and Worcester admits to an attempt to save his own skin by his deceitful actions. But there was never any question about Worcester's concern for his safety. The important question, whether Henry could have been trusted to keep his promise to pardon all rebels, is not answered. The seeds of doubt, having been planted so plausibly by Worcester's statements and by Henry's reaction, grow so that Henry's character is affected as much by what we do not know as by what we do.

As our understanding of Henry comes less from what he says than from what he does not say, our acquaintance with other characters in association with Henry often tells us more about the King than do his own actions. In a play virtually structured around character-foils, Henry's character is notable for its subtly rich contrasts and comparisons with other actors in the drama. Thus the almost natural hostility revealed in the exchanges of Worcester and Henry-appropriate antagonists-is in great part explained by their similarity in cunning, shrewdness, and self-concern. As Henry makes his own comparison with Hotspur (III. ii. 96), we note his ironic self-identification with rebellion. Their argument over Hotspur's prisoners and Mortimer's behavior in battle, however, causes us to be aware of the two men's contrasting temperaments and, further, forces us to doubt Henry's sense of honor when his highly questionable motives are compared with his honor-driven young cousin's impulses. And, of course, Hal, who asserts that he is the "king of courtesy" (II. iv. 10) and who promises when he is King of England to command the "good lads of Eastcheap" (II, iv. 14), contrasts markedly with the present King of England, who demonstrates no particular friendship with the commons and is anything but a "king of courtesy." Because each of the other characters is more open, even more visible in these comparisons with Henry, the foil-relationships are more indirectly informing about Henry than they are about Worcester, Hotspur, and Hal.

The incident, however, that serves most vividly to characterize Henry through other characters is the famous mock-king scene (II. iv. 413-528) in which both Falstaff and Hal play the King. When Falstaff first stands for Henry IV, he chooses props at hand to represent the accoutrements of office, Hal's humorous comments on these objects carry ironic implications about his father's realm: "Thy state is taken for a joined-stool, thy golden sceptre for a leaden dagger, and thy precious rich crown for a pitiful bald crown!" (II. iv. 418-20). The King's regality as parodied by Falstaff and Hal is considerably less than grand, appropriate for a throne that is as unmajestic and troubled as Henry's.

Hal's rotund drinking companion then adopts the broad rhetorical style of Preston's Cambises, saying: "Give me a cup of sack to make my eyes look red, that it may be thought I have wept; for I must speak in passion, and I will do it in King Cambyses' vein" (II. iv. 423-26), Falstaff's role as a weeping king is appropriate to the character of the suffering Henry IV, who, guilt-ridden, grieves over his son's apparent irresponsibility and sees it as divine retribution for Richard's murder. At least three instances of the King crying are found in the play-weeping which derives from fear of his son's profligacy, from guilt (III. ii.90-91), and, as Hotspur would have it, from deceit (see N. 111. 63, 81-84).

King Falstaff's jocular comment that Hal is unlike his father parodies the King's earlier speech about Hal's lineage (I. i, 78-90) and prepares us for the King's later chastisement of Hal in Act III, scene ii. Falstaff's charge that Hal would depose King Falstaff-Henry (II. iv. 479) parodies the threat of the rebels and introduces the King's fear, as yet unexpressed in the play by the King himself, that Hal will turn against him. Only after Act III, scene ii (the private conversation between the King and the Prince at court) do the serious implications of these otherwise comic exchanges become clear. When Henry appears in that scene with his son, his actions and speeches are reminiscent of the earlier tavern scene, and their full meaning is underscored by what Falstaff-Henry has already shown us, In short, if we have been perceptive, we already know a significant part of Henry's personality-especially regarding his attitude toward Hal-through another: Falstaff,

Hal also presents a side of Henry not introduced by the worried, less than majestic King Falstaff-Henry. It is the severe, intolerant, no-nonsense Henry IV that King Hal-Henry portrays in his rhetorical attack upon the "villainous abominable misleader of youth, Falstaff, that old white-bearded Satan" (II. iv. 508-9). As Hal reveals to those who would hear how he as Henry V will react to Falstaff and the world old Jack represents ("I will," he says to Sir John's plea not to banish Falstaff), he also conveys Henry IV *'s* reaction to the corpulent old man: "I do," he says to the same plea as the Prince-King (II. iv. 528).

Whether or not Hal and Falstaff are consciously portraying these facets of the character of the KingI suspect that Hal, with his perception, knows precisely how accurate his portrayal of the King is and is suggesting, however indirectly, that he is Henry's son and will be so proven in the future-it is clear that one of Shakespeare's purposes in this delightful scene is to disclose as much, if not more, of the character of the King by this indirect method as we already know by Henry's actual speeches and actions.

The third major indirect method utilized by Shakespeare to create the character of Henry from a distance is description. References to Henry are often neutral, such as when he is called "king" or "father." Occasionally, however, they are totally unfair, such as when Hotspur says, "I think his father loves him not / And would be glad he met with some mischance" (I. iii. 231-32). But most of the descriptive comments provide both a credible and an unsympathetic picture of Henry. The major sources of the portrayal of the King by this method are hardly objective persons. But the contribution these descriptions make to our attitude to this guilt-ridden politician-through their cumulation and by their often powerful rhetoric, whatever their source-cannot be denied.

One of the first descriptions not only provides an unfavorable view of Henry, but utilizes as well the earlier device of character-comparison. Hotspur chastises his father and uncle for having "put down Richard, that sweet lovely rose, / And plant(ed] this thorn, this canker, Bolingbroke" (I. iii. 175-76). The several uncomplimentary references to Henry by his patronymic and his dukedom-he is called Bolingbroke six times (I. iii. 137, 176, 229, 241, 246; III. i. 64) and Lancaster once (III. i. 8)-have the effect of portraying the King as a usurper and an impoverished claimant to majesty. The King's Machiavellian side is kept before us as Hotspur in his several speeches in I. iii describes Henry as "subtle," a "proud king, who studies," a "vile politician," the "king of smiles," a "fawning greyhound," To the youthful Percy, the King is an "ingrate," "unthankful" and "forgetful" of what others have done for him, a man who once offered the young supporter of his rebellion against Richard a "candy deal of courtesy" only later to prove himself a "cozener."

Henry's dismissal of the Percies with threats in I. i (an incident manufactured by Shakespeare) is cited by Worcester as an indication of the King's dangerous disloyalty to his earlier supporters. According to Worcester, this danger makes it necessary for them to defend themselves by taking arms (I. iii. 283-90). As self-serving as the Earl's speech is, its argument is sufficiently credible to make one wonder about the King. Henry the politician cannot be trusted. In a later attack upon the King that is more substantive than any of the charges brought by the firebrand Hotspur, Worcester details Henry's history of broken oaths 01, i. 30-71). Despite his dishonesty, even his treachery, Worcester offers a plausible justification for his refusal to convey the King's offer of pardon to the rebels 01. ii. 3-23), a justification also manufactured by Shakespeare, One must wonder why Shakespeare chose to relate the history of the usurpation and of Henry's ingratitude to his supporters twice in less than a hundred lines (IV. iii. 52-105 and V. i. 3071) if not to impress us with the plausibility, perhaps even veracity, of the Percies' perspective on Henry. Never does the King openly deny the charges: he merely ignores or dismisses them with disdain.

Hotspur's sarcastic statement to Blunt, Henry's conveyor of pardon, that

The king is kind; and well we know the
king
Knows at what time to promise, when to
pay
(IV. iii. 52-53)

is a fitting introduction to that p assionate young man's unattractive description of Henry's earlier actions. According to Hotspur, when Henry arrived in England seeking his Lancastrian lands, he was "Sick in the world's regard," "wretched," "low," an "outlaw sneaking home." He appeared "to weep / Over his country's wrongs," and with this "face" captured the loyalty of all those he "did angle for," More recently, Hotspur says, the King unfairly "Disgraced" him in the midst of his victories and sought to "entrap" him with spies. Now Henry refuses to enlarge the Earl of March, captured by Glendower while fighting for the King's cause (see IV. iii. 52105). Percy's rhetorically powerful denunciation of the King effectively overwhelms Sir Walter Blunt's earlier favorable, but

by comparison formal and pedestrian, description (IV. iii. 38-51), neutralizing Blunt's representation of Henry as a merciful king offering pardon.

As a threatened, conscience-ridden, yet ambitious and coldly effective politician, Shakespeare's Henry IV must perforce mask both his personal self and his political self. Appropriately, the playwright forms this masking character not by means of intimate contact and not directly and openly, but as from a distance and indirectly. These indirect methods of characterizing Henry, methods that inhibit a familiarity with the man, create an almost unfailingly private man and an always political prince, who-to alter the meaning of Henry's description of himself-is "Ne'er seen but wond'red at" (III. ii. 57).

Critical Essay #11

The primary debate regarding the character of Hal concerns his reformation, or transformation, as it has been called by various critics. Some critics, including Gareth Lloyd Evans and Herbert Weisinger maintain that Hal's reformation is an act. The "act" involves Hal's friendship with Falstaff, his immersion in the world of England's commoners, his seeming irresponsibility and the carelessness he seems to demonstrate where his reputation as Prince is concerned. Evans argues that Hal's purpose is to gather information about the common people, the people he will one day rule. Weisinger contends that the purpose of the act is the dramatic and political impact resulting when Hal gives up this life in Falstaff's world. Weisinger also argues that Hal is an ideal hero, and other critics, including G. I. Duthie, agree with this assessment. Some critics take a harsher view of Hal, accusing him of manipulating Falstaff, of insincerity, of being cold and calculating. He has, like his father, been labeled a Machiavel, a politician who will do whatever it takes to achieve his political goals.

Other critics, including Charles Mitchell believe that Hal learns a great deal through his journey in Falstaff's world, and that his transformation from an irresponsible youth into a responsible prince is legitimate and sincere. Elisa Sjoberg argues that Hal struggles toevolve and in succeeding, secures his right to be king. Similarly, Hugh Dickinson shows that Hal's actions prove that he has undergone a real transformation. Harold C. Goddard attempts to reconcile the question of Hal's motives by concluding that Hal possesses two distinct natures: a free and unique young man, and the ambitious Prince who must give up his freedom in favor of power. For further analysis of Hal's character, see the essays by Ernst Kris and Robert B. Pierce in the Fathers And Sons section; and the essays by G. M. Pinciss and Moody E. Prior in the Honor section.

Source: *"The Comical-Tragical-Historical Method-Henry IV,"* in *Early Shakespeare,* Edward Arnold (publishers) Ltd., 1961, pp. 144-63.

[Evans asserts that Hal's reformation is a carefully planned event. Evans discusses the two worlds of the play: that of kingship and ceremony, and the natural world, and argues that Hal is the connection between these worlds. Evans shows that Hal voluntarily isolates himself from the world of his father so *that he may study the world of Falstaff. In order to demonstrate that Hal is never truly a part of Falstaff's world, Evans describes in detail several aspects of Hal's association with Falstaff Evans also maintains that while Hal assures his father that he will change and accept his role as the future king, Hal* is *also his own person who's kingship will reject rebellion, represented by Henry and Hotspur, and political and moral anarchy, represented by Falstaff]*

. . . The two parts of *Henry IV* encompass two worlds-the world of Kingship and ceremony, and the natural world. The connecting link is Prince Hal; he has commerce with both, and it is what the one world teaches him that enables him finally to take up his habitation in the other. In each world he is confronted with living example of kingship-his own father, and his 'adopted' father, Falstaff, emperor of the natural. Both 'kings' have a kingdom to bequeath the one the realm of England, the other, a realm of

knowledge and experience. Both kings perish so that Hal may come into his kingdoms-the one by the natural order of death, the other by rejection.

In 1 *Henry IV* Hal begins his 'education'. No other prince of England in Shakespeare's histories is shown making himself deliberately a semi-fugitive from the world of royalty so that he may more certainly and dramatically enter into his heritage with the aura of man and royalty re-born. The process is self-imposed, and in some measure, self-denying, and one ironic result of it is to set up a poignant personal tension between himself and his father. The conscious purpose of Hal is emphasized time and again. For the present his creed reads 'wisdom cries out in the streets, and no man regards it', but there is more than a touch of conceit, a sort of satisfied self-seeing in his private ruminations through the stews of London. There is much in Hal that loves flourish and drama. He looks forward to the great re-birth with youthful relish.

If all the year were playing holidays,
To sport would be as tedious as to work;
But when they seldom come, they wish'd for
come,
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.
So, when this loose behaviour I throw off,
And pay the debt I never promised,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;
And like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My reformation, glittering o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly and attract more
eyes,
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
(I. ii. 227}

Boyish conceit perhaps, but there is a calculated reasoning about it and a sense of high purpose. Here is a man assuming a false face, putting on a madcap disposition to ensure a desired result. The 'reformation' is a calculated effect-its inevitability is a species of faith for Hal-and this self-conscious responsibility is the keynote of his relationship with Falstaff. Hal has never actually sinned-the early remarks about wenching have the flavour of verbal artifice and nothing else.

When the Gadshill plans are made, the whole tone is that of persuasion. There is a strong impression that this is the first time that Hal has ever considered the possibility of an actual indulgence in the nefarious escapades of Falstaff.

Hal: Well then, once in my days I'll be a madcap.
Falstaff: Why, that's well said.
Hal: Well, come what will, I'll tarry at home.
Falstaff: By the Lord, I'll be a traitor then, when thou art king.
Hal: I care not.
Poins: Sir John, I prithee, leave the prince and me alone: I will lay him down such

reasons for this adventure that he shall go.
Falstaff: Well, God give thee the spirit of persuasion and him the ears of profiting, that what thou speakest may move and what he hears may be believed, that the true prince may, for recreation's sake, prove a false thief.
(I. ii. 160)

The emphasis here is plan. It is not merely that the prince is having to be persuaded to join in the affair; more pertinently it is the sense that his participation is a kind of formality 'for recreation's sake'. There was never a less villainous planning than this for Gadshill. It is no more nor less than tomfoolery. Its 'chief virtue' is the unmasking of Falstaff's braggadocio [a braggart's] cowardice, The action and the results of Gadshill remain carefully within the atmosphere with which the robbery is planned. In no sense is the prince involved in the actual robbery; in every sense he has a care to be disguised-his first words to Poins before the travellers arrive, are 'Ned, where are our disguises?' This prince remains unstained-his committal to the world of Falstaff is academic; he observes and learns. Any doors that might lead us to question the actual propriety of Hal are carefully closed by Shakespeare. Hal lays no hands upon the travellers. Their money is returned, the 'jest' is all.

Even so Hal's preoccupation with this world, academic though it may be, when contrasted with the idealized Hotspur, and in the light of the anguish of the King who sees nothing but 'riot and dishonour' stain the brow of his son, is sufficient not only to sketch the outlines of the personal tensions which are to well up later between father and son, but also to give an ironic depth to the widening theme of rebellion and the need for strong succession.

Yet, because of his self-conscious responsibility Hal has about him something too good to be true. He dips only his fingertips in mud, and Shakespeare is careful to wipe them clean. He has about him the self-conscious pride of the man whose indulgence is very circumspect.

The first appearance of Hal after Gadshill has, however, a different complexion. He and Poins meet together at the Boar's Head to aWait Falstaff, and there occurs the puzzling action with Francis the drawer. As Dover, Wilson says, in *The Fortunes of Falstaff,* 'Critics have solemnly entered it up in their black book of Hal's iniquities and accused him on the strength of it of "heartlessly endangering the poor drawer's means of subsistence" .' Yet it is difficult to find Dover Wilson's cheery explanation that 'the main purpose of this trifling episode, apart from giving Falstaff's voice a rest after the roaring and in preparation for the strain of the scene ahead, is to keep the audience waiting agog for him', any more convincing. The actor playing Falstaff has already had a scene-that between Hotspur and Kate-in which to rest his voice. As to keeping the audience 'agog' for the fat wonder, surely the Hotspur scene fulfils that purpose, especially since in location and tone it takes our minds sufficiently far away from the fooleries of Gadshill to make a return to that atmosphere seem overdue. And if it were necessary for us to be introduced to the Boar's Head and the Prince in order to set the atmosphere for the arrival of Falstaff, why continue the scene-setting so long with this 'trifling episode'? Perhaps the explanation of the scene may lie within the boundaries of the knowledge of

the Prince which has so far been vouchsafed to us. He is the pure Prince, the conscious wearer of a mask of very harmless anarchy. Indeed all he has done is to wear a mask-he has not indulged in a dance of anarchy, In this scene, however, it may be suggested that Shakespeare, in order to give some depth of credibility to Hal's sojourn in the kingdom of Falstaff, and to the tension between Henry IV's conception of his wild son and the reality, here shows something more than the academic observer of Falstaff's dominion. Here for a short time the Prince is committed to that dominion in a positive, though still relatively harmless, way. For a short time he relaxes his hold on the conscious curriculum of his 'education', and engages with that he had decided to observe. In short, he is drunk.

When Poins asks him where he has been, Hal replies

With three or four loggerheads amongst three or four score hogsheads.
I have sounded the very basestring of humility.
Sirrah, I am sworn brother to
a leash of drawers. (II. iv. 4)

In the interim, since Gadshill, Hal has been pursuing his 'education' and, like a naughty boy who steals the dregs at a wedding feast, is as much intoxicated by his sense of sin as by what he has drunk. Hal relishes the 'dyeing scarlet' of drinking, and that he can 'drink with any tinker in his own language'. His language has the flush of drinking on its face, and the repetitive sibilants of alcohol, and he has entered into the lovely world of hail-fellow-well-met:

I am no proud Jack, like Falstaff, but a Corinthian, a lad of mettle, a good boy, by the Lord, so they call me, and when I am king of England, I shall command all the good lads in Eastcheap.

He has the tipsy man's giggly desire for a game, and Francis is the victim. When he asks Poins to call Francis, and Poins does so, Hal, with that pointless verbal backslapping which is the temporary gift of alcohol, murmurs-'Thou art perfect'. And the jest with Francis is pointless, it *is* a 'trifling episode' in the manner in which much pub gaming is pointless and trifling, and by its pointlessness mitigates the discomfiture of the victim. Even Poins, who has not been with Hal amongst 'three or four score hogsheads' cannot fathom the game. 'Come, what's the issue?' The truth is that there is no 'issue' that Hal could possibly explain to Poins. But Hal is not so tipsy that he does not dimly remember the issue himself. His answer is:

I am now of all humours that have showed themselves humours since the old days of goodman Adam to the pupil age of this present twelve o'clock at midnight.

Now, in his own mind, he can confirm what he had earlier promised.

I know you all, and will awhile uphold
The unyok'd humour of your idleness.
(I. ii. 218)

Drink has taken Hal deeper into the world of Falstaff than he has ever been or ever will be again. In his fuddled state he thinks of Hotspur, but he talks of Hotspur in the language of Falstaff.

I am not yet of Percy's mind, the Hotspur of the north; he that kills me some six or seven dozen of Scots at a breakfast, washes his hands, and says to his wife 'FIe upon this quiet life! I want work'. '0 my sweet Harry,' says she, 'how many hast thou killed today? ''Give my roan horse a drench', says he; and answers 'Some fourteen', an hour after; 'a trifle, a trifle'. I prithee, call in Falstaff: I'll play Percy, and that damned brawn shall play Dame Mortimer his wife. (II. iv. 212)

This is the same comic-cynical vision that sees honour in terms of 'he that died a Wednesday'; in a few moments when Falstaff arrives we are to hear just such another 'parcel of reckoning' in Falstaff's monstrous fantasies of the men he fought at Gadshill. The possibilities of Hal disengaging himself from this aefinite descent into the world of Falstaff are, to say the least, tenuous. Falstaff at bay is Falstaff at his most dangerous. Hal, in the flush of wanting to rub home the discomfiture of Falstaff, faces an adversary adept, not only in the art of verbal escapology [escapism], but one, when cornered, capable of taunting, corrupting, verbal sword-play. The great scene in which Falstaff relates his version of Gadshill moves impeccably on two lines which intertwine and separate and intertwine, enfolding in their pattern a rich and total image of the education of H ,his relationship with Falstaff, and through both a vision of kingship which, when it is seen in relation to the royal world Hal returns to, creates the most moving and mature comment in the history p lays. The developments of I. iv, after the entry 0 Falstaff, are firstly the comic surface where Falstaff and Hal, indeed the rest of the crew of the Boar's Head, exist, as it were, man to man-it is the comedy which unites them; secondly the relationship between Hal and Falstaff which exists below the surface of their comic union and is constantly tending to disunite Hal from the kingdom of Falstaff. Ironically, it is the very advantage which Falstaff attempts to seize through his comic largesse of wit that gradually pushes Hal further away from his world, and actually helps to redeem Hal from slipping further into a state he had vowed merely to observe. Falstaff's great comic flaw is his inability to know when to stop-or rather it is both his strength and his weakness. It gives him his monumental self-glowing status and takes away from him his ability to 'hold' his most illustrious subject, Prince Henry.

When he enters, Falstaff is hot, dishevelled and angry. He rouses Hal to a pitch of anger by equating 'coward' with 'Prince'. Hal is caught on the raw, confronted with a direct image of himself coined in the realm of Falstaff. But the heat of anger passes, and Falstaff's imagination gathers strength. Out of his dangerous rage, the monstrous comedy of his account of Gadshil1 grows. Under the Prince's swift questioning and frustration Falstaff ascends to the highest peak of his comic dominion, The corner into which he has been pushed, cannot hold him, and there comes what Dover Wilson calls his 'consummate retort',

By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that
made ye.

There is no doubt that the brilliance of Falstaff's verbal gymnastics during this scene endears him to that part of us which revels in the bright machinations of roguery. Never again was Shakespeare to create such a sustained example of the magnificence of the solitary comic spirit. It rests at the opposite pole of the tragic hero's awareness of self. Where his is self-immolating, self-examining, inward turning, Falstaff's is selfexpanding, outward turning, feeding on its own audacity, and gloriously aware of the incredible but magnetic effect it creates. But what is equally plain throughout this scene is that Falstaff is meticulously and unconsciously digging his own grave: his future grows less as he builds himself great. Falstaff's ac. count of Gadshill is a superb essay in the art of cowardice. By the very deviousness of his description he proves the falsity and enormity of his naming Hal a coward. The coward is anatomized here-first his rage at apparent exposure, then his outrageous exaggeration, as if cloud-capped towers of falsehood will hide the earthy truth, and finally the hollow, audacious, magnificent trump-card-the attempt to put himself on the side of the angels.

Hal does not let the meaning of the essay go unmarked,

'the argument shall be thy running away'.

The relish with which Hal accepts Falstaff's invitation to 'stand for' his father the King, and to examine the particulars of his life, is an appetite based less on love of the 'game' than on the assurance of his own inviolable, secret purposes.

The mock trial scene is of very great significance since it is the last time that Falstaff is seen 'in state' with his chief subject, Hal. His reign over Hal is much shorter than is often admitted, and this scene represents a final audience before a long-drawn-out abdication. Shakespeare allows Falstaff to retain the high comic status he has achieved in his description of Gadshill Falstaff sits on the throne first. But this over-indulgence of his comic craft once again causes a gap to widen between himself and Hal. He takes up his symbols and effects of office: 'this chair shall be my state, this dagger my sceptre, and this cushion my crown' (II. iv. 415). And the Prince's repetition: 'Thy state is taken for a joined stool, thy golden sceptre for a leaden dagger, and thy precious rich crown for a pitiful bald crown', with its emphasis on 'thy', sharply: distinguishes comic licence and hard reality. Falstaff plays the game of King-father to Hal, but turns the occasion once more to his favourite theme, himself. The previous swelling fantasies of Gadshill are forgotten, and the new theme is a mocking catalogue of virtues. Yet there creeps into this feast of fooling a shadow of uncertainty, 'If then the tree may be known by the fruit, as the fruit by the tree, then peremptorily I speak it, there is virtue in that Falstaff; him keep with, the rest banish' (469).

There is a cold silence implied between this and the Prince's next words. Hal does not reply to the challenge-his mind has leapt to another world of consideration; 'Dost thou speak like a king? Do thou stand for me, and I'll play my father'.

Hal forces him on to the defensive-once more the shadow falls, and banishment is uttered. It is as if Falstaff is fatally fascinated by the need for an answer. He dare not question, but uses an appealing imperative:

No, my good lord; banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Pains: but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant, being as he is, old Jack Falstaff, banish not him 'thy Harry's company, banish not him thy Harry's company; banish plump Jack, and banish all the world.

But he gets an unequivocal answer: 'I do, I will'.

There are no more dramatic interruptions than that which suddenly cuts across the stage at this point. Bardolph runs in shouting that the sheriff is at the door. Falstaff has been left in an agony of apprehension by Hal's words-he hardly takes in the fact that the law stands outside his door. He says to Bardolph, 'Out, ye rogue! Play out the play; I have much to say in the behalf of that Falstaff.'

Indeed he has much to say, but nothing ever again that can gainsay what Hal has said. Dover Wilson, observing that following Hal's words the Cambridge and other modern editions supply a stage direction, 'A *knocking heard, exeunt Hostess, Francis and Bardol. ph',* notes that neither quartos nor Folio supply previous exits for these three, and complains that firstly, this would leave the stage silent for several moments ('which *is* absurd'), ana secondly the direction is unnecessary since Bardolph and the Hostess could exit at any time during the scene unnoticed by the audience. But it may be said that the instinct of the editors is correct. Nothing could be less absurd than a silence at this point, with Falstaff and Hal left alone momentarily until Bardolph runs back with his dread news. Falstaff hardly hears Bardolph, nor the Hostess when she repeats that the sheriff is at the door. He *is* still alone with Hal. His tone is still pleadingly imperative: 'Dost thou hear, Hal? never can a true piece of gold a counterfeit; thou art essentially made without seeming so'. Falstaff asks Hal not to mistake his (Falstaff's) counterfeiting (i.e. cowardice) for his real character (a true piece of gold). Hal is one thing while seeming to be another-so, the inference is, why should not he, Falstaff, counterfeit too? This is an interpretation of Falstaff's activities which Hal in the next line completely rejects: 'And thou a natural coward, without instinct'.

With the intervention of the sheriff, Falstaff leaves and Hal does an office of friendship. He puts the sheriff off the scent. There is, however, an attitude of strong decision about him now. He seems to be slipping away from this world of riot. It is as if he is putting his effects in order before setting out on a journey from which he will not return the same person. He engages his word to the sheriff that Falstaff will answer to the charges; he promises that Falstaff will be answerable if found guilty; he says that all must go to the wars; that the money will be paid back with advantage. As for himself: 'I'll go to the court in the morning:

The themes and issues of this great scene irradiate both parts of the flay. The magnificence of its comedy, and the meanings which emerge from Hal's verbal encounters with Falstaff make it a scene central to both parts of the play. On the battlefield of Shrewsbury its memory strikes home with a sharp nostalgia, 'I fear the shot here; here's no scoring but upon the pate' (V. iii. 31). And when Hal meets Falstaff:

Falstaff: Nay, before God, Hal, if Percy be alive, thou get'st not my sword; but take my pistol, if thou wilt.
Hal: Give it me: what, is it in the case?
Falstaff: Ay, Hal; 'tis hot, 'tis hot; there's that will sack a city.

And Hal finds it to be a bottle of sack. Again in Falstaff's scenes with Shallow and Silence, there is constant backward looking at haunts now deserted. And even in *Henry V* the long aroma of the Boar's Head stretches into the field of Agincourt, 'Would I were in an alehouse in London! I would give all my fame for a pot of ale and safety' (III. ii. 12).

But the suffusion of the atmosphere of the tavern throughout the plays is secondary to the depth of effect the action between Hal and Falstaff, within its walls, imposes upon the flow of the historical action. The comic anatomization [analysis] of kingship and cowardice in their interflay-the interplay between a world of royalty feigning and a counterfeit world which has the greatness of influence thrust upon it by the shrewd audacity of comic genius, the knowledge we receive of Hal and his purposes-all this colours our acceptance of the historic31 narrative,

The two scenes following, for example, take on a deep irony. The rebellious leaders Hotspur and Glendower, whom we meet immediately afterwards, have no glow of greatness about them. Shakespeare does not make the mistake of creating too great a contrast with the Hotspur whom Hal has pictured in the exaggerated comedy of his intoxication. This Hotspur is a long way in stature from the man we met in the early scenes arguing with the king about prisoners. There he was coldly determined, arrogant, a champion of rights, now he is petulantly mulish, irritating.

Hal has seen below the chivalric generalizations of his own father's picture of Hotspur as:

A son who is the theme of honour's tongue;
Amongst a grove, the very straightest plant;
Who is sweet Fortune's minion and her
pride
(I. i. 81)

And the proof of Hotspur's other self is revealed in this cavilling taunting youth who rows with Glendower about magic and pieces of land. But, to the king, Hotspur remains the perfect son some 'night-tripping fairy' exchanged for his own. When Hal goes to him from the tavern, he is treated to a long regretful diatribe on his own iniquities-his 'low desires', 'mean attempts', 'barren pleasures', words which curiously fit the Hotspur we have just seen. Hal, who keeps his intentions always to himself, does not break his silence. Henry ruminates bitterly on the similarity of Hal's and Richard II's behaviour, and draws a picture of himself in isolated regal splendour-a kind of altar at which all genuflect in awe:

Thus did I keep my person fresh and new;
My presence, like a robe pontifical,

Ne'er seen but wondered at; and so my state,
Seldom but sumptuous, showed like a feast
And won by rareness such solemnity.
(III. ii. 55)

Hal's reply is tight-lipped:

I shall hereafter, my thrice gracious lord,
Be more myself.

It is only when the king brings up the name of Hotspur that Hal speaks at length. He does not explain away his 'iniquity', but formally avows his determination to startle the king and the world, and Hotspur:

for the time will come,
That I shall make this northern youth
exchange
His glorious deeds for my indignities.

The tensions which inhabit this interview arise directly out of the commenting, revealing power of the Boar's Head scene. The King remains within the dim shadows of formal royalty. His picture of himself as Prince and King seems utterly and pathetically remote from the sharp realities of the kind of Prince that Hal is showing himself to be, and the kind of king he may become. Henry cannot see beyond the abstractions that surround royalty, and his stricken gaze falls upon the possibility that his usurping reign can only be succeeded by his stained son. Stuck as he is within ideas of kingship, he could never understand the practicalities of Hal's reasons for temporarily forsaking his world, in order to gouge out of experience a wisdom about men and about himself. Henry's tragedy, unlike that of his predecessor Richard, is seen to be less the result of an insufficiency to fit the royal condition, than complete isolation from the new world which is being born in the person of his son. To a king who can only see himself in terms of a cypher, a symbol, fixed and ceremonial, and all this ironically meaningless in the echo-chamber of usurpation, no other world can offer any meaning. And so Hal relieves the King of some of his grief in the only way in which Henry can understand-in a formal promise to change, and to wreak vengeance on Hotspur.

Hal has already set his face clearly in the direction of a return to a royal world-but on his own terms and of his own building. Throughout the rest of the history of the reign of Henry IV, the character of Hal constantly gains in integration, while the world of Henry and Hotspur-the political world of usurpation and rebellion-and the world of Falstaff, the anarchic comic, constantly gain a momentum towards disintegration. As the history advances towards the Kingship of Hal, he is seen more and more as a rock of unity, a Prince of total experience, around which the rest disintegrates.

Critical Essay #12

Source: "A Shakespeare All too Modern?" in *Arizona Quarterly,* Vol. 20, No.4, Winter, 1964, pp. 293-316.

[Weisinger argues that Hal is "the ideal hero" and that his reformation is calculated. Weisinger states that Hal takes on the role of the Prodigal Son in order to increase the political impact of his transformation from an irresponsible boy into a good, responsible, legitimate future king. Weisinger also comments on how Hal uses Falstaff to accomplish this dramatic reformation.]

. . . In the character of Prince Hal, Shakespeare created the ideal hero. Confronted with the necessity of ridding the nation of a legitimate but bad king, a man morally corrupt, incapable of decisive action, and without the slightest sense of his regal obligations, Bolingbroke [Hal's father, Henry] seizes the throne at the cost of his own troubled conscience; he becomes King Henry IV, the good but illegitimate king. To his son he bequeaths the task of becoming both a legitimate and good king, a problem which Hal solves in his own way, a way misunderstood, ironically enough, by his father who had ascended to the throne by paths not unlike those followed by his son. Hal puts on the mask of irresponsibility so that when he chooses to drop the disguise his seeming reformation will appear all the more surprising and therefore all the more politically effective; he deliberately chooses to play the role of the Prodigal Son. He uses Falstaff as the screen behind which he conceals his intentions, and the tragedy of Falstaff is that, clever as he is, he is yet not clever enough to realize that he is nothing but a simple pawn in Hal's game. For Falstaff is to the son what Richard was to the father: the symbol of irresponsibility whose final defeat is the signal for a new order of law and justice. Falstaff is therefore never rejected for the simple reason that he has never been accepted, and his destruction is foretold him in the mock court scene of *I Henry IV:* Falstaff: "No, my good lord; banish Peto, banish Bardolf, banish Poins; but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant, being, as he is, old Jack Falstaff, banish not him thy Harry's company, banish not him thy Harry's company. Banish plump Jack, and banish all the world." Prince: "I do, I will." And he does, in *II Henry IV,* when Falstaff calls out to him in the coronation procession: "My king! My Jove! I speak to thee, my heart!" King: "I know thee not, old man; fall to thy prayers. . .. I have long dreamt of such a kind of man, / . . . But, being awak'd, I do despise my dream." Yet before Hal can conquer the symbol of moral irresponsibility, the threat from within, he has to overcome the symbol of political irresponsibility, the threat from without, in the person of Hotspur. Brilliant, egotistical, undisciplined, Hotspur possesses qualities which Hal does not have: warmth, love, wit, color, gaiety, But his virtues are defects in a man who has no control over himself. By defeating Hotspur, Hal acquires at little cost the reputation for bravery and daring Hotspur has spent a lifetime in the fields acquiring; it is a triumph of cold intellect over hot passion:

For the time will come
That I shall make this northern youth

exchange
His glorious deeds for my indignities.
Percy is but my factor, good my lord,
To engross up glorious deeds on my
behalf; . . .

Thus, as by a dialectical transformation, Hal is changed from the Prodigal Son into the good and legitimate King Henry V. . .

Critical Essay #13

Source: "The Education of the True Prince," in *Tennessee Studies in Literature,* Vol. XII, 1967, pp. 13-21.

[Mitchell offers a detailed account of Hal's education, drawing attention to the characters Hal learns from. In discussing Hal's relationship with Falstaff, Mitchell argues that Hal explores aspects of human weakness. Mitchell also examines how Hal's conception of honor changes through the course of the play due to the King's lecture on the subject and to Hal's association with Falstaff. Hal's View of Hotspur's conception of honor also aids the Prince in confirming his own understanding of honor, observes Mitchell. The critic also notes that the battle between Hal and Hotspur is *representative of the "confrontation of true and false honor."]*

. . . By definition, a king must be superior to other men; on the other hand, if he feels only the superiority of his rank, as does Henry IV, he is not qualified to rule; indeed, moral superiority, upon which rank is ideally founded, recognizes no significant difference between the socially noble and the ignoble man. . . . Hal learns that the concept of hierarchy depends upon equality: that hierarchy mirrors the degree of awareness of one's equality to others. Falstaff never rises above his baseness as a man, and Henry IV does not rise to, by descending from, his political rank, because neither is guided by the awareness of moral truth. Falstaff and Henry IV represent Hal's two fathers, the one standing for Hal's condition as a man and the other for his status as a prince; the two extremes of man and prince-baseness and superiority-are synthesized in Hal by his moral sense of true honor.

The two-part setting of the play helps to distinguish the two stages of its action. In the first half, Hal as a man enjoys the life of ease and inactivity; in the second half, Hal as prince performs the active duties required by his rank. That Hal's character is to be reviewed under the dual aspects of man and prince is indicated by the distinction which Falstaff makes repeatedly: "Why, Hal, thou know'st, as thou art but man I dare; but as thou art Prince I fear thee" (III, iii, 165-66). [All references to Shakespeare's text are from *The Complete Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare,* 1942.] It would be unwise to assume that the two aspects of Hal's character are unrelated and that his conversion from man to prince is sudden. Hal's ability to span the poles of baseness and nobility demonstrates the paradox of honor-that he who is highest is also lowest, since he who is highest on the ethical scale is lowest on the social scale (as "servant" to the state). When he is pal to Falstaff, Hal is looked upon as the basest of men; when, however, Hal leaves Eastcheap to assume his role as Prince, he is described as "an angel dropped down from the clouds" (IV, ii, 108). The lowness and the highness exist simultaneously in a true prince; neither unprincipled baseness, obviously, (as in Falstaff) nor unprincipled nobility (as in Hotspur) establishes one's inner nobility.

With Falstaff's help, Hal discovers both his common weakness as a man and his special strength as a man, which together enable him to be the true Prince. The weaknesses which Hal permits himself are associated with Falstaff's physical appetites; the

weakness which Hal does not allow himself is associated with Falstaff's comic wit, which is related to Falstaff's flouting of moral consciousness. Although Hal admittedly permits himself the release of physical appetites which express his nature as a man-an admission which proud kings tend not to make-he does not permit himself to surrender moral principles, as does Falstaff. As for the former weaknesses, Hal readily acknowledges them: "I am now of all humours that have showed themselves humours since the old days of goodman Adam to the pupil age of this twelve o'clock at midnight" (II, iv, 104-08). This kind of surrender to baseness is necessary for Hal's achievement of virtue; Hal says at one point, "I have sounded the very base-string of humility. Sirrah, I am sworn brother to a leash of drawers" (II, iv, 5-7). That Hal's "humility" has a moral cast is indicated by the remark that he is "no proud Jack, like Falstaff." At the same time that he is base, Hal is said to be "the king of courtesy," a phrase which competes favorably with Hotspur's "king of honor."

That Hal's lessons in humility prepare him for his role as king becomes clear when he assumes that position in the future; but now his consciousness of his future role helps him to combat the other temptation which Falstaff presents to Hal-laughter at wit. Laughter is, of course, related to the temptation of appetite as part of the appeal of worldly folly. Moreover, whereas Hotspur flouts morality with the power of valorous action, Falstaff flouts it with the sheer force of his wit, Falstaff delights in finding himself in a moral pickle, for the moral accusation offers him the occasion to prove the power of his imagination. His method is to explode accusatory fact with such brilliantly outlandish fictions that his accuser laughs away his own moral accusation. The essence of Falstaff's wit is not that it dodges moral issues but that it meets them head on introducing enormously funny clashes between wit an morality, with the intention not of evading but of marching straight through moral opposition. For a moral man like Hal, the danger of Falstaff's wit is that it may produce moral anarchy, its purpose being to laugh Hal out of moral consciousness, That Hal withStands the great temptation of laughter is indicated by his restrained response to each witty reply Falstaff makes.

In the first half of the play, Hal explores his weaknesses as a man, but these weaknesses are kept in check by the superior moral consciousness which makes him worthy of his superior rank. In the second half of the play, he is confronted with opportunities not to revel in baseness, but, on the contrary, to plume his honor in the public eye; he is protected from that temptation, however, by the sense of humility which he gained in the recent past. Two definitions of honor are operative in the second half of the play, one based on external, and the other on internal value. Henry IV and the rebels conceive of honor in terms of mere rank and mere valorous action unrelated to the virtue of true motive. Since Hal's concept of honor is internal and hence contrary to that of the King and the rebels, it is not surprising that Henry is at odds with his son but admires his enemy, Hotspur.

When Hal returns to the court, the King delivers a biting disquisition on the theme of honor. The King defines honor as a value synonymous with seriousness, although with seriousness of a ceremonial, external kind which contrasts with Richard II's levity:

and so my state,
Seldom but sumptUous, show'd like a feast
And won by rareness such *solemnity.*
The skipping King, he ambled up and down
With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits
(III, ii, 57-61).

The King accuses Hal of having, like Richard, lost honor through levity and base association:

For thou hast lost thy princely privilege
With vile participation.

The King argues that royalty should not be seen too much because its power over the people is "blunted with community." While the King berates Hal for his dishonor, the King unwittingly subverts his own concept of honor. The implication of Henry's discourse is that he depends so heavily on the outer appearance of royalty, which he describes as "My presence, like a robe pontifical, Ne'er seen but wond'red at," because he lacks the inner royalty founded on true purpose, which was defined earlier in Gadshill's remark that "they pray continually to their saint, the commonwealth; or rather, not pray to her, but pray on her" (II, i, 87-90). Henry contends that the outward royalty of mere rank cannot stand the test of repeated appearance and mingling with commoners:

Had I so lavish of my presence been,
So common-hackney'd in the eyes of men,
So stale and cheap to vulgar company,
Opinion, that did help me to the crown,
Had still kept loyal to possession
And left me in reputeless banishment,
A fellow of no mark nor likelihood.

But true honor does not rub off when a king rubs shoulders with commoners-a fact which is evident from Hal's demeanor as true Prince and as Henry V. However, Henry IV, who defines honor in terms of outward appearance, cannot perceive Hal's inner truth; he sees only that Hal is "degenerate," but praises Hotspur's "neverdying honour" in spite of the fact that Hotspur is inwardly degenerate, rebelling against Henry's government for selfish interest. It is ironic that Henry should identify Hal with the true King, Richard II, and himself with the degenerate Hotspur:

For all the world
As thou art to this hour was Richard then
When I from France set foot at Ravenspurgh,
And even as I was then is Percy now.

Although the King feels that base association and greatness of rank are irremediably opposed:

Tell me else,
Could such inordinate and low desires,
Such poor, such bare, such lewd, such mean attempts,
Such barren pleasures, rude society,
As thou art match'd withal and grafted to,
Accompany the greatness of thy blood
And hold their level with thy princely heart?

Hal realizes that he has not lost honor by base association, but, rather, gained it; his association with Falstaff has taught him a kind of true humility (in contrast to the King's false humility), founded on the admission of human weaknesses, and has made him realize that royalty symbolizes the kind of superior moral consciousness he exercised when he reproved Falstaff and withstood the temptation to laugh away the reproof.

Hal's education in the presence of Falstaff may be interpreted as a progression away from the position expressed by the King in his lecture to the Prince. At the beginning of the play, however, Hal's attitude toward honor seems, in part at least, to resemble his father's. In his first soliloquy, Hal defines honor primarily as the external fact of rank; moreover, the principle whereby he intends to assume the honor which shall engender wonder in his viewers is rather similar to the King's. Just as by exercising the device of contrasting behavior, the King becomes "like a comet . . . wond'red at" (III, ii, 47), so likewise, Hal says,

Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That when he please again to be himself
Being wanted, he may be more *wond'red at*
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapours that did seem to strangle h,in. . . .
So, when this loose behaviour I throw off
And pay the debt I never promised,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes
(I, I, 22-34).

Hal does not "pocket up his wrong" here, but pretends that his loose behavior is merely a "skill" or device whereby to enhance a glittering honor. He attributes the baseness not to himself but to others, pretending that he "doth permit" their presence, which he will "throw off" by some kind of mechanical reformation, suddenly, when he sees fit, not when he is morally prepared to.

In his speech to Falstaff after the Gadshill robbery, when Hal assumes the role of the King and addresses Falstaff as though he were the Prince, Hal acts out, though in a conscious fiction, the acceptance of baseness in himself: "Swearest thou ungracious boy? Henceforth ne'er look on me. Thou art violently carried away from grace" (II, iv, 490-92). When Falstaff, acting as King, spoke irresponsibly, saying, "there is virtue in that Falstaff; him keep with; the rest banish," Hal replied, "Dost thou speak like a king? Do thou stand for me, and I'll play my father." And when Falstaff, as Prince, pleads, "banish not him thy Harry's company," Hal replies, "I do, I will." Here, though in a play within a play, superiority of rank would seem to go hand in hand with superiority of moral consciousness. Hal loves both his fathers, but perceives the moral limits of the one through the character of the other.

When he is at last chastised by his father in fact instead of in fiction, Hal exp resses a shrewd understanding of honor. His final reply to the King's rebuke of his past behavior is a comprehensive one. Hal indicates that he will not merely "throw off" dishonor as he had earlier intended, but will "scour [his] shame" with the blood of action. Furthermore, says Hal, that shall be the day, whene'er it lights, That this same child of honour and renown, This gallant Hotspur, this all-praised knight,

And your unthought-of Harry chance to
meet.
For every honour sitting on his helm,
Would they were multitudes, and on my
head
My shames redoubled! For the time will
come
That I shall make this northern youth
exchange
His glorious deeds for my indignities.
Percy is but my factor, good my lord,
To engross up glorious deeds on my behalf;
And I will call him to so strIct account
That he shall render every glory up,
Yea, even the slightest worship of his time,
Or I will tear the reckoning from his heart.
This, in the name of God, I promise here;
The which if He be pleas'd I shall perform.

As the concluding lines indicate, this speech is informed by a dignified moral seriousness. Hal's prophecy does not so much express a witty boast about exchanging honors with Hotspur as it indicates Hal's moral discrimination between his character and Hotspur's. True honor belongs not to the rebellious Hotspur, who is merely his factor. Hal is now prepared to call Hotspur to a reckoning, just as he is prepared to do with Falstaff, in both cases setting the inverted moral perspective aright. Hal is aware that he has still to earn his honor because so far he has displayed only "loose behaviour." Contrariwise, Hal feels that Hotspur has worked a little too industriously for honor: "I am not yet of Percy's mind, the Hotspur of the north; he that kills me some six or seven

Scots at a breakfast, washes his hands, and says to his wife, 'Fie upon this quiet life! I want work'" (II, iv, 113-17). The humility which Hal has earned through his past association with Falstaff guides him to his present understanding of the concept of honor. Hal is, in short, superior to Falstaff on the one hand and to Hotspur on the other, for Falstaff does not check his baseness, nor on the contrary, does Hotspur limit his sense of superiority. The two extremes share a common moral irresponsibility, for the coward and the foolhardy act upon the principle of unlicenced self-regard.

Hal demonstrates his moral consciousness by evincing a valorous selflessness grounded in a sense of humility. When he challenges Hotspur to personal combat, his avowed aim is not to gain personal honor, but to risk his life to save the lives of his countrymen, both partisan and foe. Even Vernon, one of the enemy chiefs, calls attention to Hal's modesty:

I never in my life
Did hear a challenge urg'd more modestly. . . .
He made a blushing cital of himself,
And chid his truant youth with such a
grace. . . .

Hal also exercises moral discrimination when he observes that Hotspur's valor has deserved honor, but only until the present enterprise:

By my hopes,
This present enterprise set off his head,
I do not think a braver gentleman,
More active-valiant or more valiant-young,
More daring or more bold, is now alive
To grace thiS latter age with noble deeds
(V, i, 87-92).

Hal's martial encounter with Hotspur is emblematic of the confrontation of true and false honor. Hence Hallets honor as reward (which is associated with rank, V, iv, 146) go to Falstaff, who will "follow, as they say, for reward." Hal remains satisfied with virtue performed. Falstaff's allegation that he has slain Hotspur is perhaps the most blatant of all his witty exaggerations: that essential cowardice has slain essential valor. But Falstaff means to be taken seriously (see V, v, 148-56) and in fact has taken himself seriously in rationalizing his swordthrust into Hotspur's dead body. For the first time in the play, Hal does not confound Falstaff's ludicrous contention:

For my part, If a lie may do thee grace,
I'll gild it with the happiest terms I have.

But also for the first time the issue is not a moral one: that external honor which initially Hal had hoped to gain he now freely relinquishes to the kind of man who seeks it. Hotspur's counterfeit honor suits the counterfeit man, not the true Prince.

Critical Essay #14

Falstaff has inspired an abundance of criticism, to say the least. Critics tend to agree that Shakespeare's characterization of Falstaff is one of the playwright's greatest achievements. Probably the most debated aspect of Falstaff's character is his cowardice. Eighteenth-century commentary, beginning with Maurice Morgann's study of Falstaff, focussed heavily on this subject. Morgan argued that the "real" Falstaff was a courageous figure, not the drunken coward he appeared to be. A. C. Bradley continued this line of argument in the nineteenth century. Bradley maintains that while Falstaff may act in a cowardly manner at times, he is actually not a coward. Other critics, including Robert Willson, conclude that in naming Falstaff, Shakespeare intended to indicate that cowardice, as well as gluttony, are aspects of Falstaff's character.

Taking a wider approach to the analysis of Falstaff are critics such as Axel Clark, who examines Falstaff's role and power as a comic figure throughout the play. Clark concludes that, by the end of the play, Falstaff's influence over other characters is diminished, as is his comic view of life. Other commentators, including Lois Bueler have analyzed the responses of critics and audiences to the character of Falstaff. Bueler po ints out that the majority of criticism on Falstaf has been written from the pomt of view of middle-aged or elderly males. She argues that women and younger readers may respond less favorably to Falstaff than the older male critics who view the "fat knight" as a figure of wish fulfillment. For further analysis of Falstaff's character, see the essay by Robert B. Pierce in the Fathers And Sons section, and the essays by Gareth Lloyd Evans and Charles Mitchell in the section on Prince Hal.

Source: "The Rejection of Falstaff," in *Shakespeare: Henry IV Parts I and II,* edited by G. K. Hunter, Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1970, pp. 56-78.

[In an excerpt from a lecture fi rst published in 1909, Bradley maintains that Falstaff is not a coward, even though his behavior sometimes appears cowardly. Bradley offers a definition of a coward, and, after a brief commentary on the history of the stock comic figure Falstaff represents, shows how Falstaff does not fit his definition. Bradely Cites a number of examples to support his argument and includes an explanation of why Fal. staff ran away during the Gadshill incident and why he pretended to be dead at Shrewsbury.]

. . . That Falstaff sometimes behaves in what we should generally call a cowardly way is certain; but that does not show that he was a coward; and if the word means a person who feels painful fear in the presence of danger, and yields to that fear in spite of his better feelings and convictions, then assuredly Falstaff was no coward. The stock bully and boaster of comedy is one, but not Falstaff. It is perfectly clear in die first place that, though he had unfortunately a reputation for stabbing and caring not what mischief he did if his weapon were out, he had not a reputation for cowardice. Shallow remembered him five-and-fifty years ago breaking Scogan's head at the court-gate when he was a crack not thus high; and Shallow knew him later a good back-swordsman.

Then we lose sight of him till about twenty years after, when his association with Bardolph began; and that association implies that by the time he was thirty-five or forty he had sunk into the mode of life we witness in the plays. Yet, even as we see him there, he remains a person of consideration in the army. Twelve captains hurry about London searching for him. He is present at the Council of War in the King's tent at Shrewsbury, where the only other persons are the King, the two princes, a nobleman and Sir Walter Blunt. The messenger who brings the false report of the battle to Northumberland mentions, as one of the important incidents, the death of Sir John Falstaff. Colvile, expressly described as a famous rebel, surrenders to him as soon as he hears his name. And if his own wish that his name were not so terrible to the enemy, and his own boast of his European reputation, are not evidence of the first rank, they must not be entirely ignored in presence of these other facts. What do these facts mean? Does Shakespeare put them all in with no purpose at all, or in defiance of his own intentions? It is not credible.

And when, in the second place, we look at Falstaff's actions, what do we find? He boldly confronted Colvile, he was quite ready to fight with him, however pleased that Colvile, like a kind fellow, gave himself away. When he saw Henry and Hotspur fighting, Falstaff, instead of making off in a panic, stayed to take his chance if Hotspur should be the victor. He *led* his hundred and fifty ragamuffins where they were peppered, he did not *send* them, To draw upon Pistol and force him downstairs and wound him in the shoulder was no great feat, perhaps, but the stock coward would have shrunk from it. When the Sheriff came to the inn to arrest him for an offence whose penalty was death, Falstaff, who was hidden behind the arras, did not stand there quaking for fear, he immediately fell asleep and snored. When he stood in the battle reflecting on what would happen if the weight of his paunch should be increased by that of a bullet, he cannot have been in a tremor of craven fear. He *never* shows such fear; and surely the man who, in danger of his life, and with no one by to hear him, meditates thus: 'I like not such grinning honour as Sir Walter hath. Give me life: which if I can save, so; if not, honour comes unlooked-for, and there's an end,' is not what we commonly call a coward.

'Well,' it will be answered, 'but he ran away on Gadshill; and when Douglas attacked him he fell down and shammed dead.' Yes, I am thankful to say, he did. For of course he did not want to be dead. He wanted to live and be merry. And as he had reduced the idea of honour *ad absurdum* [to absurdity], had scarcely any self-respect, and only a respect for reputation as a means to life, naturally he avoided death when he could do so without a ruinous loss of reputation, and (observe) with the satisfaction of playing a colossal practical joke. For *that* after all was his first object. If his one thought had been to avoid death he would not have faced Douglas at all, but would have run away as fast as his legs could carry him; and unless Douglas had been one of those exceptional Scotchmen who have no sense of humour, he would never have thought of pursuing so ridiculous an object as Falstaff running. So that, as Mr Swinburne remarks, Poins is right when he thus distinguishes Falstaff from his companions in robbery: 'For two of them, I know them to be as true-bred cowards as ever turned back; and for the third, if he fight longer than he sees reason, I'll forswear arms.' And the event justifies this distinction. For it is exactly thus that, according to the original stage-direction, Falstaff

behaves when Henry and Poins attack him and the others. The rest run away at once; Falstaff, here as afterwards with Douglas, fights for a blow or two, but, finding himself deserted and outmatched, runs away also. Of course. He saw no reason to stay. *Any* man who had risen superior to all serious motives would have run away. But it does not follow that he would run from mere fear, or be, in the ordinary sense, a coward.

Critical Essay #15

Source: "The Battle of Shrewsbury," in *The Critical Review,* Melbourne, No. 15, 1972, pp. 29-45.

[Clark examines Falstaff's comic role in the play and comments on the limitations of that role. Clark traces Falstaff's movement in the play from his stature as the principal character in what appears to be a comedy to his role as a subordinate character wielding little power by the end of the play. Throughout the play, Clark argues, Falstaff's Jests point to truths that other characters jail to recognize. By the end of the play, Falstaff has come to understand the limitations of his comic view of life, in that he realizes that preserving his own life is a serious matter.]

The Battle of Shrewsbury is the consummation of this mixed historical and comic drama which constitutes *Henry IV* Part One, but it is also a transitional stage in the development towards the puzzlingly different drama of Part Two. On the one hand, the conflict between the comic and serious views of events, which has continued throughout the drama, reaches its climax. For the first time all the main characters of Part One are brought together on the stage. So Falstaff's witty comments are more obviously relevant to the serious political issues of the play than ever before, and the criticisms of the great men and events he sees are often devastating. But on the other hand, the scope of the comedy is at times more limited than ever before, as Falstaff is partly detached from the battle, though physically close to it; his words and actions, in the context of a battle crucial to men's lives and the nation's future, are no longer infallibly amusing, and sometimes shallow or repellent.

The move from the Boar's Head to Shrewsbury shows Falstaff in a different light (as it does Hal). The evil effects of his determination to preserve his freedom-the suffering it causes others, the corruption it produces in himself-are realized more deeply, and with increasing horror and disgust, in each successive scene in which he appears. When, on the road to Shrewsbury, he defends his misuse of the king's press- "good enough to toss; food for powder, food for powder; they'll fill a pit as well as better: tush, man, mortal men, mortal men" (IV, ii, 63-5)-he may seem to be criticizing the war mentality, but he is also reflecting this mentality, condoning this attitude, even endorsing and using it for his own profit.

Falstaff's ability to exploit every situation is evident right to the end of Part One, but at Shrewsbury he often appears more limited than ever before, He is unable (or refuses) to comprehend the full moral significance of his actions, and he has little influence over the events in which he participates. Though he is the master and exploiter of his soldiers, and though unlike them he understands and utilizes his situation, he is at one with them in being a participant in events shaped by the decisions of the great politicians. His actions are still comic, and he is the greatest example of the savagery and falsity that characterize the whole battle, but his finest speeches are now soliloquies, commentaries; he sees and conveys the comedy of a piece of history in which he is only partly involved, Whereas Falstaff was once the creator of and principal actor in the

comedy, he is by the time of the battle a subordinate actor, though a central figure. His significance is great-he may be seen as symbolizing the forces which triumph at Shrewsbury-but his Influence over the battle (and more personally over the behaviour of Hal) is slight. His most important comic and historical role is that of commentator. He sometimes seems like Thersites in the battle scenes of *Troilus and Cressida,* watching, understanding, mocking and fearing the conflict-apparently the very opposite of the royal and rebel leaders, who are completely absorbed in the action.

This impression, that Falstaff is different from the other leading characters at Shrewsbury, is strong in the first two scenes of Act V, but as the battle develops, the similarities between them become increasingly important. In the first scene of Act V, though Falstaff enters with royal leaders, and listens to the parley with Worcester and Vernon, he appears to be quite alien to these politicians. He is almost completely silent till the king and Worcester have finished their argument and left. He speaks only one line in this time, which is a deadly comment on Worcester:

Worcester . . . I protest
I have not sought the day of this dislike.
King Henry You have not sought it! How
comes it then?
Falstaff Rebellion lay in his way, and he found it.
Prince Peace, chewet, peace!
(V, i, 25-9)

The prince's remark shows how much of an embarrassment Falstaff is, how out of place he is in a military parley. To act the clown in this situation indicates a complete want of tact, a complete failure to recognize and respect the gravity of the situation. But Falstaff's remark is true, as Worcester shows when he excuses the rebellion with a mixture of misrepresentations, anger and vanity. Some kinds of truth are out of place in this company, and Falstaff holds his tongue until the king and Worcester finish their fruitless parley and leave the stage.

Left alone with Hal, Falstaff (unlike anyone else in this scene) unashamedly acknowledges that his principles in the battle will really be self-help and self-preservation. He can be seen in several ways here: as the honest man, who will openly acknowledge the supposedly base motives that the king and Worcester seek to conceal behind their proud posturing; as the irresponsible coward, decrying honour because he does not have it, while the Douglas, Hotspur and Hal are obviously brave, and honourable in that sense at least; or as the simple (but shrewd) human amongst wolves, the only man to feel and express spontaneously the fear of death, and a complete cynicism about all honours won by defying or suffering death. Perhaps the last view of Falstaff comes out most strongly at this point, because of the sheer nakedness of his emotions, and the consequent power of his expression. When he confides to the Prince, "I would 'twere bedtime, Hal, and all well" (V. i, 125), he is more than merely a base coward: his remark stands out as one of the most candid, deeply felt and universal utterances in the whole play. Falstaff's words thus provide an especially sharp contrast with what has been said before (by the king for instance, whose prayer, "God befriend

us, as our cause is just!" (V. i, 120), is a mere gesture, a cliché used to gloss over an essentially confused situation).

This strain of genuine personal feeling and candour runs right through the famous soliloquy on honour (V, i, 127-40), and makes it a very moving as well as a witty and intelligent comment: "Can honour set to a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No, Honour hath no skill in surgery, then? No." When Falstaff speaks of "the grief of a wound", he invokes something undeniably real, which the politicians in their arguments about the rights and wrongs of the battle conveniently forget. Though his final assertion that "honour is a mere scutcheon" reveals the limitations of his own attitudes, it also points to the inadequancies of the concept of honour in a battle like Shrewsbury.

Hotspur's speech to his troops at the end of the following scene shows how inadequate and suicidal honourable ambitions may be. He is smgle-mindedly brave, to the exclusion of any considerations of his own welfare, or the wisdom of his own behaviour. His imagination is generous, and his words have a fine ring, but they constantly reveal his carelessness, his thoughtlessness and his vanity. Twice he protests that he cannot speak well, and does not enjoy speaking, yet in this scene as always he shows himself a most voluble character and exciting speaker:

O gentlemen, the time of life is short!
To spend that shortness basely were too
long,
If life did ride upon a dial's point,
Stil1 ending at the arrival of an hour.
An if we live, we live to tread on kings;
If die, brave death, when princes die with us!
Now, for our consciences, the arms are fair,
When the Intent of bearing them is just.
(V, ii, 82-9)

Hotspur's excitement is increasing at the expense of his understanding: the consolation offered by the thought that, If he dies, princes are dying with him, he finds completely satisfying. There is no identifiable aim or desire behind his rush into battle, beyond the simple ideal of bravery or "honour". There is a glorious abandon in his determination not to live basely, but behind that lies a simple refusal to consider the merits of any situation, as the pathetic tautology of the last two lines demonstrates. The magnificance of Hotspur's martial vision is born of his intellectual, moral and political shallowness, and bears a close (though half-hidden) relationship to despair:

Sound all the lofty Instruments of war,
And by that music let us all embrace;
For, heaven to earth, some of us never shall
A second time do such a courtesy.
(V, ii, 98-101)

The suggestions of emptiness, desperation and futility in Hotspur's speeches here (they have the same frenzied excitement as his cry, "Doomsday is near; die all, die merrily." (IV, i, 134), on the eve of the battle) are more obvious and significant because they come so soon after Falstaff's soliloquy on honour. If Falstaff seemed out of place in the parley between the king and Worcester, it was partly because his jest contained the awkward truth; now the awkward truths of his soliloquy make Hotspur seem out of place, a hopelessly dated romantic in a new sort of battle, with a new and complicated political background. Falstaff does not dictate the rules of the battle, but he understands and follows them unerringly, while Hotspur, for all that he has an impressiveness, is simply out of his depth.

On the other hand, Hotspur's bravery (and Hal's, and Douglas's, and even the king's-when he actually faces danger himself) gives the battle a dimension which Falstaff simply does not recognize, and this means that Falstaff's cynical attitude has at least one fundamental limitation. Though he illuminates all the corruptness and selfishness of the principal participants in the battle, and all the futility of gaining honour by dying, he cannot conceive that a selfless act may be both intelligent and worthwhile, because he is the most selfish and corrupt participant in the battle himself. He can see that the death 0 Sir Walter Blunt in the disguise of the king is in a way absurd, but he cannot see that Blunt's bravery and disguise, while bringing death to himself, may have assisted a larger cause, the commonwealth, by keeping the king alive. Falstaff is completely unable to comprehend the notion of the common weal, and is therefore the most thorough anarchist.

This is why he makes a joke of everything, indiscriminately. When he reappears after the slaying of Blunt he jests continually, but the seriousness of the situation reveals the shortcomings of his clowning, more than he is able to expose the absurdity of the battle. He jests beautifully at his own expense, but he also treats the grimmest effects of his own Irresponsibility as a joke: "I have led my ragamuffins where they are pepper'd; there's not three of my hundred and fifty left alive, and they are for the town's end, to beg during life." Falstaff's wish to turn everything to laughter becomes more embarrassing when Hal enters:

Prince What, stand'st thou idle here? Lend me thy sword.
Many a nobleman lies stark and stiff
Under the hoofs of vaunting enemies,
Whose deaths are yet unreveng'd. I prithee
lend me thy sword.
Falstaff. . . I have paid Percy, I have made
him sure.
Prince He is, indeed, and hving to kill thee. I
prithee lend me thy sword.
Falstaff Nay, before God, Hal, if Percy be alive, thou get'st not my sword, but take
my pistol, if thou wilt.
Prince Give it me. What, is it in the case?
Falstaff Ay, Hal, 'tis hot, 'tis hot; there's that
will sack a city.

(The prince draws it out, and finds it to be a bottle of sack).
Prince What, is it a time to jest and dally
now?
(He throws the bottle at him, Exit.)
(V, iii, 39-43, 46-54.)

It is quite common for this incident to raise a laugh at a performance, but this happens when the actors yiel to the same temptation as Falstaff: they wish to excite laughter, and give little weight to Hal's words. His final angry question, and his action in throwing the bottle at Falstaff, make any attempt at comical effect seem cheap. Many times earlier in the drama, and often enough here at Shrewsbury, comedy completely deflates a serious judgement, or radically alters it; here the tables are turned, and clownish behaviour loses its power to amuse because it comes at such a desperately urgent time. Falstaff's determination to treat all places on earth as variants of the tavern always has something pathetic and unfunny about it, even when his attempts are successful; in this episode the pathos and hollowness of the comedian are exposed in quite a painful way, because his natural and typical attempt to make a joke fails.

Thus this incident is part of the constant interaction and conflict between seriousness and comedy which pervade *Henry IV* Part One, but it also points away from universal comedy to the markedly different drama of Part Two. The limitations of comedy are beginning to be felt as Part One nears its end, and Falstaff's indiscriminate attempts to make a joke of everything give rise to embarrassment and exasperation. Indeed, Hal's momentary angry rejection of him seems entirely just. Yet the comedy is still a universal presence, a universal influence: even in this incident, a comic view is being asserted. At this point, it is still possible to say that everything in the drama has been subjected to a comic interpretation, as well as a serious one.

Furthermore, this incident is by no means a final comment on Falstaff. As William Empson says, "the main fact about Falstaff. . .. is that it is hard to get one's mind all around him." ("Falstaff and Mr Dover Wilson", *Kenyon Review,* Spring 1953, p. 221) Any judgement of him based on one incident is liable to be modified or fundamentally changed by what he does next. When Hal leaves the stage after throwing the bottle at him, Falstaff immediately shows himself in a much more impressive light:

Well, if Percy be alive, I'll pierce him. If he do come in my way, so; if he do not, if I come in his willingly, let him make a carbonado of me. I like not such grinning honour as Sir Walter hath. Give me life, which if I can save, so; if not, honour comes unlook'd for, and there's an end. (V, iii, 55-end)

Being unashamedly self-centred, Falstaff is able to speak with a kind of humorous dignity and sanity.

He reveals a powerful apprehension of the grim realities of the battle, and an equally powerful grasp of what is valuable. His great instinct for survival, and his great vitality, are concentrated in the cry, "give me life", which might be his credo. His eye for the main chance often seems to be a simple and profound ability to see what is important;

his tenacious clinging to life seems sensible as well as shameless, in a battle where all others, except, significantly, the king himself, seem quite prepared for death. Falstaff might fall much lower in the audience's estimation were it not for his unremitting efforts to ensure his survival. He acquires a kind of quintessence lacking in any other character in the play. He endures, because unlike the others he has not invested his pride or his person in the conflict.

Falstaff's behaviour during and after the duel between Hotspur and Hal reflects quite fully the changed attitude to him which has been slowly evolving in the last three acts of Part One, ever since the tavern play.

The encounter between Hal and Hotspur has been frequently foreseen since the opening of Part One, and it now seems to be of crucial importance in determining the political future of the nation. Falstaff walks in at the end of the verbal exchange between them, and as they fight, he says gaily: "Well said, Hal! to it, Hal! Nay, you shal find no boy's play here, I can tell you." (V, iv, 76-7) Falstaff, as he presents himself, is simply the jocular partisan spectator at a sporting event. He is the barracker, shouting encouragement to one of the participants; and then he turns around and speaks to the audience on equal terms with them, rejoicing in the manly contest where, it is implied, he is just as much a spectator as they are. But after this he becomes momentarily involved in the action. Douglas enters and fights with him; he falls down as if he were dead, and Douglas leaves. His behaviour contrasts radically with both Hal's and Hotspur's. Hal and Falstaff are involved in comparable contests, because Hotspur and Douglas are almost identical in both attitude and military prowess. But Hal fights bravely against Hotspur, and kills him, thus (as the drama presents the case) assuring victory for the royal party; while Falstaff, to whom both bravery and a cause larger than himself have no appeal, fights cannily and counterfeits death. Hotspur dies for his name; Hal accepts the risk of death for his name, and for the cause of his family, perhaps even for the cause of order in the nation; Falstaff lives, for himself.

Unlike Falstaff, Hotspur has no flexibility, no resilience, and, though he is very quick to see the deceptions and falsities in the images which others present of themselves, he shows no realism in his attitude to himself. His ideals are a delusion, and his ambitions are futile, as he shows signs of recognizing for the first time in the few lines he speaks before he dies:

I better brook the loss of brittle life
Than those proud titles thou hast won of
me:
They wound my thoughts worse than thy
sword my flesh;
But thoughts, the slaves of life, and life,
time's fool, And time, that takes survey of all the world,
Must have a stop.
(V.iv. 78-83)

Hotspur begins typically by claiming that injury causes him less pain than the loss of honour through defeat. But then he realizes that honour only has value for him while he is alive to enjoy it, that thoughts are the slaves of life, and that life is itself therefore more valuable to him than the "proud titles" which he has made the consuming interest of his life. These beginnings of a new kind of self-knowledge make Hotspur at his death more than a noble but shallow cavalier; they give his end a touch of tragedy, which is deepened when his self-knowledge leads him to a sudden, universal comprehension that life is time's fool. Thus the man who thought he feared death least, comes to feel its absoluteness most, and this is one reason why his death is singularly poignant.

But this is not the reason why Hal is moved after he has killed Hotspur. In his speech over the body 01, IV, 87-101), the emphasis falls entirely on the bravery and noble spirit which Hotspur has always shown. The old medieval chivalrous qualities-"brave", "great heart", "spirit", "stout gentleman", "courtesy"-are dwelt on, while the odium attaching to Hotspur for being a rebel is deliberately forgotten. Hal evidently does not understand that chivalrous qualities have hardly any relevance in this battle, where victory is to the subtle rather than to the great-hearted: bravery is admirable, perhaps, but not necessarily useful by itself, and Hotspur, who has never learned to temper his old-fashioned valour with any modern discretion, has been simply out of his de p th. Hal is so absorbed in his role of Hotspur's riva for honour that he is oblivious of these considerations, and as the victor he shows Hotspur the reverence due to an honourable adversary. Then, seeing Falstaff lying on the ground, he makes another speech, mostly in couplets and containing an idle pun, a kind of afterthought following the drama of Hotspur's death, a slight piece of praise for the embarrassing clown whose last meeting with the prince ended in the bottle-throwing incident.

Hal's increasing coolness towards Falstaff is understandable after their last encounter, but the tone of casual acceptance in his lines over Falstaff's body suggests he feels Falstaff's death has come at a convenient time in his own royal career. Falstaff can now be finally tucked away in Hal's memory as an "old ac quaintance", and in this way Hal can speak more fondly of Hotspur, with whom he is now identifying himself in speech and manners.

Death hath not struck so fat a deer today,
Though many dearer, in this bloody fray.
Embowell'd will I see thee by and by;
Till then in blood by noble Percy lie.
(V. iv, 107-10)

To Hal, the dead Falstaff is a faintly pathetic, faintly ludicrous figure, a fat deer; and the prince, with a rather casual pun, asserts that there are many others dead in the battle who are dearer both in his affection and his estimation. The casual and distant attitude suggested by the use of this kind of p un on such an occasion (when John of Gaunt use wordplay at his death *(Richard II,* II, i, 73-83) it was a completely serious means of expressing more fully his bodily condition and his state of mind) is confirmed by the final couplet, in which Hal implies that he is being very generous to Falstaff's memory even to think of comparing him to such a noble man as Percy. A simple hierarchy is being

established: Falstaff is a mere acquaintance from the past, whose passing is sad but timely; Hotspur is a great and noble adversary; Hal, the conqueror of Hotspur, is greater and nobler.

But Falstaff does not accept, as Hal does, that the traditions of honour are relevant or important in the present battle. Falstaff is not, as one ola-guard Marxist critic maintains, a dependent on the old feudal order (T. A. Jackson, "Marx and Shakespeare", *labour Monthly,* London, April 1964, p. 170); he is the most thoroughgoing exponent of the opportunist philosophy which suplanted the feudal order when Bolingbroke usurped Richard's throne. After Hal's epitaph, Falstaff rises, and proves once again that he is not easily subjected to the kind of neat categorizing and fond farewelling with which the prince imagines he has finally succeeded in dismissing him. He then proceeds to prove quite brutally that Hotspur's ideal of honour is utterly outdated and defeated in this battle fought by the essentially feudal Percy against the successful new type of dissembling politician.

When Falstaff rises, the first thing he does is to crack a couple of jokes, so that for a moment he appears to be primarily a comic figure, following the traditional formula of comic relief after a serious scene, where the lesser mortal comically escapes after the greater has suffered death, Falstaff's feigned death may seem to make him the clown, compared with the great figure of Hotspur, who suffers real death. . .. [The] reasons Falstaff gives for feigning death cast him and Hotspur in an entirely different light:

'Sblood, 'twas time to counterfeit, or that hot termagant Scot had paid me scot and lot too. Counterfeit? I lie, I am no counterfeit: to die is to be a counterfeit; for he is but the counterfeit of a man who hath not the life of a man; but to counterfeit dying, when a man thereby liveth, is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image of life indeed. (V. iv, 114-22)

Falstaff's action has been at least as serious as Hotspur's; in fact, by feigning death, Falstaff has shown that he takes himself and his life much more seriously than Hotspur, and that his intelligence is much greater. He applies the word "counterfeit", in one sense or another, to both himself and Hotspur, but his constant play on the word finally attaches a much greater falsity to Hotspur than to himself. His own counterfeiting is successful deception of others, whereas Hotspur's is the idealistic self-deception which leads to failure and death. In calling his counterfeiting of death "the true and perfect image of life indeed", Falstaff is exaggerating, but his exaggeration, as so often elsewhere, brings out the fundamental value of his action: he is a great survivor, and a great believer in life,

Because both Hotspur and Falstaff are called counterfeits, a comparison is invited between them and the king, to whom Douglas has twice applied the word a short while before in challenging him (V, iv, 28, 35), Though Hotspur and the king are superficially more similar to each other than either is to Falstaff-they are ostensibly the serious characters, the politicians, while he is apparently the odd man out-at a deeper level the connection between the king and Falstaff is the strongest. Hotspur's counterfeiting is self-deception, but Henry and Falstaff both counterfeit cunningly to preserve their lives,

Henry's methods in the battle are essentially the same as Falstaff's (except that he uses his followers to counterfeit his death, whereas Falstaff is obliged to do all his counterfeiting on his own behalf), and their motives are also the same: to preserve their own lives, and to advance their own interests. Falstaff is the most thoroughgoing exponent and unashamed representative of the king's military principles at Shrewsbury.

This is only natural, in a play which sees Falstaff as the product of Henry's usurpation of the throne, and the questioning and disruption of national order which accompanied it. Where power proceeds from strength rather than from ordained right, as it does in the case of Henry, it may be challenged by anybody with pretensions to greater strength or a better right, as Hotspur and Mortimer have challenged it. . .. [The] victory at Shrewsbury does not go to the noble, careless bravery of Hotspur, but to those whose valour is tempered by discretion. Even Hal, with all his braver, is very calculating, and his greater discretion is the main reason why his killing of Hotspur seems a just comment on their relative status, in the conditions of English political life since Richard's death. While Hal triumphs over Hotspur in personal combat, his father successfully leads the army which defeats Hotspur's rebellion, and that success is only achieved with the aid of the various royal counterfeits who die to preserve Henry's life. It remains to Falstaff, the most unashamedly self-interested character in the play, to set the seal on Hotspur's fall by giving his body a gratuitous and indecent new wound in the thigh. The decision to inflict this wound is inspired by a repellent amalgam of perversion, desire for gain, and barely-mastered terror, and a moment later Falstaff barefacedly claims to Hal that he killed Hotspur himself. The idea of the cowardly, mendacious, parasitical Falstaff killing such a military champion as Hotspur would seem ludicrous even if the drama had not just shown Hal killing him, But astonishingly, this assertion of Falstaff's, like many of his other great lies, contains an essential truth. Though Hal killed Hotspur's body, Falstaff, through the success of his self interested policy at Shrewsbury, has signalled the end of the outworn conception of honour for which Hotspur stood; the thigh wound both epitomises and clinches the triumph of vandalism over chivalry.

So Falstaff is an essentially serious figure in English political life. This seriousness was implied in the king's speech which began the drama, and throughout Part One his anarchical energy and appetite have been seen as representative of the national condition. These qualities lie at the heart of the comedy whose influence is felt everywhere in Part One, but in the last three acts, as the political crisis has drawn to a climax, the doubts about Falstaff's irresponsibility have deepened to revulsion, and the understanding of his serious political significance has constantly developed.

When lie rises and wounds Hotspur, the feelings of revulsion at his viciousness and the understanding of his political importance both reach their deepest level in the drama: this is the typically repellent behaviour of the age, amongst those who have won power, and are continuing to hold it.

As the full implications of Falstaff's role as survivor are revealed, the drama suggests limitations in his comic role. His clowning, which has already failed to amuse on one occasion, is only a partial success here. Though the spectacle of Falstaff rising when he has appeared to be dead is amusing, there is at least a partial failure to raise the

intended laugh, a renewed sense of embarrassment, mixed in with the delight at his cunning and his great wit. Falstaff suffers from a basic lack of tact: he knows what is good in life, but he does not know how much is enough. He is like an actor who is so pleased with the success of his death that he decides to act his part over again; we feel that he may have been wiser to stay dead, even to rest content with Hal's epitaph of faint praise. It seems likely that his continued existence will only make him less dear, more tiresome and more unpleasant, and the likelihood is quickly confirmed when he stabs Hotspur and then claims to have killed him. The cunning that enables him to survive, and the sovereign with that gives him a quicker and wider understanding of the battle than anyone else, seem more and more directed to sordid and miserable ends.

Other limitations in Falstaff's comic role also emerge at this time. By rising after he had seemed dead, he is announcing the end of the "full" comedy, which up to this moment in Part One has seemed to take the whole world as its subject. Because he is utterly serious about preserving his own life, he is in fact accepting that there are some things which simply cannot be laughed out of serious consideration, and thus he accepts limits on the range of his comic vision. All Falstaff's history in Part Two may be seen as the consequence of his resurrection: he has taken on a new lease of life, on different terms from the old. Though the resurrection and the new life are comical, Falstaff rises primarily as a survivor, for whom life is all-important, and the comment this makes on the battle, and on himself, is intrinsically more serious than comical. The implications of his survival are in some ways enlarging for Falstaff himself, but they are unequivocally limiting for comedy.

Thus the pattern of Falstaff's role in Part Two is in substance set at his last appearance in Part One. He is now obviously one who preys on mankind, as he shows when he leaves the stage, hot on the heels of the two princes, with the avowed intention of "following for reward", like a hound after the hunt being rewarded with part of the kill. But his hopes that he may "grow great", and then "grow less. . . purge, and leave sack, and live cleanly, as a nobleman should do" 01, iv, 163-end) are pathetic rather than sordid. Chinks are appearing in his armour, which once appeared impenetrable. Falstaff's life is changing and disintegrating, with a speed that increases in Part Two; he is still the great seeker after life, but the manner of the search and the life itself are becoming more sordid and pathetic.

But though the scope of Falstaff's comedy is seen as a finite thing for the first time at Shrewsbury, his comic vision colours and determines the audience's view of historical events more directly here than ever before in Part One. He treats everything he sees in the battle as a comedy. All the characters and events seem serious in themselves, until Falstaff demonstrates or discovers some inherent comedy in them. Hotspur, Hal, the king, Douglas and Blunt are all made part of the comic vision of the drama through Falstaff's emulation of or witty commentary on their actions. By not taking anything seriously except his own survival, by laughing at honour, bravery and policy, he undermines the serious view which everyone else takes of the battle. And by continuing his role as a comedian, while pursuing a highly successful course in the battle, he goes a long way (but not the whole way, as Hal suggests by throwing the bottle at him)

towards proving that a man may treat all places on earth as variants of the tavern, and that comic behaviour is always possible and a comic vision of life is universally tenable.

Hal ends Part One having apparently grown up and come of age, but the appearance is more than a little deceptive. He obviously feels that he has judged Falstaff satisfactorily, and can now pass him by. Even though Hal's epitaph over the body of his "old acquaintance" proves to be premature, he shows essentially the same attitude to Falstaff at their meeting soon after. When Falstaff claims Hotspur as his victim, Hal plays along with him, too tired to assert the truth any more, and not interested in doing so. Both this and his previous encounter with Falstaff on the battle-field, which ended with the bottle-throwing incident, can give the impression that Falstaff the dallier, coward and liar is being simply Judged and found wanting in comparison with a noble prince.

But such a comparison, quite apart from presenting a grossly simplified and one-sided picture of Falstaff, rests on a superficial view of Hal's part in the battle. There can be little dispute about the impressiveness of his actions. Hal shows that he is capable of mastering a military crisis with wonderful ease. What causes misgivings about him is the increasingly hollow ring of his utterances, as his actions make him theoretically more admirable. He shows bravery spontaneously and without effort, but in other ways he is only acting the part he thinks he ought to play. Ever since the meeting with his father (III, ii), he has been trying to live the part of the young prince going off to war. Sometimes he tries to follow the courtly ideal of *sprezzatura,* of modesty and careless ease; sometimes he forgets his affectation of modesty, and adopts the more self-assertive manners and values of Hotspur. In his speech over Hotspur's body Hal is so caught up with his own chivalrous display that he idealizes himself, and makes a simple, final judgment on Falstaff-a judgment which is immediately shown to be hopelessly inadequate. Hal overestimates the importance of honour, nobility, chivalry, even of bravery, in this battle, and in doing so he underestimates the importance of the cunning, the calculation and the self-centredness which are really as marked in his character as in anyone else's. At Shrewsbury, as always, he satisfies himself by the same arguments and displays that he uses to satisfy others: the private world of his conscience is a kind of mirror world, in which he p reens himself, so that he sees no true reflection of his character and actions, but that image with which he wishes to impress others, and by which he is himself convinced and satisfied:

But let my favours hide thy mangled face,
And, even in thy behalf, I'll thank myself
For doing these fair rites of tenderness.
(V. iv, 96.8)

Hal is so pleased with the role he plays as the princely slayer-mourner of Hotspur that he forgets his genuine emotion over Hotspur's death, and allots every part in the scene to himself. His pleasure at the noble part he is playing is no less when he makes a show of modesty and generosity: the insipidity, the lack of spontaneity that showed through his vows after the king rebuked him at court (III, ii, 129-59) are observable again in his earnest appreciation of his brother's soldiery, and in his final act of generosity to the Douglas. His praise of Lancaster is seemly and uninteresting:

I did not think thee lord of such a spirit;
Before, I lov'd thee as a brother, John,
But now I do respect thee as my soul.
(V. iv, 18-20)

His praise of the Douglas is in the same style:

His valours shown upon our crests to-day
Have taught us how to cherish such high
deeds
Even in the bosom of our adversaries.
(V. v, 29-31)

Valour, one might say, knows no national bounds. The whole speech comes at second hand, and the emotion is gushing rather than deeply felt.

So Hal at the end of Part One is not a simple figure at all. He is pleased to be a hero in the battle, distastefully glad to behave and speak as he believes a Prince of Wales should. But his delight and belief in military action are in many ways quite genuine, as the beauty and energy of Vernon's description of him riding to Shrewsbury (IV, i, 97-110), and the spontaneous anger he shows when Falstaff tries to make a tavern jest in the battle, both demonstrate. Like the duel with Hotspur, the bottle-throwing incident contributes to the impression that Hal's role of heroic prince is partly natural, as well as being a stage in the young man's unedifying search for an acceptable iden. tity. Hal *is* a man of action and responsibility, however much he is not yet able to be that man except under physical stress, as well as one who composes speeches to suit his idea of the part. In making a step forward to fitness for kingship-albeit a temporary step-he has become more impressive, as well as more distasteful. By throwing the bottle at Falstaff, and later on tiredly but gently accepting his lies, Hal has suggested that the tavern moralist is superfluous in matters of national policy, The suggestion has not even been made explicit, and the drama's endorsement of it is only partial. The view of the relations between Hal and Falstaff, and between Falstaff and the grim national events in which he takes part, is not clear-cut, but it is not a spineless balancing of ambiguities.

Nor is Part One as a whole: it does without "irritable reaching after fact and reason", and is a coherent work. For all the conflicts of interests, families, morals, attitudes to and visions of life it presents, it achieves a unity that does not require conflicts to be resolved decisively. Its ending is more appropriate, a more balanced "answer to its problems", than the spectacular pronouncements rounding off Part Two. It offers imperfect characters and imperfect views on all sides, and gives a flexible, relative value to each of them. All the history it dramatizes is subjected to a comic interpretation and a serious one, and these conflicting interpretations frequently interact and merge. The tavern and the court, the revels and the national crisis, may appear at times to be mighty opposites, but in England after Richard's death the mighty opposites share fundamental affinities: there is no natural order, there are no unquestioned absolutes, everything is contingent, relative. And there is no ladder of standards, no progression to an ending with the ap pearance of moral and dramatic finality. The end of the Battle of

Shrewsbury is just one situation, suggesting some views. There have been other suggestions previously, not necessarily less important, and there is a whole new drama to come, rising out of this one. Part One is a balanced work, finishing with a sense of incompleteness entirely appropri ate to its conception and form, and the sense of incom pleteness demands another drama to follow this one.

But it is impossible to be sanguine about the course Part Two will take. At the end of the battle of Shrewsbury, the king's hopes of establishing order in the kingdom, and of leading a great English crusade (hopes largely inspired by the fear of rebellion), are indefinitely postponed because of the need to quell many more rebellions. Rebellion is in fact more endemic in England than before the battle, although Hotspur, the most attractive rebel, is dead. Falstaff remains alive, more embarrassing and predatory. Hal's success in action is coupled with a depressingly unconvincing assumption of what he believes to be royal behaviour. Part Two sinks into a great slough of despond as the mixed drama undergoes an inevitable decline. This decline is foreshadowed in Part One at the Battle of Shrewsbury, principally by the change in Falstaff's role. But the dramatization of the battle is markedly different from what we see in Part Two. In the Shrewsbury scenes we see neither the confused depression that vitiates Part Two at various points, nor the allied potentially tragic interest in exploring "the revolutions of the times" -the diseases, illusions, disappointments and humiliations to which all but

Bolingbroke's sons are subject. The idea that all things in life, including the most serious political issues, are subject matter for comedy, an idea which is embodied by the figure of Falstaff in Part One, achieves its fullest expression at Shrewsbury, where its limitations are revealed and a more depressing future is foreseen.

BOOKRAGS

Critical Essay #16

Source: "Falstaff in 1 *Henry IV:* What's in a Name?" in *Shakespeare Quarterly,* Vol. 27, No.2, Spring, 1976, pp. 199-200.

[Willson argues that when Shakespeare changed the character of Falstaff's name from Oldcastle to Falstaff (the Elizabethan ancestor of Oldcastle was offended by the use of his family name in this context) he rendered the spelling as he did for specific reasons. Willson goes on to show how Falstaff's name is *symbolic of the character's cowardice and gluttony.]*

It has been a custom of editors and critics of 1 *Henry IV* to account for Shakespeare's change of Oldcastle's name to Falstaff by referring to the objection of one of that family's members to the shoddy treatment of his ancestor on the stage. These editors and critics argue that Shakespeare looked back in history to unearth the title of the cowardly knight, Sir John Fastolfe, which he used as a convenient means of silencing the bitter and threatening complaints of the humorless Lord Cobham. This explanation may indeed illustrate the playwright's problems of production, but in the rush to uncover a source for the naming of Falstaff it fails to take into account, or at least to weight heavily enough, the noticeable change in the spelling of the supposed source name: in Q1 we do not have "Fastolfe" but "Falstalffe." Surely Shakespeare did not alter *this* name to protect himself from charges of libel by the Fastolfe family! On the contrary, I believe the name as we now have it was carefully fashioned to suggest Falstaff's symbolic role in the play. My conclusion is supported by the instructive nature of the comedy/history, and by Shakespeare's recognized habit of stylizing his comic heroes in such a way as to illustrate their burlesque relationship to a given play's main themes and characters, In Falstaff's case, his name, like his personality, is rich in connotation.

In the first connotative sense, the name suggests an image of "fallen staffs," with staff here representing "a pole used as a weapon" *[Oxford English Dictionary (OED)]* Shakespeare has thus handily underscored Sir John's cowardice ("false staff" is another possible reading). Whether at Gadshill or Shrewsbury, we regularly expect to hear of Falstaff dropping his weapon and departing in an act of discretion. In addition, this interpretation invites us to conclude that Falstaff was dubbed as carefully as Hotspur, who stands as a contrasting symbolic figure: when spurs glow with the heat of blind courage the staffs of cowardice are sure to fall.

In a second sense of "staff" -staple or the "staff of life" (OED)-the name could be intended to highlight another side of Falstaff's character-his gluttony. Falling staffs evoke the image of harvest, a time of year in which the glutton may be expected to enjoy the fruits of plenty while others do the reaping. Of course the irony in this reading consists in Falstaff's use of the grain; instead of consuming it as bread ("Item. . .ob."), he assumes the role of Bacchus and downs his beloved sack in great amounts. Without doubt the notion of harvest and its uncontrolled alcoholic pleasures is attached to the fallen knight's name.

Finally, the comic name points to a favorite Elizabethan sexual pun-the wilted phallus-that illustrates both Falstaff's cowardice and the effects of excessive drinking on desire. . .. Combined with the other two connotations, the sexual pun provides a fittingly ironic and instructive finish to Shakespeare's portrait of a man devoted to fleshly pursuits that are never totally satisfying.

Even if Shakespeare intended none of these connotations, a conclusion that is strongly challenged by the bawdy action and dialogue (see especially the exchanges between Hal and Falstaff in 1 *Henry IV,* II. iv. 375 ff.), we cannot ignore the picture of Falstaff, drawn frequently in the play, as lying in a horizontal position. Whether being flattened in the Gadshill doublecross, or sleeping in the Boar's Head Tavern, or counterfeiting death at Shrewsbury, Sir John is a literal depiction of fallen man, weighed down by his cowardice and gluttony. Since these are two vices Hal and the audience must see in their most extreme forms if they are to understand the education of the prince, it is fitting that Shakespeare should name his comic hero in such a symbolic way.

In any case, the literal and historical explanation of the name "Falstaff," which is concerned solely with the Oldcastle family objections, does not recognize Shakespeare's more central structural reasons, devoted to matters of characterization and theme, for giving the fat knight his memorable name.

Critical Essay #17

Hotspur has been described by critics as passionate, hot-tempered, and self-centered, among other things. But his sense of honor is the trait that has fueled much of the commentary on his character. While many critics, including Colin Gardner, respect Hotspur's commitment to honor, others believe that he is foolishly obsessed with it. For example, E. M. W. Tillyard argues that from the beginning of the play, Hotspur is almost "ridiculous" because he is unable to control his passions, including his passion for honor, Many critics such as Raymond H. Reno and Derek Cohen are quick to point out Hotspur's flaws. Reno observes that Hotspur's obsession with chivalry is instrumental in causing disorder. Cohen, while pointing out the tragic nature of Hotspur's character, asserts that Hotspur never shows any signs of growth or change throughout the play and that his death is necessary if healing is to occur. Overall, it is to Hotspur's extremely obsessive nature that many critics object. Yet the passion-characteristic of this trait-and the object of the obsession-honor-are aspects of Hotspur's character that appeal to other critics and to many readers as well. For further analysis of Hotspur's character, see the essay by Robert B. Pierce in the Fathers And Sons section; and the essays by G. M. Pinciss and Moody E. Prior in the Honor section.

Source: "The Second Tetralogy," in *Shakespeare's History Plays,* Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1964, pp. 264-304.

(Tillyard argues that while some may consider Hotspur to be the hero of Henry IV, Part One, *he is definitely not. Tillyard comments on the reasons why people might confuse Hotspur as the play's protagonist, focussing especially on the fact that Shakespeare gave Hotspur's character the play's best poetry to speak. The reason Shakespeare developed Hotspur's character in this manner, Tillyard maintains, was to allow Hotspur to represent the positive characteristics, such as straightforwardness and kindness, of Elizabethan Englishmen.]*

. . . I fancy there are still many people who regard Hotspur as the hero of the first part of the play. They are wrong, and their error may spring from two causes. First they may inherit a romantic approval for mere vehemence of passion, and secondly they may assume that Shakespeare must somehow be on the side of any character in whose mouth he puts his finest poetry. For proof of the first error take the frequent habit of reading Hotspur's lines on honour,

By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honour from the pale-fac'd
moon,
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
Where fathom-line could never touch the
ground,
And pluck up drowned honour by the locks,

as the kind of great poetry to which we surrender without reserve, The lines are of course partly satirical at Hotspur's expense. Hotspur, however captivating his vitality, verges on the ridiculous from the very beginning, through his childish inability to control his passions. At his first appearance he follows his gloriously vivid and humorous account of the "certain lord, neat and trimly dress'd" demanding the prisoners on the field of battle, an account where he has his passions under control and all his native wit has scope, with his violent description, grotesquely heightened by excessive passion, of the duel between Glendower and Mortimer. From this second description (whose inflation gets overwhelming confirmation immediately after and throughout the rest of the first part) it should be plain that Shakespeare held up Hotspur's excesses to ridicule and never for a moment intended him for his hero. That Hotspur speaks some of the best poetry in the play is undoubted. There is nothing finer, for instance, than Hotspur's account to Blunt before the Battle of Shrewsbury of Henry's past career from the time he was a poor unminded outlaw sneaking home till his present quarrel with the Percies. But to interpret the poetry as a sign of Shakespeare's sympathy with Hotspur's excesses is as wrong as to imagine that Shakespeare approved of Cleopatra's influence on Antony's character because he puts such poetry into her mouth. What the poetry proves is that Shakespeare was much interested in these characters and that he had something important to say through them.

Why then did Shakespeare develop Hotspur's character so highly and put such poetry into his mouth, when a less elaborate figure would have done to symbolise, as was necessary for the play's structure, the principle of honour carried to an absurd excess? It is that he uses him as one of his principal means of creating his picture of England. .

For though, as said above, Hotspur is satirised as the northern provincial in contrast to that finished Renaissance gentleman, the Prince, he does express positive English qualities and in so doing has his part in the great composite picture Shakespeare was construct ing. . .. His fits of English passion are utterly op posed to the Welsh dream-world inhabited by Glendower, while Glendower's solemn profession of being given to the arts of poetry and music sting him into an attack on them that is not necessarily in keeping with his nature at all:

I had rather be a kitten and cry mew
Than one of these same metre ballad
mongers;
I had rather hear a brazen canstick turn'd,
Or a dry wheel grate on the axle-tree:
And that would set my teeth nothing on
edge,

Nothing so much as mincing poetry, kittens, ballad mongers, candlesticks and cartwheels, though by no means exclusively English, were very much apart of English life; and Hotspur had noted them and a great deal else with an eye sharp with the zest of the man who adores the solid and reassuring traffic of the everyday world. The forthright English man had long been a stock figure in the drama, often contrasted WIth the effeminate French. . .. Shakespeare does not spare "all the faults" of this

Englishman yet he makes us "love him still." Similarly though Hotspur teases his wife outrageously, bringing her to the verge of tears with his rebuffs, maddening her with his offhandedness, he yet reassures us of the Englishman's rough kindliness somewhere underneath. There is no real cruelty in his roughness. And when he rates her for "swearing like a comfit-maker's wife," he does in his own (and not indelicate) way make love to her as well as show with what wide-open eyes he passed through the England of which in this play he is so important an expression.

Hot. Come, Kate, I'll have your song too.
Lady P. Not mine, in good sooth.
Hot. Not yours, in good sooth! Heart! You
swear like a comfit- maker's wife. 'Not you, in good sooth,' and 'as true as I live,' and 'as God shall mend me,' and 'as sure as day.'
And givest such sarcenet surety for thy oaths,
As if thou never walk'st further than Finsbury.
Swear me, Kate, like a lady as thou art,
A good mouth-filling oath and leave 'in sooth'
And such protest of pepper-gingerbread
To velvet-guards and Sunday-citizens.
Come, sing.

Critical Essay #18

Source: "Hotspur," in *Southern Review,* Australia, Vol. III, No.1, 1968, pp. 34-51.

[Gardner attempts to show how critics have misunderstood Hotspur. Recognizing Hotspur's flaws and commenting that the young rebel is *"almost ludicrous" Gardner also argues that Hotspur possesses extremely attractive and heroic qualities. Gardner discusses in detail several scenes which highlight Hotspur's virtues.]*

. . . My concern in this essay is with Hotspur, but not because I believe Hotspur to be intrinsically more important than Hal or Falstaff. It seems to me . . . that Hotspur has often, and especially in recent years, been given less than his due. This certainly cannot be said of Falstaff, whose importance and whose values have seldom been unappreciated-though some critics have had difficulty in explaining their affection for him to their own consciences. Moreover Falstaff, in his astonishing fleshly self-awareness, is clearly a phenomenon to which every modern "bosom returns an echo". Indeed a characteristic fault of some modern criticism is a tendency to put too complete an emphasis upon Falstaff, to make him. . . the centre of the play. . I am not going to attempt a complete account of Hotspur's character. It is less rich and intricate than Falstaff's, but rich and intricate it undoubtedly is; a full and just picture would require a considerable amount of space. Like Falstaff, Hotspur is to Hal both guide and temper. I do not propose to emphasize and elaborate upon Hotspur's many faults. . . not because I wish to gloss over them, but simply because no intelligent person is likely to miss them. Hotspur is often intemperate, fantastic, self-centred, irresponsible; at his worst moments he is boyish and almost ludicrous. And throughout the play, especially at the end, we see him p artly trapped and "placed" by webs of comment an dramatic irony.

It is what is valuable in Hotspur that I wish to talk of; and Hotspur's value I see (again, as in the case of Falstaff) as coexisting at almost every moment with his flaws, his excesses.

Most modern critics, even the most unsympathetic, respond fairly approvingly to Hotspur's speech about the "lord, neat and trimly dress'd", and to his deflation of the pretensions of the magniloquent Glendower. But they are apt to be less happy about his treatment of his wife, and even less so about his obviously impetuous and reckless conduct of the war. As for this famous speech on honour in Act I scene iii, it is almost always dealt with, and condemned, in exclusively and narrowly moral terms. The remarks of Richard J. Beck, who is in other respects unusually just to Hotspur, are representative:

Honour can mean either a man's *self-respect,* or the esteem in which he is held by others, to Hotspur, the second and more selfish interpretation is the one that matters. Hotspur may nave won more decorations and greater popular acclaim than the Prince; but he is outdone in magnanimity. HIs sort of honour brooks no rival, and the contrast between his sneering condemnation of "the nimble footed madcap Prince of Wales' (IV. i. 95) and the Prince's generous tribute to him is both striking and significant.

This selfish pursuit of personal glory won on the field of battle is a limited virtue, the virtue of an Achilles or a Turnus. It is a virtue to be surpassed and superseded. , . Admirable though Hotspur is, therefore, his pursuit of honour is made to appear out of date when set beside the more sophisticated and complex ideal of leadership personified by the Prince, who rightly overcomes Hotspur at the end of part I of the play *(Shakespeare: Henry IV,* Studies in English Literature, No. 24, London, 1961, p. 39).

It should be obvious from what I have said earlier that I approve of the drift of Beck's comments. What I object to is their incompleteness. Hotspur's desire for honour is certainly an imperfection, and somewhat improper; yet there is within it a vital and colourful energy, a manly courage and imaginativeness, and a warmth, which are-if the reader or audience will but *listen* to the words-most powerful and attractive. The word "selfish" which Beck uses is not wrong, but it is inadequate.

By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap
To pluck bright Honour from the pale-fac'd moon,
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,
And pluck up drowned Honour by the locks,
So he that doth redeem her thence might wear Without corrival all her dignities:
But out upon this half-fac'd fellowship!
(I. iii. 201-8)

Life, for Hotspur, is bold fiery activity: the proud "dignity" of "bright honour" is defined by the contrast with the passive universe ("the pale-fac'd moon") and with human mediocrity ("this half-fac'd fellowship"). It seems to me that, despite all the reservations that one must make, it is impossible not to react sympathetically to this speech. . . .

[Hotspur's] passion, his vigour, his humour, his bravery (in all senses of the word), even his bravado, have more than a touch of the heroic about them. And it seems to me that it is *this,* this tang of the heroic, which makes up the core of Hotspur's character, the central flame in the light of which everything else in him is to be seen.

In that famous first speech of his, for example, it is the fact that Hotspur so obviously is wholly superior to the person he describes that makes us respond so willingly, so joyfully:

My liege, I did deny no prisoners;
But I remember, when the fight was done,
When I was dry with rage and extreme toil,
Breathless and faint, leaning upon my sword,
Came there a certain lord, neat, and trimly dress'd,

Fresh as a bridegroom; and his chin new
reap'd
Show'd like a stubble-land at harvest-home.
He was perfumed like a milliner,
And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held
A pouncet-box, which ever and anon
He gave his nose, and took't away again
Who therewith angry, when it next came
there,
Took it in snuff-and still he smil'd and
talk'd; And as the soldiers bore dead bodies by,
He call'd them untaught knaves,
unmannerly,
To bring a slovenly unhandsome corpse
Betwixt the wind and his nobility.
With many holiday and lady terms
He question'd me; amongst the rest,
demanded
My prisoners in your majesty's behalf.
I then, all smarting with my wounds being
cold,
To be so pester'd with a popinjay,
Out of my grief and my impatience
Answer'd neglectingly, I know not what,
He should, or he should not; . . ,
(I. iii. 29-53)

The imaginative life of the speech-its verbal delight, its rhythmical firmness, its unmalicious mockeryconvinces us of the life and the validity of the feelings (circumscribed though they are) which nourish. Hotspur's warrior heroism. Shakespeare allows us to feel the very pulse of a passionate nobility. Hotspur's complete lack of the effeminate fastidiousness which he yet so sharply observes is a sign of his manly fullness; his controlled anger is a sign of emotional largeness. And of his sincerity and honesty there can be no doubt. Hotspur is altogether more admirable, and lovable, than the cool Worcester or the cowardly Northumberland, or than the ruthless King Henry.

Similarly, in his blunt humorous defiance of Glendower's magic, it is the passional value, the grandeur even, of his soldier's sense of reality that impresses us:

Glendower: I cannot blame him: at my nativity
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes, Of burning *cressets;* and at my birth
The frame and huge foundation of the earth Shak'd like a coward.
Hotspur: Why, so it would have done at the same season, if your mother's cat had but kittened, though yourself had never been born.
Glendower: I say the earth did shake when I was born.
Hotspur: And I say the earth was not of my mind,

If you suppose as fearing you it shook.
(III. i. 13-23)

And in the first of the senses with Kate, his good-humored aloofness, his determination not to be sen timental at any cost, is superb.

Hotspur: Away,
A way, you trifler! Love! I love thee not,
I care not for thee, Kate; this is no world
To play with mammets, and to tilt with lips:
We must have bloody noses and crack'd crowns,
And pass them current too. God's me, my horse!
What say'st thou, Kate? What wouldst thou have with me?
Lady Percy: Do you not love me? Do you not indeed!
Well, do not then, for since you love me not,
I will not love myself. Do you not love me?
Nay, tell me if you speak in jest or no.
Hotspur: Come, wilt thou see me ride?
And when I am o' horseback, I will swear
I love thee infinitely.
(II. iii. 94-107)

And of course she loves him for it. Hotspur behaves naturally and spontaneously, yet we can feel that he is, quite properly, by no means unaware of his wife's response to him. The sudden gentleness of his closing words is not always noticed:

But, hark you, Kate;
Whither I go, thither shall you go too:
Today will I set forth, tomorrow you.
Will this content you, Kate?
Lady Percy: It must, of force.
(II. iii. 119-123)

In fact, then, his considerateness cannot really be faulted; and this warmth is an expression of the animation with which the whole exchange has vibrated. But now she in her turn refuses to be docilely sentimental. It is a healthy and beautiful relationship.

I have perhaps been looking at some of Hotspur's more acceptable moments. Is there very much to be said for him when he is at his most unreason able? Let us consider an obvious passage, that which immediately follows his statement about honour:

. . . But out upon this half-fac'd fellowship!
Worcester: He apprehends a world of figures here,
But not the form of what he should attend:
Good cousin, give me audience for a while.
Hotspur: I cry your mercy.
Worcester: Those same noble Scots

That are your prisoners,
Hotspur: I'll keep them all;
By God he shall not have a Scot of them:
No, if a Scot would save his soul he shall not. I'll keep them, by this hand.
Worcester: You start away,
And lend no ear unto my purposes:
The prisoners you shall keep
Hotspur: Nay, I will; that's flat:
He said he would not ransom Mortimer:
Forbade my tongue to speak of Mortimer:
But I will find him when he lies asleep,
And in his ear I'll holla "Mortimer?"
Nay, I'll have a starling shall be taught to speak
Nothing but "Mortimer", and give it him,
To keep his anger still in motion.
Worcester: Hear you, cousin; a word.
Hotspur: All studies here I solemnly defy,
Save how to gall and pinch this Bolingbroke:
And that same sword-and-buckler Prince of Wales,
But that I think his father loves him not,
And would be glad he met with some mischance,
I would have him poison'd with a pot of ale.
Worcester: Farewell, kinsman: I'll talk to you
When you are better temper'd to attend.
Northumberland: Why, what a wasp.stung and impatient fool
Art thou to break into this woman's mood,
Tying thine ear to no tongue but thine own!
Hotspur: Why, look you, I am whipp'd and scourg'd with rods,
Nettled, and stung with pismires, when I hear
Of this vile politician Bolingbroke.
(I. iii. 208-241)

Certainly *this* Hotspur deserves a good deal of the moral censure that critics have lavished upon him. He is on the brink of absurdity. And yet his passionate indignation is full-blooded and sincere, and as a reaction to the prickly and evasive high-handedness of Henry it is not absolutely unjustified. Worcester and Northumberland are cold men: for them, self-control is no great achievement. . . .

There are many other moments of Hotspur, many other facets-his fiery allegiance to his friends, his political insight, his yearning for the "sport" of battle, his contempt for those he considers ungrateful or cowardly, his brave and rash optimism, his dislike of "mincing poetry", his combination of wide generosity and cavilling, in the way of bargaining, on the ninth part of a hair, his laughing bawdy tall!: to Kate, his warm-heartedness on the battle-field and vigorous irritation at hearing his enemy and rival praised, his impatience for the decisive encounter

Come, let me taste my horse,
Who is to bear me like a thunderbolt
Against the bosom of the Prince of Wales:
Harry to Harry shall, hot horse to horse,
Meet and ne'er part till one drop down a corse
(IV. i. 119-123)

his gay and solemn heroism as he approaches the battle itself, the courage and the despair of his last moments. In all this he is flawed; but in all, or almost all, he is-in spite of Falstaff's penetrating and valid comments on some aspects of the matter-genuinely and movingly *honourable* too, . . .

Adaptations

Henry IV; Part I. University of Michigan, 1961.

Depicts England as a society split by civil war and the Prince of Wales as a young man preparing to become the next king. Distributed by Film Video Library. 29 minutes.

Henry IV, Part I. Cedric Messina, Dr. Jonathan Miller, BBC, 1980.

Prince Hal, heir to the throne, appears to be wasting his youth in the company of the drunkard, Falstaff. Price Hal redeems himself at the battle of Shrewsbury, where the tension between King Henry IV and the rebels has come to a head. Part of the "Shakespeare Plays" series. Distributed by Ambrose Video Publishing, Inc. 147 minutes.

Henry IV; Part I: Act II, Scene IV; Act V; Scene IV. Seabourne Enterprises Ltd., 1971.

Portrayal of these scenes enables students to focus on the atmosphere and theme of the play. Distributed by Phoenix/BFA Films. 17 minutes.

Further Study

Literary Commentary

Baines, Barbara J. "Kingship of the Silent King: A Study of Shakespeare's Bolingbroke. *English Studies* 61, No.1 (February 1980): 24-36.

Baines analyzes the lessons that Henry teaches his son, giving special attention to Henry's instruction that kingship is not simply inherited; it must be earned.

Bennett, Robert B. "Hal's Crisis of Timing." *Cahiers Elisabethains,* No. 13 (April 1978): 15-23.

Argues that critics underestimate the tension and the crisis of the tavern scene. Shows how Hal's "political readiness" is weakened by this incident.

Bueler, Lois. "Falstaff in the Eye of the Beholder." *Essays in Literature* 1, No.1 (January 1973): 1-12.

Examines the array of critical opinions on Falstaff, arguing that age and gender affect the reader's view of Falstaff. Explains that older, male critics view Falstaff as a figure of wish-fulfillment.

Callahan, E. F. "Lyric Origins of the Unity of 1 *Henry IV." Costerus* 3 (1972): 9-22.

Analyzes how Shakespeare's use of the lyric form in his other works influenced the formal structure of *Henry IV, Part One.* Callahan also examines other forces that help unify the play, including the interplay between words and actions.

Cohen, Derek. "The Rite of Violence in 1 *Henry IV." Shakespeare Survey* 38 (1985): 77-84.

Examines Shakespeare's portrayal of Hotspur in *Henry IV, Part One* as ranging from comic to heroic to tragic. Concludes that Hotspur is essentially a tragic character and that his death is necessary for any healing III the world of *Henry IV* to occur.

Cox, Gerard H. "'Like a Prince Indeed': Hal's Triumph of Honor in 1 *Henry IV." Pageantry in the Shakespearean*

Theater, pp. 130-49. Edited by David M. Bergeron. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985.

Argues that Hal's character is easily misread if one overlooks the significance of the pageantry and chivalry of the Renaissance. Maintains that in his battle with Hotspur, Hal does not receive any public recognition, as he lets Falstaff take credit for the kill, and that the absence of this public triumph makes Hal's deed that much more honorable.

Cruttwell, Patrick. *The Shakespearean Moment and its Place in the Poetry of the Seventeenth Century,* pp. 27-28. London: Chatto & Wmdus, 1954.

Brief discussion of Shakespeare's views on honor as presented by Hotspur, Hal, and Falstaff. Cruttwell argues that Shakespeare does not indicate a preference for any particular view.

Dickinson, Hugh. "The Reformation of Prince Hal." *Shakespeare Quarterly* XII, No.1 (Winter 1961): 33-46.

Takes a theatrical approach to the reading of the play and argues that based on this reading, Hal, as the protagonist and hero, demonstrates that "the supreme attribute of kingship" is self-sacrifice, not honor.

Duthie, George Ian. "History." *Shakespeare,* pp. 115-56. New York: Hutchinson's University Library, 1951.

Duthie argues that Henry wishes that Hotspur were his son instead of Hal demonstrating Henry's fears that Hal would be a poor king, Duthie shows how this fear feeds into the King's anxiety that, once king, Hal would be usurped by Hotspur.

Goddard, Harold C. *"Henry IV." The Meaning of Shakespeare.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951, pp. 161-214.

Offers an overview of *Henry IV;* arguing that the two parts are actually "a single drama in ten acts." Goddard maintains that the play's complexity is illustrated by the fact that Henry, Hal, Falstaff, and even Hotspur have some claim to being the play's hero.

Gross, Alan Gerald. "The Justification of Prince Hal." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* X, No.1 (Spring 1978): 27-35.

Argues that by drawing on the work of Raphael Holinshed, Shakespeare was able to provide moral and political justification of Hal's behavior.

Humphreys, A. R. "Shakespeare's Political Justice in *Richard II* and *Henry IV." Stratford Papers on Shakespeare,* 1964. Edited by B. W. Jackson. Toronto: Gage, 1965, pp. 30-50.

Examines the political and philosophical instruction provided by these two plays. Argues that while King Henry IV's rule was unarguably Machiavellian, Henry was not villainous and actually remained a man of considerable worth throughout his reign.

Jorgensen, Paul A. "'Redeeming Time' in Shakespeare's *Henry IV." Tennessee Studies in Literature* V (1960): 101- 09.

Jorgensen discusses the theme of the "redemption of time", a concept which Hal refers to in a soliloquy. Jorgensen argues that in the past, other critIcs have failed to understand what Hal meant by redeeming time and that if they had paid attention to

Elizabethan religious literature they would have realized that redeeming time does not refer to making up lost time.

Lawlor, John. "Appearance and Reality." *Tragic Sense in Shakespeare.* London: Chatto & Windus, 1960, pp. 17-44.

Explores the symmetrical nature and the patterns of reversal in the parent-child relationships in the two parts of *Henry IV.* Argues that these relationships highlight the discrepancies between appearance and reality within the plays.

Maclean, Hugh. "Time and Horsemanship In Shakespeare's Histories." *University of Toronto Quarterly* XXXV (October July 1965-66): 229-45.

Maclean assesses the views of time held by the primary characters in the play. Maclean also shows how a character's horsemanship supports his (Maclean's) assessment of the character's view of time. For example, Hotspur is, in a sense, "overmaster[ed]" by the horse that carries him a way. Similarly, time is "using him up."

Morgann, Maurice. "An Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff." London: T. Davies, 1777. Reprinted in *Shakespearian Criticism.* Edited by Daniel A. Fineman. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972, 444 p.

Offers one of the earliest defenses of Falstaff's character. Argues that Falstaff was not a coward.

Reese, M. M. "Shakespeare's England: *Henry IV." The Cease of Majesty: A Study of Shakespeare's History Plays,* pp. 286-317. London: Edward Arnold (publishers) Ltd., 1961.

Reese focusses on Henry's failure as a king and as a father. The critic shows how Henry is unable to be the peaceful king he wants to be and how he fails to control the rebels who helped him claim the throne. Reese goes on to argue that Henry Judges others by their appearance which results in his misunderstanding and underestimation of Hal, Hotspur, and Falstaff.

Reno, Raymond. "Hotspur: The Integration of Character and Theme." *Renaissance Papers* (April 1962): 17-26.

Argues that Hotspur represents disorder and reflects the disorder of the kingdom.

Rogers, Carmen. "The Renaissance Code of Honor in Shakespeare's *Henry IV; Part I." The Shakespeare Newsletter* IV, No.1 (February 1954): 8.

In this summary of a paper delivered at the 1953 South Atlantic Modern Language Association Meeting, Rogers argues that Hal and Hotspur represent contrasting views of honor, with Hal representing "true" honor, and Hotspur representing "false" honor. Rogers also states that Falstaff offers commentary on false honor.

Rowse, A. L. "The First Part of *King Henry IV."* In *Prefaces to Shakespeare's Plays,* pp. 49-53. London: Orbis, 1984.

Offers an overview of the play, providing background information as well as a discussion of the play's plot and major characters.

Siegel, Paul N. "Shakespeare and the Neo-Chivalric Cult of Honor." *Centennial Review* 8 (1964): 39-70.

Argues that Hotspur is devoted to a sense of honor based on chivalry, and seeks honor through revenge, whereas Hal strives toward "Christian humanism" in which honor is based on virtue and patriotism.

Sjoberg, Elisa. "From Madcap Prince to King: The Evolution of Prince Hal." *Shakespeare Quarterly* XX, No.1 (Winter 1969): 11-16.

Maintains that Hal is never fully "madcap," that is, he never joins in Falstaff's exploits wholeheartedly; rather, he is secretly preparing to be king all along,

Stribrny, Zdenek. "The Idea and Image of Time in Shakespeare's Second Historical Tetralogy." *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* iii (1975): 51-66.

Stribrny examines the references to time within the play and attempts to show the significance of these references. He also comments on the use of time by the principal characters,

Vickers, Brian. The *ArtiStry of Shakespeare's Prose.* London: Methuen, 1968, pp. 1-51, 89-141.

Compares the use of prose and verse by the characters in *Henry IV.*

Wilson, John Dover. "The Political Background of Shakespeare's Richard II and Henry *IV." Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 75 l1939): 36-51.

Discusses the influence of Elizabethan attitudes and opinions on Shakespeare's historical and political views and argues that Henry is more of a "tragic figure" than a villain.

The Fortunes of Falstaff. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964, 143 p.

Offers a thorough examination of the character of Falstaff and his influence over and relationship with Prince Hal.

Zeeveld, Gordon. "'Food for Powder' -'Food for Worms?'" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 3 (1952): 249-53.

Argues that honor is the theme of *Henry IV; Part One,* and demonstrates the views of honor held by Falstaff, Hal, and Hotspur.

Copyright Information

This Premium Study Guide is an offprint from *Shakespeare for Students*.

Project Editor
David Galens

Editorial
Sara Constantakis, Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kristen A. Dorsch, Anne Marie Hacht, Madeline S. Harris, Arlene Johnson, Michelle Kazensky, Ira Mark Milne, Polly Rapp, Pam Revitzer, Mary Ruby, Kathy Sauer, Jennifer Smith, Daniel Toronto, Carol Ullmann

Research
Michelle Campbell, Nicodemus Ford, Sarah Genik, Tamara C. Nott, Tracie Richardson

Data Capture
Beverly Jendrowski

Permissions
Mary Ann Bahr, Margaret Chamberlain, Kim Davis, Debra Freitas, Lori Hines, Jackie Jones, Jacqueline Key, Shalice Shah-Caldwell

Imaging and Multimedia
Randy Bassett, Dean Dauphinais, Robert Duncan, Leitha Etheridge-Sims, Mary Grimes, Lezlie Light, Jeffrey Matlock, Dan Newell, Dave Oblender, Christine O'Bryan, Kelly A. Quin, Luke Rademacher, Robyn V. Young

Product Design
Michelle DiMercurio, Pamela A. E. Galbreath, Michael Logusz

Manufacturing
Stacy Melson

©1997-2002; ©2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc.

Gale and Design® and Thomson Learning™ are trademarks used herein under license.

For more information, contact
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3535
Or you can visit our Internet site at
http://www.gale.com

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any

form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution or information storage retrieval systems—without the written permission of the publisher.

For permission to use material from this product, submit your request via Web at http://www.gale-edit.com/permissions, or you may download our Permissions Request form and submit your request by fax or mail to:

Permissions Department
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535

Permissions Hotline:
248-699-8006 or 800-877-4253, ext. 8006
Fax: 248-699-8074 or 800-762-4058

Since this page cannot legibly accommodate all copyright notices, the acknowledgments constitute an extension of the copyright notice.

While every effort has been made to secure permission to reprint material and to ensure the reliability of the information presented in this publication, The Gale Group, Inc. does not guarantee the accuracy of the data contained herein. The Gale Group, Inc. accepts no payment for listing; and inclusion in the publication of any organization, agency, institution, publication, service, or individual does not imply endorsement of the editors or publisher. Errors brought to the attention of the publisher and verified to the satisfaction of the publisher will be corrected in future editions.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". © 1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". © 1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Shakespeare for Students (SfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, SfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of SfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of SfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in SfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by SfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an at-a-glance comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

SfS includes The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature, a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Shakespeare for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the SfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the SfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Shakespeare for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Shakespeare for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from SfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Shakespeare for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from SfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Shakespeare for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of SfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Shakespeare for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of SfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Shakespeare for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

Editor, Shakespeare for Students
Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535