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Friendship and Love of Honor

The Education of Henry V

Bernard J. Dobski

Power is a poison well known for thousands of years. If only no one were ever to acquire material power over others! But to the human being who has faith in some force that holds dominion over all of us, and who is therefore conscious of his own limitations, power is not necessarily fatal.

—Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, “The Bluecaps”¹

In *The Case for Greatness: Honorable Ambition and Its Critics*, Robert Faulkner argues that statesmen like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Winston Churchill stand apart from the tyrants and demagogues of political life because they managed the unique combination of goodness and greatness, that is of “sober respect for the law with honorable superiority.”² As such, they were able to employ their considerable political talents and energies in the effort to create or restore lawful political orders whose enduring power reflected their own brilliance. But such men also inherited traditions of republicanism, liberal constitutionalism and a Christian ethos that upheld the rights and dignity of the individual; they could be conscious of their own limitations because they could acknowledge the political and religious traditions that existed independent of their making and outside of their control. These traditions were the preconditions of their greatness, providing them with a moral horizon that could ennoble their already considerable virtues. But what of the founder or restorer of a great political order who appears to enjoy no such advantages? Can one achieve that combination of goodness and greatness absent such conditions?

In Shakespeare’s presentation of King Henry V one finds just such a “restorer”—a monarch who, through almost entirely his own efforts, manages to invest his throne and his country with a sense of national unity and greatness. In bringing together English, Welsh, Irish and Scottish soldiers in his conquest of France, Henry V manages to unite them as one people, giving them a sense of national pride that extends through the ages.³ Through his military genius at Agincourt, Henry V not only brought order to the British people but restored legitimacy to a crown that had been undermined by his father’s usurpation of Richard II. It is true that Henry V’s conquests dissolved after his untimely death, and that his passing made possible the War of the Roses whose final issue was the abominable Richard III. But one must not forget that the tarnished crown whose luster Henry V restored so brilliantly was able to protect his infant son’s claim to the throne until he, coming into his majority, repeatedly demonstrated his unworthiness for the “golden rigol.” Despite these failings, Henry V’s seemingly miraculous victory over the French, like those of Edward III and the Black Prince before him, remained a

dazzling star by which the British people and their sovereigns could navigate national greatness.

We can best appreciate how Shakespeare's Henry V was able to restore political authority to the crown of England by understanding Henry's own political education, one connected (but not reducible) to his friendly association with the monstrously lovable Sir John Falstaff. Indeed, as anyone familiar with the *Henriad* knows, one cannot hope to do justice to Hal's famous political career without an appreciation of his no less famous friendship with that "fallen knight" whose blistering wit and unfaltering devotion to the young Prince not only match his prodigious appetites for sack and sex, but incline so many to forgive and even celebrate his (not always minor) outrages against human decency. Shakespeare's artistry makes it nearly irresistible for his audience to link the form of love that is friendship to the seemingly boundless pursuit of honor that defines the future King of England. A proper understanding of Hal's view of honor is thus prepared by understanding the impact of one of the most memorable and most celebrated friendships in all of Shakespeare's work. Such at any rate are the views advanced by some of the most current scholarly treatments of Hal and Falstaff.⁴

The "Problem" of Hal's Political Education

Contrary to these views, I argue that Hal parts ways with his porcine companion early in the *Henriad* and that he does so precisely over the proper understanding of honor, of the origins, character and value of a lawful order, sacrifice in the service of which yields the praise of men and the glory of nations. For Hal, contrary to Falstaff's famous battlefield "catechism" at Shrewsbury (*1H4* V.i.127–40)⁵ honor is not merely air. Hal's no less famous remarks before the battle at Agincourt—"If it be a sin to covet honor then I am the most offending soul alive" (*H5* IV.iii.28–9)—could not have been learned at the feet of his so-called Socratic master.⁶ Indeed, unlike the sensualist Falstaff, Hal repeatedly demonstrates a concern for more than material pleasure, a concern that leads him to pursue greatness at the peak of politics. For Hal, political life at its best can ennoble men, this despite—or perhaps even because of—the fact that he never expresses a belief in an immortal soul or a judgmental God who rules the afterlife. Hal's political conviction centers on the earthly dignity available to human beings through a properly ordered politics. While the experience with Falstaff certainly sharpened his wits and refined his rhetorical skills, Hal's genuine insights into those hidden springs that generate men's devotion to lawful political orders and to the kings who uphold them—that is, his true education in politics—derive from *his own* reflections on the nature of political life.

Much of the scholarly debate over the extent to which Hal is the creature of Falstaff takes the form of whether Shakespeare intends us to understand Hal as the ideal of the Christian King or the avatar of Machiavellian cunning.⁷ Suffice it to say that there is ample evidence on both sides to suggest that Hal can be simply neither one nor the other, but in some way effects a combination of the two. Hal's deviations from traditional morality are sufficiently numerous to render problematic his candidacy for "mirror of Christian kings" (*H5* II.Chorus.6)—whether it be his venial sins, like his toleration of theft and his utilitarian approach to friendship, or his larger perversions, like a war with Catholic France whose justice is questionable at best and a

public rhetoric that would appear to corrupt his countrymen.

And yet Henry does not simply disregard political and ethical limits. He is the only king in this tetralogy who we see convene Parliament, that institutional symbol of British constitutional order (2*H4* V.ii.134, V.v.103).⁸ While on campaign in France, Henry urges “mercy” for the inhabitants of Harfleur (*H5* III.iv.54), commands his troops not to steal from the villages, indeed, not even to abuse “the French ... *in disdainful language*” (*H5* III. vi.108–10, emphasis added); and he enforces the death penalty for those caught stealing (Bardolph and Nym, *H5* III.vi.106, IV.v.72). In his last appearance in Shakespeare’s drama he informs us that while he and his future Queen are “the maker of manners” they may not ignore all customs (just the “nice” ones; *H5* V.ii.268–69). Lest we conclude that Henry simply wants to appear to take political and ethical limits seriously, we should note that his eulogy over Hotspur (V.iv.86–100), the bestowal of his favors on Hotspur’s corpse (V.iv.95), his mourning over the death of his father (2*H4* II.ii.38–65, IV.v.82–87; cf. IV.v.36–39), and his prayer on the eve of Agincourt (*H5* IV.i.286–303), all occur without the benefit of a public audience; the Machiavellian concern to appear just does not apply here. Hal seems to be both Machiavellian Prince and Christian King without being fully one or the other.

To understand how Hal might combine a Machiavellian prudence with what one might call a Christian respect for the limits governing such prudence, I turn to *Henry IV, Part 1* and to a close study of Act 2, scene 4 and specifically the “prank” played by Hal on Francis the wine-drawer. This much neglected passage represents a decisive moment in Hal’s political education, one whose proper recovery opens new interpretive vistas for the remainder of the Henriad. A close reading of this scene shows why Hal does not accept the Falstaffian critique of honor. It helps us understand why he does not think men’s dedication to the law merely reflects concessions to force, fraud, or the deep-seated irrationality of people. On the contrary, the episode in question indicates that men’s dedication to lawful orders finds its support in an order (be it natural or divine) that exists independent of human agency. As such, it not only shows us why Hal might banish Falstaff as he does but how he might understand the link between the cosmic order, which is not of our making, and the lawful order, which is at least partly of our making, to provide a path to his own pursuit of glory. Hal learns that the kind of honors that he seeks cannot be won without attending to and thus genuinely respecting those limits on the pursuit of self-interest that are external to human agency and which, when observed, can lend political life a dignity it might otherwise lack. These insights prove crucial to understanding both Hal’s dedication to active political life and that St. Crispin’s Day speech which so glitteringly crowns it.

Act II in *Henry IV, Part 1*: Lawful Orders

While we hear of Hal in *Richard II* (V.iii.1–22) we do not see him until *Henry IV, Part 1*. But when we finally do meet him—in fact the first two times we encounter Hal—we see him in the company of Falstaff with their comedic antics on full display (1*H4* I.i, II.ii). Such is Shakespeare’s art that the impression cast by these initial pairings is virtually impossible to undo; the laughably outrageous Falstaff and the scandalously ambitious Hal seem forever linked in the minds of his audience as Shakespeare’s representation of friendship. It is in Act 2,

scene 4, however, where Shakespeare first addresses explicitly and at length the political consequences of their relationship. It is also the scene where he sketches the grounds of their break. To appreciate the significance of this passage, we must situate it within the Act as a whole. And a moment's reflection on Act 2 of *Henry IV, Part 1* will show that its theme is the status of the ties that constitute personal and civic duties in an England where respect for ceremony and long-standing custom has been overturned.

From the Carriers despairing of the death of the old ostler and the apparent inadequacies of his replacement that open the Act (II.i.1–34) to the mock trial between Hal and Falstaff that closes it (II.iv.363–465), Act 2 of *Henry IV, Part 1* reveals the strains newly placed upon men's attachment to lawfulness by Bolingbroke's usurpation of Richard II. But more than just legal authority was brought into question by the deposition of a divine right king. The discrediting of an order that enjoyed the sanction of both God's authority and human practice also makes vulnerable long-standing alliances (II.iii.1–33), marital duties (II.iii.36–115), contractual obligations (II.iv.33–91), filial piety (II.iv.363–465) and even the rights of friendship (II.ii.1–45; II.iv.242–71). If there is any truth to the old adage that “the owl of Minerva flies at dusk,” then we may plausibly conclude that a study of Act 2, with its focus on England's diseased state, will shed light on the nature of those pillars required to uphold a healthy political order. As the opening scene indicates, England, with her old caretaker gone and her new one seemingly unable to learn the ropes of his position (II.i.1–31), has fallen ill. It is thus possible for one to wonder now in a way that might be more difficult under better circumstances if a new “ostler” (II.ii.40) can be found capable of restoring England to political health.

Shakespeare invites us to place our hopes for just such an “ostler” in the figure of Hal himself. For while the theme of this Act is the degraded state of England's political health, its dramatic sequencing reveals a counter-movement, one whose denouement suggests that a lawful order is (or will be) restored and that it will find this restoration in and through Hal. Following the Carriers bemoaning England's diseased state, the Act turns, first, to the plotting and, then, to the execution of a robbery (and counter-theft) by the prince and his companions. Scene 3 gives us the greatest political evil, the internal workings of the conspiracy against the crown. And yet it is an evil whose prospects are already beginning to unravel; we learn that Hotspur's allies are beginning to drop off from his cause. The prospects of political health continue to improve as we turn to the last scene of the Act. Here we see that scofflaw Falstaff unmasked as a liar and a cheat, we witness his mock trial with its guilty verdict before the “King” and we judge his subsequent banishment from Harry's side. The Act concludes with Prince Hal, England's new “ostler” (II.ii.40), abandoning Eastcheap to return to court and take up arms against the Hotspur-led rebellion.

Of course, while Falstaff is not formally banished by Henry until his coronation (*2H4* V.v.47–72) thus making good on Hal's “I will,” he is effectively banished from Hal's company here, revealing the moral severity of Hal's “I do” (*1H4* II.iv.468). For with the exception of a brief chance encounter on the battlefield at Shrewsbury (which concludes with Hal throwing a bottle of sack at Falstaff; V.iii.57) and Hal's pathetic eulogy over a “dead” Falstaff later, we never see the two alone together again in *any of the plays*. If Hal has indeed effectively banished Falstaff from his life at the end of Act 2, and if he has done so on the basis of a new-

found respect for a lawful order that leads him to reject Falstaff's critique of honor—that is, if respect for the lawful order has been restored not in England but in Hal himself—then we must wonder what happened in the preceding scene to effect such a revolution.

This question and the preceding treatment of the ties that bind men to each other are framed by reflections on time throughout the Act. That is, they are framed by a consideration of what rightly orders men's private and public affairs. For if carriers are to fulfill their charges (II.i.1), thieves to lay their traps (II.i.32, 50–61), rebels to manage their conspiracies (II.iii.11, 35, 65–66), kings to save their kingdoms (II.iv.282, 320–26), and princes to go to war (II.iv.92–97, 526) then all must take accurate measure of the time. To be sure, knowing when to spring a rebellion is no easy matter. But in this Act even the simplest effort to mark the time is difficult; both the Carriers and Hal are unsure of the correct hour (II.i.1, 34; II.iv.92) and Hal must remind the Sheriff that despite the darkness it is, according to the clock, morning (II.iv.510–12) and thus a new day. By raising the theme of political disorder within the context of difficulties telling the time, the reader is led to wonder if men should take their bearings from the movements of an eternal cosmic order (like the position of Ursa Major: II.i.2)⁹ or by man-made conventions (like clocks):¹⁰ Should the cosmos or man be the source of political order? The opening reference to Ursa Major as Charlemagne's wagon suggests a third possibility, one repeated, and picked up by Hal later on, in his exchange with Francis the wine-drawer ("Michaelmas": II.iv.53). Might it be possible for a figure, a la Charles the Great, to join the two authorities and, through his sheer greatness and the long habit of customary usage, fix his name to the enduring cosmic order that governs men? Given his own stated ambitions (I.ii.188–210), it is not unreasonable to expect that Hal would find in a disordered England the opportunity to bring political customs into line with a framework that exists independent of human agency. A man who finds his celestial parallel in the "Sun" may be inclined to establish himself as the arbiter (or even embodiment) of both the heavenly and customary orders, that standard by which both the heavens and men mark the time and govern political life.¹¹ It is thus tempting to look ahead to the defining moment of Hal's political career—his stunning victory over the French at Agincourt—and see in the political glories that he forever links to St. Crispin's day the kind of political calculation anticipated here in Act 2 of *Henry IV, Part 1*.

To see how Hal might understand the interplay between the cosmic and conventional orders to prepare a path for his own pursuit of glory, we need to turn to his exchange with Francis. While this passage has long been ignored, glossed as a prime example of Hal's "tricksterism"¹² and read as a sign of his sporting cruelty,¹³ reconsideration of this episode suggests its relevance to those broader political themes whose treatment unites the Act as a whole and reveals it as an important step in the self-education of the Prince, what Hal himself calls a "precedent" and a "pupil age." In his exchange with the wine-drawer he engages in a close study of those hidden springs within his subjects that activate their devotional capacities. Through this engagement, Hal shows that he knows how to teach himself about the nature of his subjects' law-abidingness and their willingness to serve others. Indeed, he learns about more than just his subjects; Hal's interrogation of Francis helps to illuminate his own devotional capacities and thus his own dedication to politics.

No Joking Matter: Taking Hal's "Prank" Seriously

At first blush, the episode in question seems to justify its scholarly neglect. It is filled with non-sequiturs, conversational stops and starts, bizarre and difficult to understand comments, and seemingly inexplicable rhetorical twists. It never addresses the question that inspired it and ends abruptly with no clear or definable resolution. It is also one-sided, pitting the hopelessly overmatched Francis against the piercing wit and wily rhetoric of the young Prince. The prank ends when Francis' master, the Vintner, interrupts with news that Falstaff and company have arrived. The scene then turns to a lengthy—and at times hilarious—treatment of more obviously political themes. When one compares the scene's bizarre opening with the more explicitly political episodes that follow, we might be inclined to do as so many have done and dismiss it as a crass prank on Hal's part.

The funny thing is, as a joke, this stunt doesn't play very well. It certainly doesn't match the comedic heights reached by Hal and Falstaff when they are together. Even Poins, no slouch himself when it comes to a good gag (it was his idea for him and Hal to rob the robbers Falstaff, Bardolph, Gadshill and Peto: I.ii.155–60), is mystified by the stunt. Hal on the other hand seems quite taken with himself. In response to Poins's "what's the issue?" he remarks enigmatically, "I am now of all humors that have showed themselves humors since the old days of goodman Adam to the pupil age of this present twelve o'clock at midnight" (II.iv.89-91). Hal's apparent non-response merely heightens our curiosity as to what is going on here. The absence of humor in an episode that everyone takes to be a prank conducted by one of Shakespeare's consummate tricksters forces us to take another look at their exchange.

As it turns out, this episode takes up and explores the very same reflections that are treated throughout Act 2. Hal's so-called prank takes the form of a test of Francis' contractual fidelity, with the Prince inviting him to abandon his professional obligations. Not only must Francis respond to Hal's browbeating, but with Hal right in front of him and Poins calling from off-stage, he is forced to choose between two masters. And yet to discharge successfully his duties to the Vintner, Francis must serve both customers. The question is, can he satisfy both the princely lord before his eyes *and* the unseen caller from without? Or will he have to choose to serve one over the other? Such questions as are occasioned by this exchange allow us to treat the passage as a piece of the broader investigation outlined above. But what is perhaps most important to note is that Hal's joke is intended to pass the time until Falstaff arrives for their agreed upon rendezvous (II.iv.27–30). And yet, just after the prank, when Sir Jack shows up, the Prince tells the Vintner to make Falstaff and company wait outside. With Falstaff's entrance now delayed, Hal first comments on the preceding exchange with Poins, then inquires about the time and *then* launches into an unprovoked and seemingly out of place tirade against the character of Hotspur. Only after this, does Hal return his attention to his friends standing outside in the late night air.

Falstaff's delayed entrance becomes all the more interesting in view of the peculiar rhetoric deployed by Hal here. For while the pretext of this experiment is to discover why Francis gave him a penny's worth of sugar, Hal never directly poses this question to his interlocutor; instead, he approaches his target obliquely, only explicitly addressing the tapster's contractual obligations. Such rhetorical sleight of hand betrays the influence of the

slippery “Sir Jack.”¹⁴ And all of the challenges that Hal poses in his interrogation of Francis reflect Falstaff’s critique of morality, a Manichean view that pits an incoherent devotion to others against a thorough-going selfishness and which elevates the latter over the former. If Hal was Falstaff’s royal student, then why doesn’t the Prince welcome his teacher when he arrives? What happened in the discussion with the wine-drawer to drive a wedge between the future King and his so-called friend? To address these questions we must examine his various rhetorical sallies in detail.

Hal’s Dialogue with Francis

Hal begins his interrogation by asking how long Francis is contracted to serve the Vintner, a question which receives a surprising “five years plus.” Astonished that such a lowly task could require such a lengthy contract, Hal half teases the bartender’s assistant, asking if he has the courage to break with convention, shun his contractual obligations and earn the reputation for cowardice. Hal’s rhetoric here sets off a fiery denial by the bartender; Francis swears on all the Bibles in England that he would do no such thing! No mere slave to the customs of men, Francis’ willingness to uphold his contractual obligations is supported by his belief in the divine. For the tapster, God’s authority stands behind his dedication to the legal customs of his profession.

In response to such moral seriousness, Hal ratchets up the intensity of his questions; he now inquires about Francis’ age. At first blush, this appears a non-sequitur. But it is virtually impossible to point to one’s age without leading one to think of the years that have passed and, subsequently, how much life one has left. Francis’ reference to Michaelmas here (his presumed birthday), drives this reading home. Coming as it does near the autumnal equinox, Michaelmas signals the onset of winter and the shortening of days. Hal thus introduces into their conversation, ever so subtly, the specter of death. From Hal’s rhetorical perspective, the rationale for such a move should be clear: by getting Francis to think about his age Hal can hope to get him to reconsider the sensibility of his decision to spend five years or more of his life serving drinks as an indentured servant simply so that he may become, of all things, a bartender. Hal’s question appears to touch a nerve for the wine-drawer however, for it is at this point that Francis, who put off the first three calls from Poin, *now* takes advantage of the fourth and tries to extricate himself from the Prince’s interrogation, turning at long last to serve the unseen voice calling from without.

Faced with the premature end of his game, Hal must keep Francis’ attentions squarely on him. He does so now by mentioning the sugar and inquiring into its worth. Given an opportunity to discuss his generosity, Francis stays put. Indeed, he does more than just stay—he trumpets his virtue, replying that he wishes he could have given two penny’s worth of sugar! Such self-flattery provides Hal his new opening. For if attention paid to Francis’ virtue will keep him at Hal’s side, that is, if a return on his virtue is what he seeks and if such a return will delay his turn to that “other” competing authority, then Hal intends to do Francis one better. Instead of praising his kindness, Hal offers him a thousand pounds for a penny’s worth of sugar. By doing so, Hal not only praises him for his virtue, but makes it financially possible for someone like Francis to leave behind indentured servitude for good. Hal thus aims to eliminate

whatever material need that might have been the source of such dedication. Now Francis's immediate response to this offer ("Anon, anon") is ambiguous, intended more it seems for his unseen caller than it is for Hal. But Hal exploits this ambiguity to pretend that Francis has accepted this insanely large windfall. And it seems Hal employs this pretense because it allows him to push the rhetorical point he raised earlier. By pretending that Francis will take the excessive financial gift, Hal can, half-accusingly, ask if he will rob his master, the Vintner. Francis is confused; he doesn't know what to make of this sudden turn in the conversation.

Such confusion is understandable. Once again, Hal's sharp comments seem to come out of the blue. And yet, once again, placed in their proper rhetorical context, they afford the Prince an opportunity to explore more deeply Francis's willingness to serve others. Hal began by tempting Francis to abandon his apprenticeship; five years or more of menial labor hardly seemed worth the bartending payoff. While Francis rejected this offer in the strongest possible terms, we discover *here* that he gives away the Vintner's sugar free of charge. And he even seems willing to accept a massive gift for such minor kindness, one that he produced at the expense of his master. If Francis is willing to accept a gift out of all proportion with his minor decency, as Hal here seems to think, and if a return on his virtue is what will keep him at the Prince's side, then Hal might have good reason to suspect that what moves his interlocutor is not a concern with propriety as such but self-interest. But if Francis's good deed was motivated by a desire for a reward of some sort, then it is not so unreasonable to wonder, as Hal seems to, if it would be more sensible to just "go for the gold" without serving others. If what Francis really wants is a reward for his virtue, then he should just steal from the tavern owner and cut out the moral middle-man. The student of Falstaff seems to have learned his lesson well.

Hal's follow up remarks, where he rebukes the waiter for his mulish attachment to duty, confirm these observations as his own. For if Francis is *not willing* to steal from the Vintner (as it seems he isn't), then he might as well remain a waiter. If serving others is all he wants to do, then he should remain content with his lowly station and attend to Poins now. From Hal's Falstaffian perspective a more consistent, and thus more rational, approach would require Francis either to embrace service completely or to "be a man" and pursue gain limitlessly. There is then a *certain* justice in Hal here calling Francis a "rogue." For if the bartender's assistant is going to cling resolutely to the virtues of serving others while at the same time consistently refusing to serve his customer, Poins, then either he lacks the most basic self awareness or he is a hypocrite and a scoundrel. The scene reaches its denouement when both the Prince and Poins call Francis at the same time, rendering the poor man speechless and immobile. The tension is resolved by the sudden appearance of the Vintner who advises his apprentice to "attend to the guests within" (II.iv.79).

We are now in a better position to see how the exchange just studied constitutes a fitting substitute for the original interest in the "under-skinker's" generosity. Hal's line of questioning aims more at plumbing the depths of Francis's devotional qualities and exploring the motives behind such devotion than it does at playing a joke. It is precisely the capacity for selflessness that is at the heart of generosity and devotion to others. By exploring the latter, he can address his original stated interest in the former. And since Francis seems capable of articulating little more than "Anon, anon," Hal's indirect interrogation promises to be much more fruitful than a direct query of a man so verbally challenged. By studying what pressures will and won't work

on Francis' attachments to the Vintner and to his sense of duty, by exploring what will keep him by the Prince's side and what may drive him towards his unseen caller, Hal can experiment with those psychological levers that all successful rulers need to master.

The Politics of Cynicism

In the most literal reading of the passage, Hal, as a customer, tests Francis' attention to his lowly duties and to his master, by having another customer call from a by-room. To fulfill his responsibilities, Francis must attend to both men without also somehow alienating them. To satisfy one at the expense of the other is to fail in his duties. But Francis is more than just the apprentice of the Vintner. He is also subject to the crown, the heir to which sits before him demanding—playfully to be sure, but demanding nonetheless—that he respond to his questions. Hal thus represents political authority in England at a time when the legitimacy of that authority is in question. Given his carousing in Eastcheap with the likes of Falstaff, this description seems all too apt for Hal. But if Hal is the stand-in for a disordered and distempered England, then what are we to make of Poins, his partner in crime? As the unseen caller constantly reminding Francis of his duties over and against those of a corrupt political order, Poins would seem to represent God. Shakespeare's use of religious imagery strewn throughout these hundred lines¹⁵ invites his audience to think of the Almighty and to find Him symbolically represented in Poins' invisible but noisy presence.

Read this way, the scene seems to suggest a deeply cynical political lesson. It shows how the political order keeps men like Francis from turning fully to their ethical or spiritual duties by getting them to focus on the rewards for service. Hal demonstrates how he can keep his subjects bound to him when they are tempted by the calls of morality, law and duty to do otherwise. Perhaps even more troubling, the scene also shows us how Hal can manipulate religious authority (i.e., using Poins to “embody” the call of God) to serve his own interests. But in the end, it is not clear that Francis does completely side with Hal. For while Hal dominates the conversation, Francis' attention is clearly split. As the conclusion suggests, the tension between political and religious authority doesn't seem fully resolved in favor of either; by attending to the “guests within” Francis serves neither Hal nor Poins.

It may be that, as in the more literal reading, Francis cannot hope to fulfill his legal and ethical responsibilities without serving in some way both masters. After all, the political order, diseased as it may be, still has *some* claim on men's devotions. One would certainly be hard pressed to explain how the wholesale rejection of political authority, and the instability and insecurity that follow in its wake, could be consistent with what moral conduct requires. The abandonment of a political community, especially one in need of moral refurbishment, would be nothing less than an abdication of one's moral charge. And yet one cannot simply identify with and slavishly serve the corrupt ends of a corrupt community. Christian ethics would seem to require that one avoid the bad examples set by the new King and his rambunctious son while still preserving respect for a genuinely lawful order. As such, the various appeals designed to keep Francis from leaving Hal's side—appeals to money, shame, vanity, and fear—do not get Francis to drop his apprenticeship and set aside a life of service. The guileless Francis is not so willing to view fidelity to contracts and lawfulness as a means to some other end; he

doesn't understand service to others to be merely instrumental.

By bringing Francis's moral stubbornness to light, Hal can see more fully the rootedness of customs and conventions within a human nature uncorrupted by the moral sophistry that he employs here and that Falstaff employs elsewhere. The insight into such rootedness seems to constitute a rare but important exception in Hal's political education. For while Hal's education—from his usurper father and his debunking teacher—has taught him the flexibility of human customs and conventions, the treatment of Francis here shows him the extent to which a nature impervious to his rhetoric doggedly clings to serving others as an end in itself. It shows him the need within human nature for a limit external to human agency, one that is sacred and which can serve as a legitimate restraint on what would otherwise be a limitless pursuit of self-interest. According to this insight, it is possible to concede that some of the laws that govern our political, moral, familial and spiritual lives may indeed be the product of human creation. But their very existence testifies to an enduring need for them, a need rooted deep within the human condition. One can thus see the psychological origins of the rhetoric used so convincingly at Agincourt where, as King, Henry appeals to immortal glory to inspire his men to defeat the vastly superior French forces.¹⁶

The Recovery of Political Devotion

One might conclude that all we have shown is that Hal has learned (or reconfirmed) a well-worn Machiavellian insight: most men are attached to some notion of justice and as such require their rulers to act, or at least appear to act, in accordance with such a moral understanding. Because men like Francis may stubbornly cling to the dignity of law, contracts, and religion, the man who would rule them must understand that he may not blithely do away with all moral pretenses. He must, at the least, appear to be just. But we would be remiss to conclude that the attachment to legal, ethical and spiritual authorities at play in Francis characterizes only blue-collar simpletons, and not, say, worldly wise royalty like Hal or even moral degenerates like Falstaff. After all, Hal, like Francis, gives away his sugar to "Sweet Ned" Poins (II.iv.21–22). Hal promises Francis a tip so large that to call it generous would be an understatement. And Hal, like Francis again, refuses to forego his political vocation—a life that requires him to serve others—in order to enjoy all the pleasures that come from friendship with Falstaff and a life of cavorting at the Boar's Head tavern.¹⁷ Perhaps then for Hal, too, something divine authorizes his own dedication to a life spent in pursuit of political honor and glory.

But if, to one way of thinking, Francis might be said to represent "the Prince" here, then Hal, with his indecent temptations of Francis, his seemingly casual treatment of contracts and law, his emphasis on self-interest at the expense of moral duty, to say nothing of the fantastic rhetorical skills on display, calls to mind Falstaff. In this particular reading, "the Prince" is tempted by "Falstaff." Poins, on the other hand, with his persistent reminders that "the Prince" turn his attention to his responsibilities, clearly represents the demands of Hal's father, King Henry IV. Read in this way, Hal, playing "Falstaff," can perhaps gain some insight into what it is within his own soul that allows him to resist the unrestrained pleasures afforded by the lawless life in Eastcheap; it allows him to see that his dedication to politics is not rooted

simply in custom or accident—the adventitious consequence of being the great-grandson to King Edward III—but in a nature independent of human making. While “the Prince” may dally with “Falstaff” his attentions here are split and he is ultimately kept from embracing the Falstaffian critique of lawfulness by a nature that remains stubbornly dedicated to the active political life over and above the blandishments offered by Eastcheap. Hal thus investigates that Hotspur-like attachment to honor which prevents him from ever taking the Eastcheap gang too seriously (I.ii.185–207).¹⁸

In this reading of the passage, as with the previous two, Francis is torn because the figures represented by Hal and Poins both make legitimate claims on his attention: to perform his duties he has to serve both men. The Falstaffian concerns expressed by Hal legitimately claim his attentions because, as intimated by Hal to Francis, we have only one life to live on this earth. Given the certainty of our mortality here (and the uncertainty of what happens after) it seems positively inhuman to disregard all sensual and material concerns. When he is King, Hal will need to respond to such demands if he is to fulfill his responsibilities; after all, how can he hope to rule others well if he is insufficiently attentive to the needs of the body or the human concerns with the here and now? Indeed, Hal himself must address these concerns if only because the success of his political enterprises requires an heir who will preserve, consolidate and perhaps even extend his conquests (*H5* V.ii.204–8). And that requires that he be around long enough to prepare such an heir for his considerable tasks; his mortality and thus what will happen after he dies looms as a concern for Hal in a way that it never does for the eternally youthful Falstaff.

It seems precisely this very anti-Falstaffian concern with life after one’s death that proves so crucial to Hal’s dedication to political activity and to his concern for the dignity that can be found in a restored political order. To be clear, Shakespeare gives us no clear evidence that Hal, like his father, believes in an immortal soul or a God who doles out rewards and punishments in the next world. The night before Agincourt, the English soldier Williams remarks to his fellow soldiers, Bates and Court, and to a disguised Henry that on that “latter day” the King shall bear responsibility for all those who might die on his behalf in an unjust cause (*H5* IV.i.134–46). But Henry demurs; according to the King’s carefully limited response, God judges men here, in this life: “War is his beadle, war is his vengeance; so that *here* men are punished” (IV.i.168–69, emphasis mine). In claiming that the King is no more “guilty of their damnation than he was guilty before of those impieties for which they are *now* visited” (IV.i.174–76, emphasis added), Henry does no more than to suggest that their damnation is the untimely deaths they suffer on the field of battle. And in his solitary prayer that follows, Henry distinguishes the “contrite tears” that he bestowed on Richard’s *corpse* from those priests who “sing still for Richard’s *soul*” (IV.i.299, emphasis mine). Finally, Henry prays that the “God of battles” will not punish him tomorrow for the sins of his father, a concern that would be groundless if he believed his father’s soul was capable of paying for such sins after he died (IV.i.286–302). While Henry V never openly denies the possibility of divine retribution in the afterlife, his most explicit remarks on the subject reflect a studied ambiguity, limiting divine punishment to this earthly realm.

And yet even if Henry V does reject the soul’s immortality, Shakespeare’s presentation of this royal’s famous career does not lead us to conclude that he thereby rejects a moral order

circumscribed by certain sacred limits. After all, Hal remains attuned to the possibility that political greatness can lend an enduring dignity to the life of man. Thus in his St. Crispin's day speech we see King Henry V speak of the glory to be won and enjoyed by those who will live through the battle, a glory to be enjoyed by them while they are alive partly because they envision it lasting after they die; the very prospect of one's mortality makes attractive the immortal glory he promises. For Henry IV by contrast, a God who judges our immortal souls always overshadows the greatness of political life even at its peak. It is precisely this possibility which torments the King throughout both *Henry IV* plays, leading him at times to despair of "the crooked ways" by which he came to the throne, at other times to advocate such measures openly.

For Falstaff, the possibility that a moral order exists capable of ennobling men is simply derisible; despite all of his legendary intellectual firepower, Falstaff seems closed to certain human and political questions in a way that Hal does not. As a result he falls prey to the moral beliefs that he takes so much joy in deriding. Sir Jack bears the moral mark of a world class boaster—a man who debunks all that men admire so that he himself may earn their admiration. Falstaff's public critique of morality allows him to display his cleverness, his daring (see *1H4* II.iv.45) and thus, paradoxically, his ability to consult more than his own self-interests!¹⁹ There is perhaps no greater evidence of Falstaff's attachment to ordinary moral conventions than the discovery, at the close of Act 2 scene 4 of *Henry IV, Part 1*, that he carries on his person receipts for what he owes others (II.iv.516–22). These attachments resurface in *Henry IV, Part 2*, where Falstaff "valiantly" protects Doll Tearsheet from Pistol's rage (*2H4* II.iv.133–208), and in *Henry V* where Hostess Quickly reports that on his deathbed Falstaff railed against the women and booze he spent his life chasing (*H5* II.iii.26–37). One has to wonder whether a man who claims to be liberated from the charade of human customs, who believes honor to be "air," and who is reputed to possess such intellectual clarity that he is likened by some to Socrates, would keep track of his debts, display chivalry at sword's point and denounce at the end of his life what he spent most of it pursuing.

In the end, the Prince is more aware of his political attachments than Falstaff and thus is more self-aware.²⁰ This is perhaps why he is able to learn from Francis and why Falstaff is unable to learn from Hal. This might also explain Hal's decision to delay Falstaff's entrance to the tavern; until he has concluded his experiment with Poins, his boisterous friends can wait outside a bit longer (*1H4* II.iv.81). And that means that Hal's famous break with Falstaff does not take place at the end of *Henry IV, Part 2*. It occurs here, in the wake of his much neglected experiment with Francis, an episode which anticipates the more celebrated theatrics between Falstaff and the Prince later in this scene (II.iv.366–468), a drama that itself ends with Sir Jack "banished" and with Hal somewhere between the worlds of Eastcheap and his father's royal court. It is perhaps worth recalling in this context that Francis, by tending to the "guests within," serves neither "Falstaff" nor "Henry IV"—Hal, it seems, must consult his own understanding of the dignity of politics. When it comes to the nobility of political life, Hal stands between Falstaff and his father. By doing so he stands above them.

Hal and Friendship

By the end of the opening of Act 2 scene 4 of *Henry IV, Part 1*, Hal has effectively banished Falstaff from his company and he has done so on the basis of his new appreciation of the rootedness of customs and conventions in a nature uncorrupted by Falstaff's moral debunking. Of course, Hal informs us early on that he will use the Eastcheap crowd to serve his broader political designs. Later he "honors" Sir John with a charge of infantry whose command is likely to risk the life of this obese, gout-plagued knight, an ugly speculation supported by his pathetic eulogy over a "dead" Falstaff (*1H4* V.iv.101–9). Finally, once crowned, he does not hesitate to banish Falstaff from his company and to order the Chief Justice to throw him and those with him into prison. Hal may have always enjoyed a kind of distance from Falstaff.²¹

But such questions about the sincerity this friendship do not entitle us to conclude that Hal has no friends. There is, after all, Ned Poins. Whereas Hal and Falstaff mix blistering insults with friendly banter, Hal and Ned only speak "sweetly" to each other. Of the three practical jokes we witness Hal perpetrate in Eastcheap—all of which come at the expense of Falstaff—Ned is the only one "in" on all three and is the architect of the first and the last. Perhaps most importantly, it is only with Ned that Hal, that consummate political actor, lowers his guard and unburdens himself regarding his concerns for his father's health, an opening prepared by an expression of intimacy that is so startling and so out of character that most scholars simply ignore it.²² Unprovoked, Hal confesses to Poins that he is "exceeding weary" and that such

humble considerations make me out of love with my greatness. What a disgrace is it to me to remember thy name! or to know they face tomorrow! Or to take note of how many pair of silk stockings thou hast—viz. these and those that were they peach-colored ones! or to bear the inventory of thy shirts—as, one for superfluity, and another for use! But that the tennis-court keeper knows better than I, for it is a low-ebb of linen with thee when thou keepest not racket there; as thou has not done a great while. (*2H4* II.ii.11–21)

The attention paid by the normally detached Prince to the minor details of Ned's wardrobe and tennis habits betrays an intimacy that is arresting. For not even at the deathbed of his father does the Prince offer such an open display of affection, choosing instead to weep in private. Rather, Hal confides to *Ned*: "Marry, I tell thee it is not meet that I should be sad now my father is sick; albeit I could tell to thee, as to one it pleases me for fault of a better to call *my friend*, I could be sad" (*2H4* II.ii.38–41, emphasis added; see *2H4* II.ii.60). It is perhaps because Falstaff himself is aware of such intimacy that he tries to undermine Hal's affection for Ned (*2H4* II.ii.119–23). In the end, Hal's true friend is neither his equal in love of honor nor his equal in the battle of wits.

That Hal discloses his grief over his father's mortal illness in the context of proclaiming his friendship for Ned is not surprising. Falstaff's materialism empties human relationships of their substance and meaning, making it impossible for him to take seriously here Hal's private passions. Hal knows this, despite Falstaff's many proclamations of love for him. He is fully aware that Falstaff's rejection of the soul's immortality provides the basis for his shaky judgment that there is simply no soul and thus no dignity to human and political life. The only other time we see from Hal a spontaneous display of emotion—and perhaps the only time we see him angry—is when he throws at Falstaff the bottle of sack he had playfully given the Prince on the field at Shrewsbury; failure to take seriously politics at its most serious wins Sir Jack the wrath of the Prince. Of course, despite all of his mockery, Falstaff may genuinely love Hal. But Falstaff will never be fully aware of the depths or origins of such passion. The

intellectual consistency demanded by his materialism will always force him to chalk up to “medicines” anything smacking of altruism.

It is not for friendship then, but for a kind of dialectical mastery, that the Prince serves as apprentice to his bawdy vintner. As Falstaff himself declares “I am not only witty in myself but the cause that wit is in other men” (*2H4* I.ii.8–9). He is indeed a world-class rhetorician, a master wordsmith whose medium is allusion and double-entendre, capable of inverting meanings, bending language and reworking literary allusions to suit the needs of the moment.²³ But it is not merely verbal dexterity that Hal picks up from “Monsieur Remorse.” What he learns is *the* Falstaffian calling card—how to use speech to evade or conceal personal responsibility. Such rhetoric isn’t simply to avoid trouble; it is, rather, the means by which he preserves and advances a restored reputation.²⁴

But if the capacity for moral evasion is what the young Prince hopes to get from his verbal sparring with Falstaff, then what does he get, or hope to get, from his time with Poins? What is it that this particular friendship brings the future King of England? If the passage noted above provides any guidance, then we might conclude that Hal’s friendship with Poins allows him to un-burden himself, at least temporarily, of the pressures that come with his playing such a sustained and intricate ruse, albeit one designed to win him a fame that will last as long as the world (*H5* IV.iii.51–60). For the path to glory that Hal has charted for himself (*1H4* I.ii.185–207) and which he conducts over the course of three dramas, requires a dissembling whose on-stage duration enjoys no parallel in Shakespeare’s dramatic corpus. To be sure, as both Prince and King, Hal seems to pull off his plan with considerable success. But Hal’s “confession” to Poins here suggests that such a single-minded pursuit of his own glory comes at great personal cost to him; it requires that he deny to both his father and his friend the open acknowledgment of his attachments to them, that he refuse to discharge what human sentiment naturally demands of us. For if he weeps for his father, he will be called a hypocrite, a charge which would render suspect his long-planned self-revelation; thinking him disingenuous, people would assume that his personal transformation was mere spin, a ploy designed to win their approval. At the same time, if he were to give full rein to his friendship with Poins, he would be disgraced in his own eyes as an aspirant to political greatness; a man concerned with his own fame and the glory of his nation does not preoccupy himself with “small beer” or the tennis rackets, silk-stockings, and linen-shirts of others (*2H4* II.ii.1–27). And yet, it is precisely his friendship with Poins that allows him to set aside, if only momentarily, his self-interested pursuit of fame and to reveal, and thereby partially relieve, the wearisome situation that he has constructed for himself. Because of this there is something “sweet” to the relationship between Hal and Poins (*1H4* I.ii.107, 152, II.iv.20–21), something not unlike the gift of Francis’ sugar to the Prince, especially insofar as such “sweet” generosity seems capable of producing a pleasure in both the giver and the recipient that can overpower considerations of low self-interest.²⁵

These reflections on Hal, Falstaff and Poins suggest an important link between Hal’s nearly scandalous political ambitions and the possibility of genuine friendship. For despite the fact that Hal’s political pursuits and his friendships clearly serve his self-interests, they also require him to recognize a good outside of himself that he lacks and whose possession requires him to moderate his conduct, to consult the welfare of others and thereby avoid the solipsism

that makes friendship impossible and turns statesmanship into tyranny. Hal's most private pursuits must necessarily possess a "public" dimension if they are to be fully satisfied, a seemingly paradoxical conclusion anticipated by his exchange with the tapster. For such an exchange shows us the need to resolve the apparent antinomies between the material and spiritual realms, the demands of family and friendship, the needs of the mundane and the sacred, and the claims made by public duties and private interests. And the suggestion is that we—whether we are a wine-drawer, subject to a lord or to the Lord, or even the King of England—resolve them not by sacrificing one to the other but by recognizing the inextricable link between all of them.

Hal's "Eureka" Moment and St. Crispin's Day

Hal must treat the customary order with dignity not because long-standing social norms require that he do so, but because it reflects a truth found in that horizon which encompasses and ennobles his political pursuits. The dignity of the customary and the lawful may not necessarily lie in its specific prescriptions but in its capacity to give word—however inadequate the expression—to that broader order that governs us. This insight may help us to understand Hal's enigmatic remarks at the close of his experiment. Again, in response to Poins' "what's the issue?" Hal says (*IHA* II.iv.89–91),

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

In a statement whose time-related references recall the Act's broader themes, Hal seems to declare that he now grasps all of those human passions that have always moved men; the preceding exchange with Francis has revealed an enduring truth about human nature. Such a "eureka" moment naturally constitutes for Hal an educational one, for he calls it his "pupil age," an education conditioned by the "present 12 o'clock at midnight." Because Hal, in the very next line, asks Francis for the time, we can rest assured that he is not reading the clock on the wall.

Midnight, like dusk, evening, dead of night, and dawn, designates a natural nocturnal phase and not simply a point on the clock. "12 o'clock" however, represents the conventional effort to mark, in this case, the end of one day and the beginning of another. Such enigmatic phrasing might suggest that Hal's insight into human nature is best described by the marriage of the cosmic and conventional orders. Far from placing upon the text an interpretive burden that it could not possibly bear, this reading picks up on an image already mentioned in this scene: Francis tells Hal that he marks his age by Michaelmas, the feast of St. Michael celebrated on September 29. With its proximity to the autumnal equinox, Michaelmas, in addition to heralding the onset of winter, also calls to mind the perfect balance between night and day. Given this earlier reference to the equilibrium between two seemingly opposed elements, is it so incredible to think that Hal might have in mind the possibility of bringing together antinomies in a way that doesn't favor one over the other?

This reading becomes even harder to resist when we consider that this feast day not only brings together the divine, natural and customary orders, but does so to celebrate the most glorious of God's angels near a time when the forces of light and darkness are evenly

balanced. Michaelmas may thus represent in fine the kind of glories that Hal seeks to carve out for himself when he finally ascends to the throne: to have his name take on almost holy significance by linking it to a convention that celebrates the balance of those forces that are independent of human making but which govern men's affairs. Far from reflecting the limitless Machiavellian pursuit of individual glory, Hal's education here suggests the need to do justice to the limits imposed upon us by a cosmic order, limits whose boundaries are brought into specific relief by the customary order which regulates human affairs. "Michaelmas"—like the references to "Charlemagne's wagon" earlier or that "goodman Adam" with whom both humanity and time originate—prepares us for Henry V's St. Crispin's day speech and his attribution of the victory at Agincourt to God.

In the first place, the victory at Agincourt becomes that single event by which the men who fought there and lived to "see old age" would order their lives. Because of their conquest over the enemy's overwhelming forces, those who fought with Henry win for themselves a sense of self-respect that allows them to "stand a little taller"—to rise above their low stations and to take pride in their manhood, lessons that such men can pass on to their sons and neighbors. It also becomes the event which brings political order to the life of the British people. For in a victory won by the united efforts of Irish, Welsh, Scottish and English forces, one discovers a British "nation certain of its ruler, possessing an absolute unity of purpose, animated by wartime camaraderie, the exhilaration of conquest, the pride of demonstrated superiority, and given over to the feeling that it lives in a blessed historical moment."²⁶ The triumph of Henry's forces here thus marks the birth date of the modern British nation, a birth date whose undying commemoration will perpetuate the national unity so daringly won.

But their victory and the national order born from it does not just reflect the triumph of secular politics. By repeatedly invoking Crispin Crispinus in his speech (six times in *H5* IV.iii.40–67, and once at IV.vii.89), Henry tries to link in the minds of his audience the military victory at Agincourt to the religious figures with whom it shares a date. That Henry ascribes the victory to God alone (IV.viii.107–121), that he orders his victorious forces to sing the *Non nobis* and *Te Deum*, and that he charges death for those who praise themselves for the victory just won (IV.viii.115–117) suggests that the King wants a feast day, which is to take on a radically new political meaning, to retain that broader religious horizon capable of ensuring its continued commemoration. Finally, as the leader of God's army in a miraculous win against the French, Henry lays to rest any doubt about the legitimacy of his claim to the throne. Though the credit must be given to God, everyone in England and France knows that the victory was achieved by the hands of the King and those with him. The apparent discrepancy between Henry's speech and the effect of his deeds, far from revealing an inconsistency in his rhetoric, suggests rather his fidelity to healthy politics by balancing the antinomies such politics requires. For if men simply wait for God's divine intervention and don't take up arms on behalf of what is just, noble and good, then they will always wait until it's too late; and yet to allow men to think of themselves as masters of their own fate is to abandon them to a politically unwholesome sense of freedom.

If Shakespeare intends his audience to understand Henry V's spectacular victory at Agincourt to reflect the moment in which he reconciled the competing demands made by the political and heavenly realms and reflected in the tensions between public duties and private

interests, as I maintain, then he could have hardly picked a more symbolic day. While the date of Agincourt (October 25) will commemorate the birth of the modern British nation, the name of the feast day also calls to mind not one but two saints, brothers whose martyrdom for Christ won them immortality, a soul-salvation that mimics their shoemaking vocation, that is a “trade” one “may use with a safe conscience,” which is to say “a mender of bad soles.”²⁷ That the patron saints of shoe-makers are alleged to have been twins, two offspring produced by one birth,²⁸ and that this Catholic feast day allegedly belonged originally to a pagan deity, merely adds weight to the contention that this customary celebration, with its overlapping religious dualities, represented the opportunity by which King Henry V could, through force of his political will alone, bring together the natural, conventional and divine orders in a way that would preserve the immortal glory of the British people and their king. Of course, that King Henry V could glimpse such harmonization as the highway to the glories reserved for the likes of Charlemagne—or even St. Michael—in his princely exchange with Francis should heighten our appreciation for the essential unity of the Henriad, of the career of Henry V and of the best possible political ruler that Shakespeare could envision. Indeed, capturing this unity seems to be the hallmark of political life at its best even as it reminds of the limitations that govern, guide and restrain the best political orders and the statesmen who found and lead them.

Notes

1. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*, tr. Thomas Whitney and Harry Willets (Harper Perennial, 2007) 69.

2. Robert Faulkner, *The Case for Greatness: Honorable Ambition and Its Critics* (Yale University Press, 2007) 45.

3. Tim Spiekerman, in *Shakespeare's Political Realism: The English History Plays* (SUNY Press, 2001), notes that the victory at Agincourt gives the British forces “the exhilaration of participating in a phenomenal military and political victory. The sense of national pride he engenders is expansive” touching not only the combatants, but “their children and grandchildren as well” (148). See also Paul Cantor, “Shakespeare’s *Henry V*: From the Medieval to the Modern World,” in *Perspectives on Politics in Shakespeare*, eds. John A. Murley and Sean D. Sutton (Rowman and Littlefield, 2006) 11–31, esp. 16; and Constance Hunt, “The Origins of National Identity in Shakespeare’s *Henry V*,” *Perspectives on Political Science* 36/3 (2007) 133–40. Derek Cohen argues for the importance of Henry V’s reign to “nation-building and history making” and thus “the fraught process by which history and ... nationality are created”: see Derek Cohen, “History and the Nation in *Richard II* and *Henry IV*,” *Studies in English Literature* 42/2 (2002) 293–315, esp. 295.

4. See, for instance, Allan Bloom, *Love and Friendship* (Simon and Schuster, 1993) 401–10, esp. 405–6, 409; see also Cantor 2006. For Harold Bloom the friendship is decidedly one-sided, but a friendship nevertheless: see Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (Riverhead Books, 1998) 271–314.

5. References herein are from the Arden Shakespeare editions published by Thomson Learning.

6. Allan Bloom (1993, 407–8), Spiekerman (2001, 113), and Harold Bloom (1998) stand

out among those who understand Falstaff to represent some version of Socrates.

7. Norman Rabkin's chapter, "Either/Or: Responding to *Henry V*," provides a useful review of both sides of the debate: see Norman Rabkin, *The Problem of Meaning in Shakespeare* (University of Chicago Press, 1981) 33–62. Of special interest is Rabkin's recovery of the reading of Henry V as the "mirror of Christian Kings," a reading that is increasingly out of fashion. Perhaps most notable in this respect is J. Dover Wilson, *The Fortunes of Falstaff* (Cambridge University Press, 1943). Rabkin's own view is that Shakespeare intends us to see both sides of Hal as equally supported by the evidence from the plays and thus both equally likely: "the inscrutability of *Henry V* is the inscrutability of history" (1981, 62). Rabkin also concludes that Hal has "incorporated Falstaff's clear-sightedness" regarding honor (1981, 47). For views on Hal's unique Machiavellianism, see A. Bloom 1993, esp. 408; Avery Plaw, "Prince Harry: Shakespeare's Critique of Machiavelli," *Interpretation* 33/1 (2005) 19–43; Spiekerman 2001. Harold Bloom (1998) echoes this assessment, reiterating throughout that the "murderous" and "aggressive" Hal has learned everything he knows from the Socrates of Eastcheap. For John Alvis, Hal's "personalization of providence" prevents any easy identification of Hal with Machiavelli, though Hal does link Falstaff's teachings to the moral corruption occasioned by Machiavelli: see John Alvis, "Liberty in Shakespeare's British Plays," in Murley and Sutton 2006, 33–45; see also Alvis' chapter on Henry of Monmouth in his *Shakespeare's Understanding of Honor* (Carolina Academic Press, 1990). Cantor argues that despite Hal's Machiavellian methods of deception, he does not "ignore or disrespect ... entirely" the boundaries of morality (2006, 23; see 16, 19). By navigating the extremes of Christian idealism and Machiavellian realpolitik, Henry V "represents Shakespeare's model of kingship," not "in the sense of a perfect ruler" but "the most we could reasonably expect in an actual ruler" (2006, 15). Spiekerman anticipates this conclusion (2001, 149–52). For Hunt (2007), it is Henry's recognition of his subject's erotic self-sacrificing nature that distinguishes him from Machiavelli. Aysha Pollnitz situates Shakespeare's treatment of the young Prince within the context of sixteenth-century debates over the education of princes, specifically whether "carefully educated princes" could alleviate the controversies attending royal succession: "Educating Hamlet and Prince Hal," in *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought*, eds. David Armitage, Conal Condren and Andrew Fitzmaurice (Cambridge University Press, 2009) 119–38.

8. Of the five references to Parliament in this tetralogy, three of them deal with Henry V (*H5* I.i.1–5, 60–72); the other two are in *Richard II*. On the place of Parliament in Shakespeare's political thought and its subsequent absence in his plays, see Alvis 2006, 33–47, 45; Oliver Arnold, *The Third Citizen: Shakespeare's Theatre and the Early Modern House of Commons* (Johns Hopkins University, 2007).

9. On the "order" supplied by Ursa Major even to thieves, see the references to the "Seven Stars" by Falstaff (*1H4* I.ii.16) and Pistol (*2H4* II.iv.183).

10. In pointing to the differences between things like clocks and constellations, Shakespeare does not draw a simple distinction between convention and nature. The mere invocation of natural phenomena is not sufficient to rule out the possibility that the cosmic order which enfolds them is quite literally a heavenly one. By employing "cosmic" to refer to that non man-made order by which we mark the time, I hope to preserve the ambiguity of its

divine or natural status, an ambiguity reflected in Shakespeare's own presentation.

11. Cohen claims that Hal is "determined to direct the forces of history" and in so doing will gain "the power to define the English nation in terms he dictates" (2002, 303).

12. Alvis 1990, 207.

13. Such is the gloss by Spiekerman (2001, 110) and Allan Bloom (1993, 403).

14. See note 24.

15. Consider the references to "christen names" (II.iv.7), "salvation" (II. iv.9), "all the books in England"—that is, the Bible (II.iv.48), "Michaelmas"—the feast day of St. Michael (II.iv.53), "goodman Adam" (II.iv.90), and the interplay between "Lord" and "lord" throughout the scene.

16. Cantor observes that Henry is "willing to cross the conventional line between morality and immorality when political necessity demands it, but he tries to avoid doing so in a way that will permanently erase that line." Henry "does not want to establish a public precedent for disregarding morality and thereby smooth the way for other men to follow in his footsteps and commit evil with a clear conscience" (2006, 25). Cohen, by contrast, argues that while Hal "is subject to the symbolic order, which allots meaning to the orders he gives ... he surrenders his absolutism by his transgression of the system of differences" (2002, 300).

17. Shakespeare validates this particular link between Hal and Francis in Act 2 scene 4 of *Henry IV, Part 2*. There Francis rules over other tapsters while Hal disguises himself as a drawer. Of this disguise Hal says "From a prince to a prentice? A low transformation, that shall be mine, for in everything the purpose must weigh with the folly" (2H4 II.iii.166–69). Falstaff foreshadows this moment when he complains to the Chief Justice that quick intellect "is made a tapster and his quick wit wasted in giving reckonings" (2H4 I.ii.169–70; Hal's attending to "reckonings," cf. 1H4 II.iv.113, with I.ii.47–8).

18. In addition to linking Francis to Hal, Shakespeare also links Hotspur to Francis: both are "parrots" single-mindedly devoted to their vocation (II.iii.82, II.iv.97).

19. If "careful liars are carefree about morality," as Spiekerman suggests about Hal (2001, 117), then we must also conclude that Falstaff, who is a wildly careless liar, cares about morality, and that he does so precisely along the lines I suggest.

20. Allan Bloom claims, on the other hand, that Falstaff is the "only inhabitant of the Boar's Head who has self-knowledge" (1993, 403).

21. This distance is not bridged by the new King's decision to support financially the Eastcheap gang (2H4 V.v.66–69, 97–101).

22. One of the few works to appreciate the significance of this passage is Eric Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, tr. Willard Trask (Princeton University Press, 1953). In his chapter "The Weary Prince," Auerbach identifies this scene as a classic example of Shakespeare's interweaving of styles, of the tragic and comic, high and low, sublime and quotidian. Auerbach's treatment of Shakespeare's representation of reality, largely anticipates my own conclusion about the importance of the cosmic and conventional orders to Henry V's political ambitions and career. Norman Rabkin, by contrast, considers the "flyting he carries on with Poins" to be "unpleasant (1981, 41). True to form, Harold Bloom sweepingly declares that Hal is "ambivalent towards everyone and everything" (1998, 277).

23. On Hal and Falstaff's "intellectual relationship," see A. Bloom 1993, 402, 405–9;

Cantor 2006, 16. There is perhaps no more effusive praise, nor no more poetic a statement, of Falstaff's verbal dexterity than that offered by Harold Bloom (1998, esp. 275, 282, 294).

24. As King, Hal employs this Falstaffian tactic many times: he uses both the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Salic Law to justify his going to war with France (*H5* I.ii.33–114); he traps his would-be assassins into convicting and condemning themselves to death, for which they actually thank him (*H5* II.ii; cf. *2H4* IV.ii.105–24); he “liberates” himself from responsibility for those of his men who might die uncharitably disposed in battle (*H5* IV.i.101–86); and he attributes the victory to God not to himself (*H5* IV.viii.107–27). Hal's strategic use of this tactic is best explored in Alvis 1990; Cantor 2006; and Pamela K. Jensen, “The Famous Victories of William Shakespeare: The Life of Henry the Fifth,” in *Poets, Princes and Private Citizens*, eds. Joseph M. Knippenberg and Peter A. Lawler (Rowman and Littlefield, 1996) 235–70.

25. As Hal gives to Poins the sugar he had just received from the tapster, he says to his friend, “to sweeten which sweet name of Ned I give thee this pennyworth of sugar” (II.iv.20–22). Near the end of the *Henriad*, after he has “won” his first kiss from Princess Katherine, King Henry observes that a “sugar touch” of Katherine's lips is capable of achieving what the members of the French Council and a “general petition of monarchs” (*H5* V.2.274–7) could not—namely, to convince him to lay aside what were *his* terms for a peace treaty.

26. Spiekerman 2001, 149–50.

27. *Julius Caesar* I.i.13–14; cf. *H5* V.Chorus.26–28 and IV.i.176–84.

28. Hal refers to his own situation as King as a “hard-condition Twin-born with greatness” (*H5* IV.i.230–31).