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## The King's Speech: A Rhetorical Analysis of Shakespeare's Henry IV, Part I

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The King's Speech:  
A Rhetorical Analysis of Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part 1*

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
in  
English

by

Chance Everett Sweat

B.S. Tulane University, 2004

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## ABSTRACT

Recent scholarship has explored the “Machiavellian” actions of Prince Hal in *Henry IV, Part I*; yet the classical rhetorical pedagogy of Renaissance Britain suggests that the speeches in the play lead to a transformation in Hal that is antithetical to the emergent understanding of Hal as a great manipulator. Falstaff uses the ruse of rhetoric instructor in order to construct a classical rhetorical argument for his own ends, and Henry IV gives a passionate yet formally adept (and classically rhetorical) plea to his son in order to incite change. An analysis of Falstaff and Henry’s arguments as well as Hal’s responses provides the framework of understanding the play not as an example of what has been called “Machiavellianism” but rather as a testament to the power of what Cicero calls the “good man skilled in speaking.”

Rhetoric; Classical Rhetoric; Speeches; Shakespeare; *Henry IV, Part I*; Hal; Falstaff; Machiavelli; Renaissance; Pedagogy

## INTRODUCTION

Analyzing the relationship between Shakespeare and classical rhetoric is nothing new; scholars such as T. W. Baldwin and George Plimpton have made clear connections between Renaissance education and classical rhetorical pedagogies, and although Shakespeare is well renowned for his poetry and drama, he was also a master of rhetoric. Specifically, *Richard II*; *Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2*; and *Henry V* include a set of characters that often use classical rhetoric. *Henry V* includes some of Shakespeare's most masterful speeches (including the "St. Crispin's day" and "Once more unto the breach" speeches); however, in *Henry IV, Part 1*, Shakespeare portrays the growth of the prince who will one day make the great kingly speeches in *Henry V*, and many of the speeches in this play rival those of *Henry V* in interest, and sometimes in power.

In *Henry IV, Part 1*, the main characters frequently employ rhetoric either to convince or to judge other characters. In particular, Falstaff creates and abuses a classroom-like environment to attempt to retain Hal's favor, and Henry IV employs an emotionally charged argument in the middle of the play to convince his son to radically change his lifestyle and act more like a prince. Falstaff's argument provides a humorous imitation of classical rhetorical pedagogy (though underlying his humor is a serious point), and the king's argument provides a vivid presentation of the power of rhetoric spoken straight from the heart. Hal responds to each of the two characters with his own rhetorical arguments, creating a total of four important rhetorical arguments.

Despite the masterful rhetoric employed in such key arguments as these, many scholars analyze the characters strictly within a Machiavellian framework, viewing Hal as a character who attempts only to *seem* to be good. They ignore the crucial role that the rhetoric plays in transforming Hal, and the pejorative Machiavellian parallels these critics employ diminish the

powerful role of rhetoric. For example, in *The Emperor of Men's Minds: Literature and the Renaissance Discourse of Rhetoric*, Wayne Rebhorn argues, "Hal's performances can be read as virtual reproductions of the notion from the Renaissance discourse of rhetoric that eloquence is power" (62). The focus on Hal's language as the means by which he controls other characters reduces Shakespeare's great rhetorical arguments to set pieces for static and exploitative characters. The action in the play, the changes in the characters, and the ways in which characters affect each other and speak to each other and to themselves are far more complex than mere Machiavellian sophistry.

## FALSTAFF AND HAL'S IMPERSONATION OF THE KING

### Falstaff's Exordium and Proposition

Although the king and Hal are each much more complex than mere sophists, Shakespeare provides a foil to the great orators. Falstaff, more than any other character in *Henry IV, Part 1*, seems to have had a lasting impression on audiences. From a namesake brewery once found in New Orleans to Ignatius Reilly and other literary characters who follow in Falstaff's footsteps, it is clear that the old, bawdy drunkard has appealed to audiences in a way that makes the serious themes of nobility, paternity, and war seem more amusing. However, behind the boisterous joviality, Falstaff shows the skills of a brilliant speaker, a sophist whose desire is to assume a powerful position once Hal ascends to the throne but whose action (or, indeed, his very presence in Hal's favor) threatens to bar the prince from becoming king.

The first major scene involving deliberative rhetoric pits Hal against Falstaff in a kind of imitation exercise purportedly meant by Falstaff to prepare the prince to defend his lifestyle to the king. Falstaff begins his general deliberative argument (an argument that runs through several exchanges between Falstaff and Hal) in the second scene of the play. He provides a kind of entrance (or exordium) to his chosen subject simply by addressing the prince and establishing the relationship of the speaker to his audience. The entrance here is interesting because Falstaff immediately references Hal's future position. Rather than refer to his friend as a prince, Falstaff shows that his primary interest in Hal is the time "when thou art a / king" (I.ii.16-17). He continues, "Marry, then, sweet wag, when thou art king . . ." (I.ii.23); Falstaff invokes the Virgin Mary, calls his jesting friend a "sweet wag," and refers to Hal's status as a future king for a second time. By invoking the Virgin Mary, even if in a colloquial way, Falstaff at least minimally connects himself to a beloved religious icon. As Aristotle points out in his *Rhetoric*, it



is best to establish one's ethos at the onset of the speech rather than simply with prior deeds (182); Shakespeare adheres to this idea by first establishing a comic, lazy, bawdy character and then showing that Falstaff himself understands the importance of a presenting good character in a rhetorical context, even though Falstaff's action is as simple as a colloquial invocation.

When he calls Hal a "sweet wag," Falstaff uses pathos, Aristotle's second means of persuasion. Although Hal had just mocked Falstaff's wine abuse and afternoon naps, Falstaff takes an endearing tone towards his friend. Calling his friend "sweet," Falstaff appeals to the king's compassionate side. Calling his friend a "wag" ("often as a mother's term of endearment to a baby boy; in wider application, a youth, young man, a 'fellow', 'chap' "—OED), Falstaff appeals to Hal as a young, son-like friend. Falstaff's use of a term of endearment is meant to appeal to Hal's sense of kinship and is an attempt to establish his ethos as that of a close friend or family member. Just as Mark Antony addresses the plebian Roman crowd as "Friends, Romans, countrymen" in order to win their favor, Falstaff tries to do the same here with "sweet wag." Both phrases denote a relationship, and both command respect for the speaker. "Sweet wag" may seem hyperbolic, and Falstaff's sincerity might be questionable, but Hal responds well to the overall theme of Falstaff's lines by saying, "Thou sayest well . . ." (I.ii.30).

Falstaff's argument hinges on Hal's status as the likely future king, and with the words, "when thou art king," Falstaff completes his entrance and moves to his main concern, his "proposition." That is, to use Thomas Wilson's definition of "proposition," Falstaff provides "a pithie sentence, comprehendyng in a smale roume, the some of the whole matter" (709). He does this by going on to say, "[L]et not us that are squires of the night's body be call'd / thieves of the day's beauty. Let us be Diana's / foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon, / and let me say we be men of good government, being / govern'd, as the sea is, by our noble and chaste

mistress / the moon, under whose countenance we steal” (I.ii.24-29). His clear proposition to Hal is for Hal to think favorably upon Falstaff and the others once Hal is king. The request is jocular; nonetheless, it is sincere.

Falstaff creates an ethical appeal with the words “squires” and “gentlemen.” The titles attempt (humorously, to be sure, but nevertheless genuinely) to legitimize his and his companions’ nighttime activities. If what they do can be labeled as the actions of “squires” and “gentlemen,” then the natural assumption is that the actions must be good in nature. His stated connection to Diana associates him with a chaste goddess. Although, like Falstaff’s cohorts, Diana is associated with the night, she is a noble symbol; Falstaff capitalizes on the similarity in an attempt to make his own association with the night seem acceptable. Much like Homer’s characters whose ties to gods and goddesses at times make them greater than their surrounding characters, Falstaff’s connection to Diana strengthens his ethical appeal.

Falstaff makes a pathetic appeal by mentioning good government to a future prince. Any ruler who can consider his government good must be proud. Falstaff’s decision to call the men of the night a part of Hal’s future “good government” is an appeal to Hal’s pride. Further, Hal, soon to have control over Falstaff’s fate, is like the “noble and chaste mistress” Diana. Falstaff appeals to Hal’s pride by calling him a good ruler, and because Falstaff will serve both Hal and Diana, he implies a connection between the two.

The last clause of Falstaff’s appeal is, “under whose countenance we steal.” The line is meant in the sense of “steal away,” but Falstaff’s pun is clear. The omission of “away,” in this case a syllepsis (an omission that creates a pun), emphasizes the joke by forcing the reader to understand the literal meaning only by filling in the missing word. If Hal has a problem with Falstaff, a large part of that problem must lie in Falstaff’s willingness to steal, particularly from

Hal's future subjects. Making the joke draws attention to Hal's concern with Falstaff's character, but Falstaff's humor is clearly his saving grace, so attaching humor to the villainy detracts from any negative connotations that "stealing" has.

Hal responds to the thief's proposition by expanding on Falstaff's connection to the moon goddess Diana. He states,

Thou sayest well, and it holds well too, for  
the fortune of us that are the moon's men doth ebb and  
flow like the sea, being govern'd, as the sea is, by the  
moon. As, for proof now: a purse of gold most  
resolutely snatch'd on Monday night and most dis-  
solutely spent on Tuesday morning; got with  
swearing "Lay by" and spent with crying "Bring in";  
now in as low an ebb as the food of the ladder, and by  
and by in as high a flow as the ridge of the gallows. (I.ii.30-38)

Hal takes Falstaff's proposition and ignores the men's proposed relationship to the goddess, opting instead to focus on the ill fortune eventually bestowed on such men by the community. He recognizes Falstaff's appeal, and he responds by mentioning how the stolen money is quickly lost and that fortune for such men, as controlled by the "tidal" elements of the moon metaphor, will bring them to the gallows. Falstaff's plea and Hal's response are not formal requests and denials; they are not deeply serious, political deliberative speeches. Rather, they are the joking but somewhat serious banter between two friends whose words provide humor and manifest character for the audience. However, it is clear that both characters understand how to use formal rhetoric.

Although the entrance and proposition of his larger deliberative rhetoric go no further immediately, Falstaff continues to connect himself humorously and as a buddy to the future king so that his words might have more pathetic power. He calls Hal “Mad wag” (I.ii.44) and “Sweet wag” (I.ii.59) to keep their friendship in mind even as he pesters the king by repeating his request. He asks, “But I prithee, / sweet wag, shall there be gallows standing in England / when thou art king? . . . Do not thou, when thou art king, hang a thief” (I.ii.58-62). Falstaff returns to Hal’s image of the gallows and begs (again, with humor, but seriously, too) to hear that he will not be hanged when Hal is king. To parry this suggestion that Hal be compassionate in his eventual kingship, Hal of course suggests that he will make Falstaff a hangman.

A bit later, Falstaff uses a partly logical and partly ethical argument: he tells Hal, “Thou hast done much / harm upon me, Hal, God forgive thee for it! Before I / knew thee, Hal, I knew nothing, and now am I, if a / man should speak truly, little better than the one of the / wicked. I must give over this life, and I will give / it over. By the Lord, and [if] I do not, I am a villain” (I.ii.90-96). Even though the lines are humorous, Falstaff here makes a valid point: Hal seems to have encouraged Falstaff’s behavior. Falstaff argues that Hal’s influence has corrupted him, and in doing so, he attributes his own bad actions at least as much to Hal as to himself. The accusation is absurd considering Falstaff’s age and long history of immoral behavior, but the juxtaposition of humor and serious rhetoric is central to Falstaff’s character. Last, and perhaps most important, Falstaff recognizes that Hal might be on the verge of a change, that Hal’s mindset as future king might be evolving. Falstaff’s claim that he will “give over this life” is a subtle appeal to someone who understands virtue and who is also planning to give over his life to virtuousness. It is an ethical appeal because it shows Falstaff not only recognizes the problem of

his own reputation but also demonstrates (or at least attempts to demonstrate) a commitment to correct the problem.

Nancy Struever astutely argues that Shakespeare's rhetorical situations "focus precisely on the nature of the dysfunction of moralizing discourse" (139). Falstaff's lines are humorous, but they are also part of a serious rhetorical discourse that demonstrates a decline in the discourse of morality. Struever further states, "[I]n the Renaissance, academic rhetoric, rhetorical pedagogy had a tremendous investment in moralism. Naturally, those engaged in teaching rhetorical skills to adolescents felt compelled to emphasize moral responsibility and discursive courage" (141). If Falstaff does indeed take on the role of teacher, any arguments, despite how humorous or light-hearted they might seem, must necessarily be examined rhetorically.

Tom McAlindon claims that Falstaff "is in reality the tell-tale comic symbol of a political world in which chivalry's twin virtues of truth and valour [sic] are ostensibly revered and persistently betrayed. He may mock that world, but he identifies with it greedily, aspiring to be an earl or duke" (226). Thus Falstaff's humor does nothing more than dress up his desires. His jokes have serious implications, and his constant appeal for Hal not to banish him is sincere despite the humorous aspect. Although some critics might dismiss Falstaff as someone whose words are simply meant to amuse the audience, the subtle rhetoric he employs is a critical aspect of the play.

Hugh Grady argues that Falstaff "is not, as Hal is, poised between conflicting social roles and identities" (148). Falstaff does occasionally play with the idea of repentance but not seriously; on the other hand, he recognizes that Hal is torn between the conflicting roles, and Falstaff's rhetoric reflects that understanding. He and Hal both know that the king does not approve of Hal's behavior, and they both know that some change is necessary for Hal to secure

his claim to the throne. Falstaff assumes that the prince might make the change; he urges Hal not to cast him out when the prince becomes king, and in doing so, he recognizes that a king would naturally not want Falstaff as part of the community. Although Falstaff's argument includes jokes and ultimately fails, it is nevertheless a compelling deliberative argument from one friend to another.

### **Hal's Soliloquy**

After Falstaff's exordium, the prince commits himself to go to Gadshill (not to help Falstaff steal but rather to let Falstaff steal from travelers so that Hal can then steal from Falstaff). Hal then ends the scene with a monologue in which he echoes Falstaff's earlier commitment to change and addresses a question of lineage that his father had posed in the first scene. He begins, "I know you all, and will a while uphold / The unyok'd humor of your idleness" (I.ii.195-96). The lines show that he recognizes the faults of his comrades and commits to stay with them only for a while. Grady claims, "Prince Hal is a juggler of identities within the social real[m], able to move from one social context to the other, changing his sense of self almost as casually as he changes his clothes" (127). However, Hal's reluctance to steal from travelers, Falstaff's constant pleas, and Hal's decision to continue his connection to Falstaff by tricking his friend all point to a developing character who, though he knows better, still is unable as yet to sacrifice one aspect of his life for another. He does not initiate any of the actions in this part of the play; rather, other characters lead at each step: Falstaff initiates the major rhetorical argument about Hal's future behavior as king, Poins convinces Hal to steal from Falstaff, and Henry urges Hal to fight Hotspur. Much like an alcoholic or drug addict who wants and intends to reform, Hal recognizes the problem and tells himself that he will be able to change.

In the following line Hal demonstrates his motivation: “Yet herein will I imitate the sun” (I.ii.197). He uses the metaphor of the sun to explain how he will clear the clouds (base friendships) that have obscured the “beauty from the world” (I.ii.199), but the clear meaning is that Hal will become the “son” of his father; he will reclaim his lineage. He directly states his intention to change his way of life: “So when this loose behavior 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.ii.208-11). The lines, spoken alone, dramatically demonstrate his desire to make amends with his critics, particularly his father.

Unlike some critics, McAlindon argues that the scene is not a sign that Hal is Machiavellian:

Of course the famous soliloquy at the end of [Hal and Falstaff’s] first scene together is often cited as evidence of duplicity and an exploitative willingness to feed his companions on false hopes while he enjoys their company. But there is no hint anywhere that he lies to or misleads either Poins or Falstaff. It is clear, too, that Poins harbours no false hopes about the future, and that whenever Falstaff voices such hopes he is instantly—albeit to no avail—given the truth. (227)

Although Hal’s complicity with the band of men might imply a promise to the group, he tells them the truth of his intentions. The motivation, according to Hal, is the criticism he has received (again, mostly from his father); therefore, the soliloquy seems to be a desperate (but not binding) attempt at a promise to change himself. Hal had promised to go to Gadshill, thus binding himself closer to Falstaff and the others, and his soliloquy seems to be his self-justification about having done so, rather than a duplicitous self-reassuring statement from someone committed to exploiting his unruly friends while otherwise maintaining good morals.

## **Falstaff's Confirmation**

In the second act, Falstaff and Hal learn that Henry has called Hal to court (because three enemies—including Hotspur—mean to overtake the king), and they both recognize that part of the king's motivation in summoning Hal is to address Hal's absentee role as prince. Falstaff sets up a lengthy impersonation of Henry (II.iv.373-481) by telling Hal, "Well, thou wilt be horribly chid to-morrow / when thou comest to thy father. If thou love me, / practice an answer" (II.iv.373-75). Hal knows that Falstaff is correct; Hal's actions up until this point have been antithetical to his princely status, and both he and Falstaff recognize the king's mounting displeasure. Both recognize that the king, acting as a patriarch to his subjects in this moment of crisis, might deny Hal the crown. As a response, Falstaff suggests that they take part in the rhetorical exercise of impersonation.

As a pedagogical exercise, the impersonation exercise is meant to teach students to imitate great heroes, mythological characters, and statesmen as a means for the students to learn how to use ethos (portraying oneself in a speech as a believable and reliable person, counselor, or advisor) as a means of persuasion. Falstaff, the great sophistic manipulator of the play, tells Hal that he will help with an impersonation exercise for Hal to develop a means to speak with his father; however, once the impersonation begins, he proceeds in a satirical manner. Falstaff sets the scene by stating, "This chair shall be my state, / this dagger my sceptre, and this cushion my crown" (II.iv.378-79), to which Hal responds, in kind, "Thy state is taken for a join'd-stool, thy / golden sceptre for a leaden dagger, and thy precious / rich crown for a pitiful bald crown" (II.iv.380-82). Falstaff jokingly tries to establish a situation in which he can speak as the king for his own ends; he satirically uses the props to imitate a humorous kingly ethos so that he can provide his own guidance (as analyzed below). Hal, however, recognizes Falstaff's proposal and



uses sarcasm to establish the stage for his later response. The props, at best comic replications of the king's equipment, begin the interchange in a lighthearted tone; however, they also set Falstaff off as someone who only attempts to impersonate a true rhetorician.

Robert J. Fehrenbach argues that the props not only are jokes but also say something about Falstaff and Hal's understanding of 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[.] . . . 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. (48)

Although the props are a joke, they are clearly symbolic of the two characters. However, it seems unlikely that the props are meant to show that Henry's accoutrements are "unmajestic." Rather, because Falstaff is such a clear foil to Henry, Falstaff's silly, ineffective props seem antithetical to the real props of the king—just as Falstaff's misleading rhetoric cannot equate to the great rhetoric of the king.

After setting the scene, Falstaff begins to imitate the speech of the king: "Harry, I do not only marvel where thou spendest thy / time, but also how thou art accompanied; for / though the c[h]amomile, the more it is trodden on, the / faster it grows, [yet] youth, the more it is wasted, the / sooner it wears." (II.iv.398-402). Falstaff immediately embraces the king's argument that could most put Falstaff at risk: the company Hal keeps is detrimental to his well-being. Falstaff recognizes that he, as Hal's friend, has "trodden" on the prince and has helped to waste his youth; however, unlike the chamomile, abuse does not help Hal to prosper. The theme matches that of a king, but the image of the chamomile contrasts Hal to a flower and seems insincere.

Then Falstaff questions whether or not the prince is actually the king's son (II.iv.402-06) and thereby echoes the earlier comments by Henry wondering to Westmorland if somehow Hal and Hotspur were switched at birth (I.i.86-90). He states, "That thou art my son I have partly / thy mother's word, partly my own opinion, but chiefly / a villainous trick of thine eye, and a foolish hang- / ing of thy nether lip" (II.iv.402-05). Falstaff likely maintains the joking spirit that seems to unite him with Hal because he continues to oppose the serious life the king wants Hal to follow. But he still reminds Hal of the lingering question of whether or not Hal is the rightful prince, both in the sense of birth and the sense of honor and duty.

Falstaff finally gets near the original point of asking Hal to "practice an answer" by contrasting the prince's proper role with his ignoble actions: "If then / thou be son to me, here lies the point: why being son / to me, art thou so pointed at? Shall the blessed sun of / heaven prove a micher and eat blackberries? a question / not to be ask'd. Shall the son of England prove a / thief and take purses? a question to be ask'd" (II.iv.406-10). He uses an Erasmus-like repetition as well as the metaphor of the sun (akin to a metaphor in Hal's earlier soliloquy) to enhance his idea. Even the use of "son" twice and "sun" once audibly reminds the prince of the importance of his role as son to the king. The metaphor of the sun places Hal next to heaven, and the exaggerated comparison reinforces Hal's lofty position in society. The pathos seems meant to make Hal feel guilty for his actions, and the logos is clear: a prince should not steal.

Falstaff then establishes a third metaphor to reinforce the earlier two: "There is / a thing, Harry, which thou hast often heard of, and it is / known to many in our land by the name of pitch. This / pitch (as ancient writers do report) doth defile, so doth / the company thou keepst" (II.iv.410-14). After explaining that Hal's position is like the sun, Falstaff uses pitch to describe the defiling effect of Hal's friends. Again, here Falstaff returns to the fact of what is happening,

and his multiple metaphors help him to establish the king-like argument. In two opposing metaphors of the trodden but resilient plant and the pitch, Falstaff clearly embodies in his kingly impression the king's understanding of the facts.

Falstaff, despite being such a humorous character, seems to seriously imitate at least a part of a kingly speech; however, the speech is organized so that first, he can jokingly make fun of his friend (first by calling him illegitimate); second, he can move to a condemnation of Hal's friends; and third (as shown below), he can employ his own deliberative argument. Although he mirrors the king's words, his poor accoutrements and joking insults do little more than establish the path by which he will make his own request to the king.

Falstaff moves to the crux of his own (real) deliberative argument (in which he attempts to ensure his own place once Hal is king) by providing a kind of confirmation in which he lists the reasons why Hal shouldn't banish him. He tells the prince, "Harry now I do / not speak to thee in drink, but in tears; not in pleasure, / but in passion; not in words only, but in woes / also" (II.iv.414-17). The hyperbolic series of alliterative dichotomies humorously imitates the high words of a passionate king-father and is indicative of the light-hearted nature Falstaff gives to the impersonation exercise. Falstaff continues, "And yet there is a virtuous man whom I / have often noted in thy company, but I know not / his name" (II.iv.417-19). Because the impersonation of the king was a ruse by Falstaff to establish his own deliberate rhetoric, these lines continue Falstaff's argument from the first act. Falstaff continues by praising himself: "A good portly man, I' faith, and a corpulent, / of a cheerful look, a pleasing eye, and a most noble / carriage . . . his name is Falstaff. If that man should be / lewdly given, he deceiveth me; for, Harry, I see / virtue in his looks. 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" (II.iv.422-30). Funny as it might be to an

audience, Falstaff's clear, manipulative goal is to use the voice of the king in order to convince Hal that Falstaff is indeed a good friend to have. He finishes with a proposition like the one he made in the first act (I.ii.24-29): he tells Hal to "keep him / with, the rest banish" (II.iv.430-31). Falstaff at first indulges in the humor of the situation but eventually comes to his desire to praise himself and then proceeds to state his desire for Hal to be compassionate to him as a king.

### **Hal's Suasoria as Henry to Hal**

Recognizing Falstaff's shift in purpose, Hal maintains the humorous tone but shifts the argument to his own purposes by asking, "Dost thou speak like a king? Do thou stand / for me and I'll play my father" (II.iv.433-34). He continues by stating, "Swearest thou, ungracious boy? henceforth / ne'er look on me. Thou art violently carried away from / grace" (II.iv.445-46). Beginning an argument that proves to be the very opposite of Falstaff's—and will prove serious in the highest degree—Hal first uses a pathetic appeal, meant to make the imagined Hal feel ashamed of his actions. He quickly establishes the prince has erred by spending time with Falstaff and being "violently carried away from grace."

Hal then begins an invective argument that is meant entirely to criticize Falstaff's character. Within one long question, he calls Falstaff "an old fat man, a tun of man" (II.iv.448), a "bolting-hutch of beastliness" (II.iv.450), a "swoll'n parcel / of dropsies" (II.iv.450-51) and several other insults, one of which is the antiphrasis (the substitution of one part of speech for another), "trunk of humors" (II.iv.449). The series begins in what seems a jovial manner but progresses to what is a strong, clear series of insults. The repetition of Falstaff's faults makes it seem like the prince enumerates far more of Falstaff's faults than he actually does. In fact, he moves very little beyond Falstaff's age and size.

He ends with a quick series of questions, “Wherein is he good, but to taste sack and drink / it? wherein neat and cleanly, but to carve a capon and / eat it? wherein cunning, but in craft? wherein crafty, / but in villainy? wherein villainous, but in all things? / wherein worthy, but in nothing?” (II.iv.455-59). As with the series of pithy insults, the rapid series of questions and repetition of style make Hal seem to enumerate even more points than he does, and by putting so closely together Falstaff’s craft, villainy, and worthlessness, Hal compounds Falstaff’s faults and heightens the effect with each successive question. By repeating “wherein” so often, Hal makes it seem as though no suitable answers can be found in Falstaff’s character. As in his soliloquy, this passage shows that Hal understands his own situation rather profoundly and seems to use this impersonation to predict what his father might actually say, one of the positive results that impersonation exercises serve. In Hal’s argument, the tone moves from humorous to serious, and it becomes apparent that the prince is giving reasons he should banish Falstaff, an issue about which both Falstaff and Hal have both shown an awareness earlier in the scene and which Falstaff brought up early in Act I. Hal directly challenges Falstaff, showing that he recognizes the problematic nature of his role as prince and his relationship with Falstaff. Additionally, he proves to himself that he can, at least in jest, stand up to his friend with the truth.

### **Falstaff’s Refutation and Peroration**

Challenged directly and sensing the deep serious turn of the discussion, Falstaff responds with a logical refutation via Aristotelian enthymemes. He begins, “But to say I know more harm in him than in / myself, were to say more than I know” (II.iv.466-67). Then he claims, “That he is old, / the more the pity” (II.iv.467-68). To complete the enthymeme: old men deserve pity, Falstaff is an old man, thus Falstaff deserves pity. Also, he defends his excesses (with drink and

food): “If sack and sugar be a fault, God / help the wicked! If to be old and merry be a sin, then / many an old host that I know is damn’d. If to be fat / be to be hated, then pharaoh’s [lean] kine are to be / lov’d” (II.iv.470-74). In the series of enthymemes, he effectively praises the many people who he implies are fat and love both sherry and sugar while he argues that the Egyptian cattle match Hal’s list of the virtuous, thus calling into question Henry’s (really Hal’s) judgment.

Falstaff then moves to a series of repetitions in what can be considered his argument’s peroration (the final part of an argument in which the speaker sums up the entirety of his argument and often provides an appeal to his audience’s emotions). He (as the prince still) refers to himself as “sweet jack Falstaff, kind / Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff” (II.iv.475-76). The intended effect is for the name, “Jack Falstaff,” to become synonymous with the adjectives and for Hal to pity rather than scold his “sweet,” “kind,” “valiant” friend. He finishes his argument with a repetitive version of the proposition that he mentioned earlier in the play. He begs, “[B]anish not him thy Harry’s company, banish / not him thy Harry’s company—banish plump Jack, / and banish all the world” (II.iv.478-80). Repeating “banish not” after the “Jack Falstaff” diacope establishes an anaphora (a repetition of beginnings) that reinforces the overall message Falstaff means to provide. He does not simply want Hal to think of him as sweet, kind, and valiant; rather, he wants Hal to keep Falstaff close. The repetition is meant as a pathetic appeal to Hal’s sense of propriety: Banish not sweet Jack, banish not kind Jack, banish not valiant Jack.

The last two uses of “banish” in the series of repetitions, “[B]anish plump Jack, / and banish all the world” (II.iv.479-80), also establish a new enthymeme: if Falstaff is wicked and damned for sack and merriment, and, as is implied in the enthymeme, the whole world enjoys sack and merriment, then all the world is wicked and damned. If Hal banishes Falstaff, then Hal must banish the entire world (including everyone in his future kingdom). By turning it into an

enthymeme, Falstaff not only makes the connection that he is like the rest of the world but also seems to say that he is “all the world” to Hal. The wordplay reinforces Falstaff’s ethos by emphasizing his loving connection to Hal and by making himself synonymous with all the goodness of the world. In all of this, the pathetic appeal to emotion (specifically, the emotion of friendship but also the great appeal of happiness and a carefree life) typical of a peroration is powerful, showing that Falstaff knows many rhetorical tricks and can use them well when he finds himself in danger.

Despite Falstaff’s best efforts, however, his deliberative argument fails, as is apparent in Hal’s next line: “I do, I will” (II.iv.481). Grady correctly argues,

Hal is shown in the play as suspended between two fathers—King Henry and Falstaff—and between two futures—his father’s nightmare of Hal as a prodigal and unsuccessful king like the Richard he replaced, and Hal (in his and his father’s fantasies) as a second Hotspur, a military hero who would make good his father’s ambitions by surpassing them. (173)

What becomes crucial in the play, then, is not the way in which Hal juggles the two fathers or how he is able to appeal to both; rather, it is that Hal must choose one of his “fathers,” and in this scene, despite having humored Falstaff throughout the play thus far, Hal here declares that he will not follow Falstaff’s proposed path. He has not abandoned Falstaff yet, but he says he will.

Shortly after this argument, Hal protects Falstaff from a sheriff; he continues, like the creature of habit, to protect his friend. His argument to Falstaff and his willingness to warn Falstaff that he will banish the bawdy drunkard show that on some level Hal wants to transform into a regal prince. However, the issue is still in doubt, and it is ultimately up to the king to provide the necessary push for his son to commit fully to a substantial reformation.

## THE KING'S SPEECH

### Henry's Entrance

When the king and Hal first meet in the play, the king is surrounded by noblemen and dismisses them in order to meet privately with Hal. The two live out the actual conversation (III.ii.1-180) that Falstaff and Hal had practiced in Act II, and the king begins his narration to Hal in a religious tone: "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" (III.ii.4-11). The king here establishes himself as a pious man who values goodness in order to create his "derived ethos" (which is the ethos "derived" from the argument itself, as opposed to the initial ethos he would have as both father and king). However, he also uses a strong pathetic appeal by telling Hal that Hal is God's tool for punishment; here, Henry attempts to shame Hal into recognizing that he is a disappointment to a devout father. When he references his own "mistreadings," Henry shows that he takes accountability for his own past actions and in doing so strengthens his ethical appeal. The argument that God causes Hal to act so poorly further takes away Hal's agency in the matter, thereby encouraging him to accept ownership of his behavior either by accepting responsibility for his own actions or by denying his father's accusations.

Henry follows his religious tone by focusing on Hal's duty as prince and his failure to live up to that duty: "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?" (III.ii.11-17). Like Falstaff and Hal earlier, the king uses repetition to make the



list of Hal's mistakes seem much longer than it is. By repeating "such" so many times (again, using an anaphora), the king exacerbates the prince's misdoings by layering connected actions together with a modifier that enhances their extremity, and so attempts to stimulate Hal's sense of shame.

Additionally, in the above passage Henry returns to the question that has bedeviled him from the beginning of the play of whether or not Hal is the rightful heir by asking how the prince's actions can be connected to Hal's lineage. The effect of the king's rhetoric is meant to appeal to Hal's sense of familial pride and duty. The contrast of "lewd" and "bare" behavior so closely to "princely" lineage and to God Himself further emphasizes the divide between father and son. In fourteen lines, the king adduces very little concrete evidence of what ills Hal has committed (perhaps because both characters well know of Hal's faults), but he still provides a heavy-handed layer of guilt over his son.

### **Hal's Denial**

Despite the king's heavy-handed appeal, Hal is not immediately swayed. Hal's response is that he can disprove some of the tales told against him, yet he admits that he may have done some wrong. He states, "So please your Majesty, I would I could / Quit all offenses with as clear excuse / As well as I am doubtless I can purge / Myself of many I am charg'd withal; / Yet such extenuation let me beg / As in reproof of many tales devis'd, / Which oft the ear of greatness needs must hear / By smiling pick-thanks and base newsmongers" (III.ii.18-25). Rather than admit to the enormous accusation his father makes, he initially sounds much like the Machiavellian prince that Rebhorn and Grady argue that he is: he attempts to use rhetoric to establish an acceptable image of himself to his father rather than admit fault and promise change.

He blames a general rule that people of power must hear lies from others who make up lies.

Although he actually knows exactly what his father means (as demonstrated in his debate with Falstaff), he is not yet willing to admit to his father his problems and adopt a new lifestyle.

Hal shows that his father's argument has had at least a minimal effect by his late request (and admission) that "I may for some things true, wherein my youth / Hath faulty wand' red and irregular, / Find pardon on my true submission" (III.ii.26-28). Presumably, any parent in the audience or reading the text can see the child who admits, little-by-little, some of his wrongdoing. Hal has prepared for such a scenario, yet when he is in a position either to deny or admit, he squirms. While a Machiavellian may have been able to present a convincing image to his father, Hal fails at doing so. His father recognizes the prince for the troublesome, resistant youth he is, and Hal fails to dismiss the problematic issue of his tarnished reputation.

### **The King Redux**

The king responds with a quick absolution for Hal's denial: "God pardon thee!" (III.ii.29). In the same manner that Hal cuts short Falstaff's manipulative words during the impersonation, the king cuts short his son's lies about innocence. The king sounds very much like Falstaff's imitation of him from earlier in the play; both Henry and Falstaff recognize the problems inherent in Hal's association with Falstaff, and each uses well-spoken rhetoric to share his judgment.

The king continues by providing a sort of narration that explains Hal's current position amongst the noblemen:

[Y]et let me wonder, Harry,

At thy affections, which do hold a wing

Quite from the flight of all thy ancestors.  
Thy place in Council thou hast rudely lost,  
Which by thy younger brother is supplied,  
And art almost an alien to the hearts  
Of all the court and princes of my blood;  
The hope and expectation of thy time  
Is ruin'd, and the soul of every man  
Prophetically do forethink thy fall. (III.ii.29-38)

Whether or not the king implies that Hal might not be his rightful son in the first three lines of this passage, it is clear that he again attacks Hal's sense of family duty. At first, the targeted emotions are Hal's pride and shame. When the king mentions that Hal's brother has taken the favor of the noblemen, the king appeals to Hal's anger: anyone who has something taken from him, whether deservedly or not, naturally feels upset and becomes angry. Henry further explains the situation by shaming Hal for destroying the "hope and expectation" that comes with being a prince. By telling his son that the noblemen anticipate Hal's fall, Henry attempts to shame Hal into the realization that he is close to losing the hope of ascending to the throne, the position he so long took for granted.

The king then sets himself in opposition to the prince by explaining how he ascended to the throne: "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" (III.ii.39-45). Hal, "lavish of presence," has forfeit the opinion naturally given to him by the kingdom (thanks to his father) from his birth. The lines establish the king's ethos as one

completely contrary to that of Hal's: one ascends to be the king whereas the other tosses the prospect of the position away. Hal is clearly unlike his father who eschews vulgarity in favor of temperance and good public opinion; therefore, not only does this argument attempt to make Hal to realize the dichotomy, but it also encourages him to respect the advice his father is about to provide. Henry bolsters his initial ethos with the derived ethos that comes from telling his son that he is an expert in such matters.

The king then gives a more concrete explanation of his actions by telling his son about the effect of his own temperance:

By being seldom seen, I could not stir  
But like a comet I was wond' red at, . . .  
And then I stole all courtesy from heaven,  
And dress'd myself in such humility  
That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts,  
Loud shouts and salutations from their mouths,  
Even in the presence of the crowned King.  
Thus did I keep my person fresh and new,  
My presence, like a robe pontifical,  
Ne'er seen but wond' red at, and so my state,  
Seldom but sumptuous, show'd like a feast,  
And won by rareness such solemnity. (III.ii.46-59)

Being "seldom seen" obviously contrasts with Hal's constant patronage of Mistress Quickly's tavern, and the king's having been "wond' red at" is in stark contrast to the council's predicting Hal's fall. Again, Henry establishes a connection between himself and God by mentioning his

“courtesy from heaven” and “robe pontifical,” the effect of which is to explain that public opinion favors those who display an interest in being virtuous. The humility and ability to “pluck allegiance from men’s hearts” and “salutations from their mouths” that the king mentions are the ideals for which he thinks the prince should strive.

The king then establishes Richard II as having had a disposition similar to the present Hal and explains Richard II’s disadvantage: “The skipping King, he ambled up and down, / With shallow jesters, and rash bavin wits, . . . / Mingled his royalty with cap’ring fools, / His great name profaned with their scorns, / And gave his countenance, against his name . . .” (III.ii.60-65). Much like Hal, Richard II once kept a poor choice of company. If Henry is to be the ideal example, then Richard II serves as the antithesis of the ideal. The pathetic argument, because Hal must recognize the comparison, is akin to Henry’s telling Hal that someone else will ascend the throne. By telling Hal that he is like Richard II, Henry focuses on fear since Hal must recognize and fear that he might have the same disastrous fate of Richard II.

Afterwards, the king mentions Richard II’s frequent public appearances and uses the metaphor that men became too full from eating Richard II’s sweetness that they no longer wanted to eat (III.ii.69-73, 84). The metaphor carries over from Henry’s role as a “feast” for the public and is meant to instruct Hal how best to gain favor. Henry also uses a metaphor of a cuckoo in June that is heard and seen so often without any regard (III.ii.74-78). The appeal creates a logical argument from which Hal can draw a conclusion: if to be out too much in public causes disfavor, then it is best not to be out too much in public.

Concluding that section of the argument by explicitly comparing Hal to Richard II, Henry tells Hal, “And in that very line, Harry, standest thou, / For thou has lost thy princely privilege / With vile participation. Not an eye / But is a-weary of they 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.85-91). The king creates a sort of peroration (even if it only separates two parts of one argument) that any orator would be proud to give. After reemphasizing his points, the idea that Hal keeps bad company and is too often in public, the king tears up (i.e., makes himself "blind with foolish tenderness"). The audience, hearing and seeing such a scene, would recognize the extreme pathetic appeal from a father to a son; Henry, weeping for his son, transfers his disappointment to his son. The shame a child must feel when he disappoints his father must be extreme, especially a child whose expectations are so high and whose indiscretions might have been so easily avoided. Henry at this point need not even provide a proposition; the emotional impact makes the proposition implicit: rid yourself of your "vile participation" and keep close quarters if you want to make your father proud and maintain your right to ascend to the throne.

Hal, much more moved than earlier in the scene, replies, "I shall hereafter, my thrice-gracious lord, / Be more myself" (III.ii.92-93). The argument proves at least slightly successful; Hal begins to show some change from the ungrateful child who at first dismissed his father's passionate pleas by arguing that only a couple of the accusations against him were true.

But the king, despite having provided an effective peroration of sorts and despite seeing (through blurred eyes) the start of a change in his son, knows he must say more:

Now by my sceptre, and my soul to boot,

[Hotspur] hath more worthy interest to the state

Than thou the shadow of succession. . . .

He doth fill fields with harness in the realm,

Turns head against the lion's armed jaws,

And being no more in debt to years than thou,  
Leads ancient lords and reverend bishops on  
To bloody battles and to bruising arms. (III.ii.97-105)

Here, Henry focuses singularly on spurring Hal's anger. Like any son whose father claims another man is really the rightful heir to his estate, Hal would respond emotionally with anger. Henry tries to take advantage of that anger and direct it toward Hotspur, the threat to take over the kingdom. Following the pathetic argument, the king uses the logical argument that Hotspur has already gained the favor of men despite being (at least in the play) of Hal's own age, a detail that would no doubt stir Hal's shameful emotions and make him more likely to act on his anger. The image of the lion combined with the later statement that Hotspur has won renown "[t]hrough all the kingdoms that acknowledge Christ" (III.ii.111) further establishes Hotspur as a beloved, Henry-like character who should seem to Hal to be a true threat to the throne.

After enumerating a few of the men who have decided to support Hotspur, the king goes one step further and accuses Hal of supporting Hotspur: "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, / To dog his heels and curtsy at his frowns, / To show how much thou art degenerate" (III.ii.122-28). The effect of such an enormous accusation would further stir any child to anger: at his father for making an accusation, at himself for allowing his state to become such, and toward his enemy for threatening his way of life. Henry states that Hal might be a traitor to the family, and the reason is that he wants to exaggerate Hal's disobedience. He wants to let Hal know that his mistakes have been so vast as to resemble that of the enemy. The strong accusation excites his son, and certainly the king means to do so. The insult that Hal would bend to Percy out of fear is meant to

further excite Hal's angry response and set the course for the prince to prove his father and his other critics wrong. Henry builds up his argument to imply what is most expedient for Hal, and in the last passage, he powerfully makes the appeal that fighting against Hotspur (as opposed to his current role which is near to helping Hotspur) is the most expedient way not only to take back his seemingly rightful claim to the throne but also to save his father's kingship.

The argument as a whole, perhaps the prepared notes of a king or perhaps the spontaneous emotional response of a father, is the crux of the play that determines whether or not Hal will take the throne. Common critical study focuses on whose story is at the heart of the play (Henry, Hal, or Falstaff's). More important from a rhetorical standpoint is which argument is most instrumental in resolving their tangled stories. Prior to this scene in the play, Hal had shown no real commitment to his father to change, and Henry's impassioned rhetoric demonstrates real fear that his son might not come around to accepting his royal obligation to good governance through good moral character. Indeed, the king's argument here spurs his son to make public and actual the claim Hal makes only to himself in his famous monologue in the first act. In doing so, he makes the prince much more accountable for the pledge Hal had made to himself. It spurs his son to commit to a specific action (killing Hotspur) that will most clearly demonstrate a reversal in the prince's character. The king's speech is, therefore, the most important of the play. Hal's killing Hotspur and maintaining his royal image is simply the manifestation that results from the speech. The king's words and tears are those of a father who is overburdened, but his argument is also an exemplary rhetorical model. It is the passionate, deliberative rhetoric of someone who knows the best course of action, gives way to every possible rhetorical means, and is finally able to convince his listener of the value of his proposition.



## A Princely Response

Prior to Henry's last argument, Hal had given, at best, prissy and juvenile responses to his father's pleas. Hal had shown little to no commitment on his part to reform. However, after his father's masterful argument, much of Hal's response mirrors the tone of his father, and all of his words are meant to convince his father of his change. Although the final phase of the reversal does not occur until the end of *Henry IV, Part 2* (when Hal banishes Falstaff), Hal's speech to his father is a rhetorical argument in which Hal must convince his father of the change that has taken place. Earlier in this scene, Hal had failed to convince his father that he had changed, so his words here must be rhetorically gripping in order for the king to believe his son.

In his first lines after the king finishes, Hal tells his father, "Do not think so, you shall not find it so, / And God forgive them that so much have sway'd / Your Majesty's good thoughts away from me!" (III.ii.129-31). The literal meaning of the lines resembles his earlier, lying response in which he blames others for his bad reputation; however, the demanding tone in "Do not" and "you shall not" show a forcefulness that he earlier had failed to demonstrate. His reference to God and his use of his father's formal title show an understanding of the ethos that should accompany his position.

Most importantly, Hal then moves to a promise. The claim he made in his earlier soliloquy (I.ii.195-217) to reform is problematic and doubtful because of its juxtaposition so near Hal's mischievous actions with Falstaff and Poins. Now the prince shows sincerity through specificity: "I will redeem all this on Percy's head, / And in the closing of some glorious day / Be bold to tell you that I am your son, / When I shall wear a garment all of blood, / And stain my favors in a bloody mask, / Which wash'd away shall scour my shame with it" (III.ii.132-137). Echoing his father's frequent body imagery—e.g., "hearts" (III.ii.34, 52), "mouth(s)" (III.ii.53,

116), “eye(s)” (III.ii.70, 76, 80, 87)—Hal claims that he will use Hotspur’s head to create the garment and mask that will wash away his own shame, and in doing so, he makes it obvious that he is reacting to his father’s pathetic appeals. Further, he addresses the issue that lingers throughout the play: his lineage. He directly tells his father that he will prove that *he indeed is the king’s son*. While this is intended to appease a father who questions whether or not his son is indeed his rightful son, the passion with which Hal responds may indicate not only a desire to appease his father but also a desire to prove something to himself that has long given him consternation.

Hal echoes his father’s blood imagery (III.ii.35) with his own (III.ii.135-36) to make fully clear his anger, and he again mentions the shame he now feels (III.ii.137) in order to let his father know that he understands the message. He then states, “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” (III.ii.147-52). Hal’s desire to “tear the reckoning from his heart” combines both his father’s imagery with the anger his father meant to incite. Whereas Henry calls Hal the means by which God was punishing Henry (III.ii.4-11), Hal cites Hotspur as the means by which Hal will gain glory. Again, Hal echoes his father’s great rhetorical style by altering the means by which one person can be usefully representative of another’s “mistreadings” or good deeds.

Near the end of his response, Hal again echoes his father’s connection to God: “This in the name of God I promise here, / The which if he be pleas’d I shall perform, / I do beseech your Majesty may salve / The long-grown wounds of my intemperance” (III.ii.153-56). In doing so, he reinforces the idea that he has learned to speak “ethically” as a ruler and that God, the source

of virtuousness, has become important for the once wayward prince. The metaphor of the salve and the wound demonstrate Hal's recognition that he has hurt his father; by turning the emotional damage into a literal wound, the prince clearly expresses an abstract idea. In referencing his intemperance, Hal admits to his father his own vice of intemperance, something he failed to do in his earlier response. Further, he makes his promise seem more meaningful by showing an understanding of the stakes: "If not, the end of life cancels all bands, / And I will die a hundred thousand deaths / Ere break the smallest parcel of this vow" (III.ii.157-59). Hal here tells his father that he understands not only that he needs to fight Hotspur in order to win back public favor and protect his father's crown but also that his own life is at risk in doing so—and that he willingly risks his life to this end.

The argument successfully convinces the king, as shown in his response to his son: "A hundred thousand rebels die in this. / Thou shalt have charge and sovereign trust herein" (III.ii.161-62). Hal's words are convincing, and they work not only because they follow the themes set forth by Hal's father but because they manifest clearly to Henry Hal's recognition of what really is at stake between the two men.

And exactly this is what Henry so desperately sought in his most profound rhetorical appeal both as a father and as a king to his princely son.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

Grady argues that in *Henry IV, Part 1* “[T]he high seriousness of politics is grounded in nothing more substantial than the wit combats and plays on words of a disreputable tavern” (126). He also claims that Falstaff offers a “Siren song potentially seducing the Prince from the instrumental path of Machiavellian politics” (158). He claims that Hal’s two choices are between “the carnival and the Machiavellan” (173). Grady correctly recognizes that Hal must choose between two distinct worlds, but he reduces the substance of each in such a way as to ignore the importance of the connection between the characters’ rhetoric and the action of the play. The “high seriousness of politics” is central to the play in that a father passes down monarchical principles to his son, and the tavern wit acts as the antithesis to the highly serious argument between Henry and Hal, the argument that emphasizes the importance of good governance. Falstaff’s “carnival” certainly provides Hal with a good, humorous time, but it is also the rhetorical school in which Hal learns to argue values (and to recognize and argue against Falstaff’s rhetoric). Henry’s so-called “Machiavellian” side is that of a concerned father-king who wants to look out both for his son-prince and for his kingdom, and the rhetorical argument that Henry makes to his son is the crux of the play, the point at which Hal must finally commit to reform in order to maintain his role as future king. Henry’s method in becoming king may have been political and somewhat Machiavellian, but his speech to his son is not Machiavellian but passionate and sincere.

Rebhorn tackles the rhetorical issue of *Henry IV, Part 1* and views the arguments between Henry and Hal as a display of the king’s gullibility and the prince’s sophistry. He cites the king’s obsession with appearance to persuade public opinion and focuses strongly on Henry’s ability to “pluck allegiance from men’s hearts” (57-58). He cites Bartholomew Keckermann as

an example of a Renaissance authority who, like others, thought the heart was an important target for rhetoricians: “The orator especially looks to the heart [*cor*] that he may excite and move it with varied emotions” (59). While Rebhorn’s argument explains an aspect of pathos, it neglects the principal form of rhetoric, as outlined by Wilson, author of the seminal work of rhetoric throughout the Renaissance, in which he outlines that a rhetorician’s job is

To teache.

To delight.

And to perswade. (705)

Wilson’s outline echoes that of Cicero in *De Oratore*, in which he argues that “three things . . . alone can carry conviction; . . . the winning over, the instructing and the stirring of men’s minds” (324): ethos, logos, and pathos. While the heart certainly acts as the focal point for pathetic appeals, rhetoricians also are supposed to win men over and instruct them, to teach them and to persuade them. Rebhorn’s central focus on the image of the heart as all-important to Henry (then later to Hal when he responds to his father) ignores the other rhetorical principles at play.

Rebhorn sums up Henry’s long section of the argument (see *The King Redux*, 21-27): “In those ninety lines Henry details his theory of kingship, then attacks Hal for behaving like Richard and running the risk of losing the crown, and finally comes to the bitter conclusion that Hal is likely to fight against him on Hotspur’s side” (60). The ninety lines contain much more than that; they provide a full deliberative argument in which the king masterfully, though with deep passion, persuades the prince to act with nobility.

Rebhorn states, “Hal’s reply is masterly. . . . The effect on Henry is dramatic as he completely reverses his earlier estimate of his son[.] . . . Hal’s persuasive words gain what persuasion always seeks to gain according to the rhetoricians: belief, the transformation or

conversion of the auditor, as Henry himself suggests when he speaks of ‘sovereign trust’ ” (60). Rehorn ignores the depth of Henry’s powerful argument and its effect, thus ignoring the king’s real impact on his son and crediting Hal with the sophist’s ability merely to convince without the three things Aristotle considered necessary: good sense, good moral character, and good will.

Rehorn, still considering Hal as a sophist, states, “Hal demonstrates that he is his father’s child most dramatically through his diction[.] . . . Here Hal deliberately echoes his father’s presentation of politics” (61). Hal’s diction does resemble that of Henry, but for any orator (a good man speaking well) who makes a convincing appeal and persuades someone, the persuaded person would likely use rhetoric resembling the argument of the orator who made the original persuasion.

Rehorn further argues,

Hal’s promise to defeat Hotspur ends with an image central to Henry’s theory of kingship, the image of the heart. Just as Henry bragged of being able to “pluck allegiance from men’s hearts” . . . , so Hal declares, literalizing the image, that he will “tear the reckoning from his [Percy’s] heart” . . . in mortal combat. Imitation—in this case, a carefully calculated imitation—is the sincerest form of flattery, and in consequence, Henry, who is aching to be reassured of the love and devotion of his son, immediately banishes all doubts and proclaims his complete trust in Hal. What the latter has done is to exercise a form of rhetorical kingship—and to succeed with it against his father! (61)

But the critical aspect of Hal’s diction includes the promise that he will kill Hotspur to transform his own current image, and he fulfills his promise toward the end of the play. His style and substance certainly mimic that of his father, but the important aspect is that Hal makes a clear promise. If Hal were merely a sophist speaking gruesomely and metaphorically about hearts,

turning his father's diction into a false war cry, then that does not explain Hal's killing Hotspur in the fifth act. If he were merely a sophist, a master at understanding what is important to his father and then repeating it passionately back without really meaning it, he would not be the sort of character to follow through on his words. If he were the type of character, however, who can understand an appeal from his distressed, passionate father using every means at his disposal (including words and tears) in that appeal and then who can and does respond to it genuinely, then he would understand the king's meaning and follow through with an appropriate physical response, just as he does when he kills Hotspur.

Rebhorn admits, "Rhetorical displays of spectacular images and words may enable a ruler to terrorize his enemies and gain the allegiance of his subjects, but those displays are always, finally, connected to that ruler's possession of genuine forces" (63). He does recognize that words alone, sophistry, are not enough to make one of the characters an ideal orator. However, he ignores the Aristotelean idea that a good orator will be most convincing if he demonstrates good character. Aristotle states, "It is not true, as some writers assume in their treatises on rhetoric, that the personal goodness revealed by the speaker contributes nothing to his power of persuasion; on the contrary, his character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses" (182). Quintilian makes a similar claim: "Let the orator, then, whom I propose to form, be such a one as is characterized by the definition of Marcus Cato, *a good man skilled in speaking*" (translator's emphasis, 412-13). Rebhorn does not consider how good a man either Henry or Hal is; he merely concludes Hal is manipulative because he repeats his father's images. But Hal follows through with his promise; he engages Hotspur in battle, puts his own life in peril, and successfully reclaims his place as the recognized, rightful heir to the throne. That he mimics his father and makes a convincing argument is less a testament to his ability to

manipulate his father than it is affirmative proof to both his father and the audience that Hal has chosen to act accordingly with the role his kingly father has set forth.

Regarding Henry, Irving Ribner points out, “As a disciple of Machiavellian philosophy, Bolingbroke cannot do the killing [of Richard II] himself. ‘Princes should have things that will bring them hatred done by their agents,’ says Machiavelli, and Bolingbroke accordingly employs Pierce of Exton” (183). Sukanta Chaudhuri claims, “It was a basic Machiavellian precept that the prince should perform gracious and popular deeds himself, but leave the dirty work to others. Bolingbroke uses Northumberland all through in this way” (126). While their arguments help to establish Henry as a Machiavellian leader in *Richard II*, they also point out a glaring flaw in considering Hal a strictly Machiavellian character: he does not show himself to be good while enlisting others to do bad on his behalf. Rather, when he is at his worst (i.e., reveling alongside Falstaff), he acts as such in public, and when he chooses to do something good (i.e., kill Hotspur), he does so because of his father’s good argument rather than the importance of the appearance—and then (showing the goodness of his action) gives credit of his deed to someone else (Falstaff)!

Chaudhuri also claims, “Machiavelli does grant that ‘there is no better indication of a man’s character than the company which he keeps’; but an even better way to win renown is ‘by some extraordinary act,’ ‘some novel act that would cause them to be talked about[.]’ . . . This is precisely the tactical purpose behind the rejection of Falstaff” (128). Certainly Hal’s original relationship with Falstaff and the other thieves indicates something negative about Hal’s character, but if dismissing those negative influences is necessarily a tactical purpose to cause Hal “to be talked about,” then it would be impossible for someone with bad influences to dismiss those friends without seeming Machiavellian. Hal is unlikely to be so manipulative as to stage



his friendship and then dismiss Falstaff. Rather, Hal is a dynamic character who undergoes real change and recognizes the need to dismiss Falstaff (even though he delays that action until the end of *Henry IV, Part 2*).

The analyses by these critics that Henry IV and Hal are Machiavellian are important analyses in terms of subjectivity and the role of the Machiavellian ruler, but it is important not to analyze Shakespeare's great rhetorical arguments only in terms of the relationship between ruler and subject. It is important to recognize that the arguments themselves are in many ways as praiseworthy as the poetry that Shakespeare includes in his plays.

Within the context of any Shakespearean play, it is important to note the complexity of the characters, the interactions between characters, and the changes that take place. In the exchanges between Falstaff and Hal and then Henry and Hal, it is clear that all three elements (the complexity, the interaction, and the change) are all inseparable because of the great rhetoric that Shakespeare provides for those characters. Further, it is clear that Shakespeare understood classical rhetoric very well; his rhetorical situations show so many clear signs of that. Even Falstaff, the great comic character in the play, is an example of Shakespeare's rhetorical skills. Falstaff not only provides Hal with a school of sorts in which Hal learns to use deliberative rhetorical arguments, he also acts as the rhetorical foil to the king.

The king's rhetoric in the third act is clearly the aspect of the play that spurs the action not only at the end of *Henry IV, Part 1* but also throughout *Henry IV, Part 2* and helps create the deep character of Henry V. The deliberative argument that the king presents is responsible for Hal's decision to kill Hotspur and also sets in motion Hal's ultimate decision to accept the responsibility of good governance, as displayed by Hal's acceptance of Lord Chief Justice as advisor in the second play, and eventually to cast out Falstaff in that same play.

Hal does indeed move between two worlds; however, the internal struggle between intemperance and serious governance is a much more likely explanation than Machiavellianism for Hal's behavior. And the king's acceptance of Hal's rhetoric is much less due to Hal's ability to manipulate as it is to Hal's decision to transform, as identified not only by the words Hal uses but also by his later actions.

All three of the main characters show a profound understanding of rhetorical principles and devices, and combined with the action of the play (in which Falstaff fails, the king succeeds, and Hal undergoes a transformation), the rhetorical speeches show something much greater than Machiavellianism: they provide in Shakespeare exemplary models for rhetorical and moral study. It is clear that all three capably use rhetoric; however, Falstaff fails because he lacks the proper ethos, and Hal succeeds only because his father, the rhetorician whose powerful words control the action of the play, effectively teaches his son via a well-crafted and virtuous deliberative argument.

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## Vita

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