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Early Modern Masculinities in *1 and 2 Henry IV*

By

Nicholas Thompson

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of English and Creative Writing
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the Degree of Master of Arts
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2020

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Early Modern Masculinities in 1 and 2 Henry IV

by

Nicholas Thompson

APPROVED BY:

C. Greig
Faculty of Education

S. Pender
Department of English and Creative Writing

M. Johnston, Advisor
Department of English and Creative Writing

April 24, 2020

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ABSTRACT

Early modern ideals of masculinity were notably inconsistent, and often contradictory, yet remained prominently embedded within the ideology of Elizabethan England. This thesis focuses on how Shakespeare's *1* and *2 Henry IV* expose the dangerous consequences of these ideals when situated in competition with one another by reproducing them during a period of intense civil upheaval. These plays reveal the deficiencies of conventional models of masculinity, particularly through the characters of Falstaff and Percy, as well as the need for a new model of masculinity that can provide the state with order and stability. The resulting Machiavellian ideal, which Hal constructs from other competing ideals, is a model of masculinity that operates according to a principle of control, both in the political sense and over oneself. Percy's death and Falstaff's banishment signal the emergence of Hal's Machiavellian ideal as a more effective model of masculinity, which flourishes not through prescribed notions of manhood but by actively negotiating the beneficial or destructive aspects of particular ideals, combining them in accordance with an ever-changing society. By tracing these changes, masculinity is revealed as a composite of many ideological registers that depend on ideas of, among others, bodies, language, and politics.

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INTRODUCTION

1 and *2 Henry IV* are plays concerned with the lives of men. While the same might be said of early modern drama in general, these two plays are unique in the degree to which they remain exclusively male. Only four female characters are listed across the two *dramatis personae*, and three of them display strong attributes of early modern manhood. The remaining male characters are divided by the *dramatis personae* according to faction, family, and status—all characteristics of the phenomenon of masculinity. Bruce R. Smith defines this phenomenon with specific reference to “Shakespeare’s works” in his claim “that masculinity, in cultures all over the world, throughout history, is not a natural given, something that comes with possession of male sexual organs, but an achievement, something that must be worked toward and maintained. Masculinity, in this view, is not an *essence* but a *construction*” (131). While Smith acknowledges that “[i]n early modern English the word ‘masculinity’ was, indeed, primarily a biological concept, the equivalent of what we in modern English would call ‘manliness’” (10), he argues that achieving masculine status was not for the early modern male a straightforward, biological process, as the development and scope of his study also attests.¹ Shakespearean drama demonstrates masculinity as constructed and reproduced in many ways, and always in conjunction with specific environments. So, while Henry Percy is an exemplar of the martial man, he struggles to maneuver diplomatic and

¹ According to Lauren Kassell, “[s]ex, gender and sexuality were not defined simply in terms of ‘biology’. What it meant for a body to be ‘natural’ was itself at stake. Emerging discourses of objectivity were tied to constructions of subjectivity. The differences between men and women and between masculinity and femininity were inscribed and enacted within understandings of the natural world as God’s creation. Social relations were regulated by the church and mediated through notions of patrilineage and patriarchy which informed governance from the state to the family. Questions about sex, generation and sexuality were debated within universities, in legal courts, and by laypeople” (57).

domestic situations. He forms an ideal of masculinity specific to the battlefield, while his neglect of the court and the home function to undermine this ideal. By contrast, Falstaff falls under Smith's stock-type of the "saucy jack," for whom "a man is no more but what a man swears he is" (57). The differences between forms of masculinity reveal the complicated nature of constructing manhood in early modern England. According to Alexandra Shepard, "the social practice of manhood was enormously diverse, contingent, and contradictory, influenced by and informing distinctions of age, social status, marital status, and context" (1) and "[g]ender identities in early modern England were neither static nor given, but the product of social interaction" (11). Lacking a universal criterion for masculinity, one principle nonetheless stands out in all of its forms: masculinity subordinates men to one another, and the status of an individual as masculine greatly overlaps with his social status.

For Hal, this principle of masculinity is obvious. His brand of masculinity follows a middle way between that of Falstaff and that of Percy, finding between them a working model of power. His brand of masculinity is also a product of its environment. Hal's ability to control bodies, both his own and those of others, is part of his ethos. For example, Hal's masculinity resembles that expounded in Machiavelli's *The Prince*, written to teach Lorenzo de' Medici to rule the state as a man would a woman. Machiavelli argues that *fortuna*, a term that captures both the concept of chance and volatile life, poses a threat to stability. A man capable of controlling *fortuna* through *virtù*, a term that captures the calculated control of otherwise unruly existence, is necessary to the functioning of the state. Hal recognizes the importance of virtue, or, at

least, the importance of the appearance of virtue, to power, and uses Machiavellian strategies to construct a new form of masculinity for himself.

Masculinity also has implications for the state. Hal is an obvious example because following his succession he will make decisions that affect the whole of England. But even Falstaff, isolated from society among the undesirables of the Boar's Head Inn, is held by others as responsible for protecting the state against emasculation. Falstaff is perceived as a parasite, satisfying his appetites by the labour of others. Without this moralizing of masculinity, manifest in the ridicule directed towards Falstaff by the other characters, Falstaff would fail to serve a function in the play. He reveals that there is an expectation placed on men to construct for themselves masculine status, as the ridicule directed towards him in the play presupposes his capacity for acting according to propriety.

Politics in Shakespeare's time were invested in an ideology that conceived of the state as a corporation comprising many individual members, and which, as a collective, was identifiable with the king. Ernst H. Kantorowicz discusses this ideology and its historical development at length, and he attributes to Shakespeare its lasting cultural significance. The most revealing of Shakespeare's plays is, for Kantorowicz, *Richard II*, wherein, by usurping Richard II's crown, Bolingbroke, who is subsequently crowned Henry IV, undermines the double body of the king. As both himself and the corporation, the king is theoretically double. But in deposing Richard II, Bolingbroke ruptures his doubleness, revealing both himself and Richard II as natural bodies. The need for control again becomes thematic, and at the beginning of *1 Henry IV*, Bolingbroke, now Henry IV, is struggling to maintain his own simulation of kingship. The anxiety about Hal's

waywardness goes hand-in-hand with anxieties concerned with the nature of kingship, and Falstaff, who is farthest from healthy kingship, presents a direct threat to the state by exposing the frailty of its political ideal.

Anxiety about masculinity was staged in different ways. For example, Gina Bloom has researched the gendered implications of performing voice on the early modern stage. She argues that “[e]arly modern plays repeatedly stage the efforts of male characters to reassert control over the fugitive, unpredictable voice” (10). She draws on numerous plays to argue that controlling one’s voice signaled masculine status, while an inability to articulate oneself literally spoke to a character’s emasculated state. In her discussion of boy actors, Bloom focuses on John Marston’s *Antonio and Mellida*, arguing that “Marston’s metatheatrics in the induction underscore [...] the extent to which masculine control over these spheres is an act, a function of performance. Marston presents male identity as literally a role to be played” (59). Moreover, as Smith points out, “[b]ecause theatre is also a matter of performance, plays provide a perfect means of investigating cultural and historical differences with respect to gender identity” (2). Masculinity is performance, and the stage is an ideal medium for expressing anxieties about it.

Hal’s masculinity transgresses the boundaries of the state to reveal larger anxieties within the political world. During the plays’ first production, Elizabeth was the reigning monarch, and anxieties arising from her female physiology were pervasive in the public sphere. Elizabeth was especially sensitive to this issue, using masculinizing symbols to circumvent prejudice. Gail Kern Paster, drawing on Roy Strong, notes the “many examples of the motif in portraits of Queen Elizabeth, who carries a sieve to

symbolize not only her physical virginity but also the connection between that virginity and her ability to rule” (50). By positioning her virginity as a physiological sign of virtue, she displays control over the body. By portraying aspects of masculinity, she “managed the paradox [of being a woman in power] by mystifying the queen’s virginity and iconographically distinguishing her body from those of other women” (101).

In a scene that I explore in more detail in chapter 3, the image of a king weeping threatens to disrupt the political fiction by revealing the king’s natural body. Similar to how Elizabeth uses symbols to control the ideologically transgressive elements of her body, control over what Paster calls the “leaky body” is necessary to keeping up appearances. For Paster, this is an issue of gender, since male bodies are dry and hot, not cold and wet like female bodies. For Hal, the leaky body refers as much to the body of the state as to his own physiology, with the result that kingship requires a masculine ruler to control the unruly individuals who “leak” beyond their place within stratified society.

Norbert Elias’s study on books of etiquette has found that these books were often used in a manner that subverted the authority of their intended upper-class readers. Elias ties his answer to a mechanism of sociogenesis of the civilizing process that brings the middle and upper classes together in a dialectical relationship. He writes that

[p]eople living in the example-setting circle do not need books in order to know how “one” behaves. It is obviously therefore important to ascertain with what intention and for which public these precepts are written and printed—precepts which are originally the distinguishing secret of the narrow circles of the court aristocracy.

The intended public is quite clear. It is stressed that the advice is only for *honnetes gens*, i.e., by and large for the upper-class people. Primarily the book meets the need of the provincial nobility to know about behavior at court, and in addition that of distinguished foreigners. But it may be assumed that the not inconsiderable success of this book resulted, among other things, from the interest of leading bourgeois strata. There is ample evidence to show that at this period customs, behavior, and fashions from the court are continuously penetrating the upper middle classes, here they are imitated more or less altered in accordance with the different social situation. They thereby lose, to some extent, their character as means of distinguishing the upper class. They are somewhat devalued. This compels those above to further refinement and development of behavior. And from this mechanism—the development of courtly customs, their dissemination downward, their slight social deformation, their devaluation as marks of distinction—the constant movement in behavior patterns through the upper class receives part of its motivation. (100-101)

There appears to be a difference between the intended audience (upper class) and the actual audience (middle class). The actual audience is the impetus that sets in motion a dialectic of etiquette. These books of etiquette emerge in part out of a growing middle class, in response to an established upper class, while new forms of etiquette are a response by the upper class to distinguish itself from a growing middle class. The result is a historical dialectic that increasingly suppresses all mention of the body. Erich Auerbach's assessment of Shakespeare as showing "nothing precursory of the

Enlightenment, of bourgeois morality, and of the cultivation of sentiment” (328), suggests that Shakespeare’s drama embraces anxieties about the emerging body of middle-class subjects, which challenges the masculine ideal of control.

Protecting the state against emasculating behaviour requires that masculine behaviour be performed by its members. In order to uphold this political fiction, its rules and regulations must be successfully disseminated across individuals. Keith M. Botelho argues that a responsible citizen is an earwitness. As someone who can speak and listen in accordance with the dominant ideology, an earwitness is tasked with securing the stability of the state against information deemed false. Kings, even more than their subjects, require skills for distinguishing between good and bad counsel. He argues that “mere passive listening and paying ear service to counsel is not sufficient. A king must actively engage the ear in the pursuit of truth” (61). According to Botelho, earwitnessing was constructive of masculine identity.

Early modern English drama, however, challenges the ideal of the masculine earwitness by drawing on the destructive potential of male speech. Botelho contends that “[m]ale anxiety rested in the seeping of female into male or male into female, and this process of projecting their own fears of male loose speech by harping on women’s own transgressive tongues was central to the construction of early modern masculine identity” (10). *1* and *2 Henry IV* offer examples of this anxiety not only through their portrayal of male earwitnesses but through subversive examples of masculine females. I will return in my conclusion to Mistress Quickly, Doll Tearsheet, and Lady Percy, all of whom are, with the exception of Hal and several minor characters, far better earwitnesses than are their male counterparts.

2 *Henry IV* also challenges representations of masculine stability through the allegorical figure of Rumor. In the “Induction,” Rumor appears on stage, “*painted full of tongues*” (1). Enclosed within a robe of tongues, Rumor enacts the role of messenger to Percy’s father, Northumberland, promising “To noise abroad that Harry Monmouth fell / Under the wrath of noble Hotspur’s sword” (29-30). Audience members already familiar with the portrayal of the Battle of Shrewsbury in *1 Henry IV* know that Percy fell to Hal’s sword, yet Rumor explains how it has been spreading the contrary “through the peasant towns / Between that royal field of Shrewsbury / And this worm-eaten hold of ragged stone” (33-35). By describing itself as “a pipe / Blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures, / And of so easy and so plain a stop” (15-17), Rumor disavows that it is itself responsible for falsely reporting the events at Shrewsbury. On a wind instrument, a “stop” alters the pitch to produce different sounds, but the instrument requires a player to provide the instrument with breath.² Despite its role as messenger, Rumor has no breath of its own, and requires the help of others to spread from one place to the next. Players are referred to as “the blunt monster with uncounted heads” (18) and produce “The still-discordant wav-ring multitude” (19). If music to the early modern mind forms the basis of universal order, Rumor represents its antonym, disorder, by comprising many voices all playing on the same instrument. The images of tongues that cover it speak of struggle, not homogeneity, and at the root of that struggle is the problem of many voices in conflict with one another.³

² Bloom points out that in adult males heat expands the vocal chords and generally produces a deeper voice than in boys and females, but also that “[t]hese categorical descriptions [...] are not stable indicators of gender identity: an Amazon and a man can share vocal characteristics. Rather it is the ability to control the voice that signals manhood” (VM 58).

³ Barbara Shapiro points out the fragility of the body of the state, where “[e]ach part of the body was to remain where nature had placed it and not usurp the functions of other parts. It was a concept of political

According to Botelho, “the second tetralogy, which gives us the character of Rumour, explicitly brings the related concerns about hearing, masculinity, and rumor together, thereby offering a sustained exploration of how counsel functions both on the tongue and at the ear” (52). The importance of being able to distinguish good from bad counsel, or truth from falsehood, is of primary importance to kingship. Botelho points out that “mere passive listening and paying ear service to counsel is not sufficient. A king must actively engage the ear in the pursuit of truth” (61). As Rumor explains, many “speak of peace while covert enmity / Under the smile of safety wounds the world” (9-10). The importance of earwitnessing is further explicated by Botelho in militaristic terms. He argues

that the most potent weapons of Elizabethan warfare could be the tongue on the offensive, spreading rumors, and the ear on the defensive, discerning rumors to secure the truth. The wartime policy of spreading rumors and the wartime strategy of being able to discern truth from falsity, both firmly embedded in the historical record, find their way on to the stage in the second half of the sixteenth century. (56).

For Botelho, the ideal earwitness is not only an ear but also a weaver of true narratives. He or she possesses a skilled tongue, is versed in the art of politics and able to navigate the dangerous falsehoods which originate in self-interest.

Ideally, the body politic is harmonious, and every individual member has its place within the whole. For early modern England to function as a single entity, every

life that could not easily accommodate acceptance of factions, parties or dissent or the language of contract or conscience. When such pluralism became an accepted part of political life, the organic concept with its premise of political harmony would become less prominent” (18).

individual must act towards the same end. A strong society requires a king capable of controlling the transmission of speech, since rumour can just as easily result in a discordant society. Botelho points out that in Shakespeare's time

Elizabeth was intimately concerned with the control of news and information about her and her realm, as numerous extant speeches and letters attest, and she seeks to use her intelligence network as an extension of the "eyes and ears" of the royal court, providing her with secrets, news, and information that, in essence, would only ever come to her second-hand. (18)

Botelho draws from the *Rainbow Portrait* the classical figure of Fama, which "poised [Elizabeth] not only to spread her good fame, but also to protect against 'Bad Fame,' that destructive force of rumor, who, as Karen Pinkus asserts, is gendered female" (15).

Again, the uncontrolled *fortuna* appears as the enemy of civil society, demanding a ruler trained in the art of controlling political discourse. Rumor is therefore not strictly the enemy, but like *fortuna* must be controlled to ensure the stability of the state.

Following the "Induction," the "true wrongs" of "Rumor's tongues" are demonstrated by Lord Bardolph in the form of a false report. When he arrives at Northumberland's keep with "certain news from Shrewsbury" (2*H4* 1.1.13), he reasons that his report is true because it originated with "A gentlemen well bred and of good nature" (1.1.27). Lord Bardolph's apparent obliviousness about what this means in regards to his own gentlemanly status leads him to continue by decreeing that "If my young lord your son have not the day, / Upon my honor, for a silken point / I'll give my barony" (1.1.53-55). The report, however, reveals Lord Bardolph's presumption that

noble status is an indicator of honesty, which is why when Travers arrives and contradicts the first report with a second account that originated with a second gentleman, Lord Bardolph immediately dismisses Travers's source as nothing more than "some hilding fellow that had stol'n / The horse he rode on and, upon my life, / Spoke at a venture" (1.1.59-61). Morton's arrival and confirmation of Travers's report gives the appearance of providing further evidence in favour of the second report, but this evidence is only reliable *after* Northumberland explicitly accepts his son's death. Rather than outright acknowledge Percy's death, Morton leads Northumberland to articulate it for himself. After Northumberland expresses his fears, Morton confirms them by telling him that he is "too great to be by me gainsaid; / Your spirit is too true, your fears too certain" (1.1.91-92). Morton counsels Northumberland to trust his fear, which he knows to reflect the truth—that Percy is dead.

Morton's process of revealing truth through falsehood is repeated several times over the course of the plays. Rumour remains a mixture of truth and falsehood, by its own admission. Rumor describes how

[...] The posts come tiring on,
And not a man of them brings other news
Than they have learnt from me. From Rumor's tongues
They bring smooth comforts false, worse than true wrongs. ("Induction"

37-40) Rumor speaks what others want to hear. It plays on their passions. The problem is that these passions often undermine reason. In the scene quoted above, Morton is fortunately of sound mind. He recognizes Northumberland's imbalanced physiology and has him come to truth on his own terms. Later in the scene, when Northumberland,

“enraged with grief” (1.1.144), promises to set out on “bloody courses” (1.1.159), Morton reminds him that his “strained passion doth [him] wrong” (1.1.161). He convinces Northumberland, “I hear for certain and dare speak the truth” (1.1.174), to which Northumberland, recognizing Morton’s balanced judgement, orders him to “counsel every man / The aptest way for safety and revenge” (1.1.177-178).

But Morton’s good counsel remains in competition with Lord Bardolph’s bad counsel, and it is ultimately Northumberland’s decision to choose between the two reports. The dangerous nature of Rumor suggests that it ought to be cast out from the court, and Lord Bardolph’s presence is itself indicative of Northumberland’s poor abilities as an earwitness. By having Northumberland come to truth through fear, Morton also reveals the unsettling corroboration of truth and passion. Lord Bardolph is therefore correct in his evaluation of truth as whatever those with superior status ascribe to, since the way to truth is for Northumberland whatever his passion agrees with.

Rumor’s comparison of itself with “a pipe / Blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures” (“Induction” 15-16), suggests that its movements are perpetuated through the passions, much like the two reports received by Northumberland. Being a good earwitness evidently requires that one understand these passions, as well as the nature of Rumor. Since information in the plays is always greatly coloured by passion, the purity of truth appears impossible. What characters articulate as knowledge is thus half-truth, always tainted by self-interest. Even Morton’s service to Northumberland voices an interest beyond merely conveying truth. The individual interests of characters distort truth. The result is a struggle between competing partial truths, none of which fully represent the actual events at Shrewsbury.

Falstaff reminds others of the impossibility of actualizing ideals by locating Rumor within the body. “My womb, my womb, my womb undoes me” (4.2.19-20), he exclaims, following the image of “a whole school of tongues in this belly of mine” (16-17). The image Falstaff’s womb is one of generation, wherein Falstaff, like the “foolish compounded clay, man” (1.2.6), regenerates itself through acts of the flesh. Falstaff reveals that just as the ideals of man are threatened by his many particularities, the ideal of truth is burdened by the many instances of its articulation. Any formation of an ideal, whether it be honour, masculinity, or truth, remains partially false because of self-interest. While Botelho points out that being a good earwitness means upholding ideals for the good of society, Falstaff implicates the possibility that ideals are impossible. The only truth is for Falstaff the appetites of the flesh, simply because they cannot be doubted. In his own way, Falstaff remains far more honest than those around him.

The volatile nature of rumour is a result of the unruly body. By gendering the earwitness as masculine, Botelho allows himself to argue that control is necessary to truth. Yet Hal, who appears to be in complete control of his body, also appears the most duplicitous, and therefore the least likely to speak truthfully. The problem lies in control being an ideal, which makes it subject to self-interest. If Falstaff is correct in implicating ideals as impossible, then Hal’s complete control over his body is merely apparent. Botelho points out that Rumor is rooted in “classical conceptions of Fama” (15), which shares with Machiavelli’s *fortuna* a representation of the dangerous and unruly life. Since rumour, like *fortuna*, cannot be eliminated, controlling it as much as possible is a priority. Although ideals cannot be actualized, they can be approximated, and Hal, as the character least affected by *fortuna*, is in the greatest position to free himself of the falsehoods of

others. As king, Hal will be expected to speak on behalf of his subjects—“the blunt monster with uncounted heads” (“Induction” 18)—and represent them through a single voice. He will be expected to control both his body and the body of the state.

In line with Kantorowicz’s study of the double body of the king, Rumor is embodied both by the king and his subjects. The instability of the state allows Rumor to travel freely, no longer regulated by a centralized power. “Stuffing the ears of men with false reports” (8), Henry IV’s rule cannot contain dissonant political fictions. He must control the transmission of Rumor to stabilize the state. Instead, however, conflicting interests reveal the state as deeply divided by differing pursuits of power.

Rumor has many faces in *1* and *2 Henry IV*. For Percy, it appears both as honour and masculinity. For Falstaff, rumour is breath and words. By separating this thesis into three chapters on three different characters, I attempt to show how they produce masculinity through rumour’s many faces. Despite the differences between these characters, they are bound up with one another in important ways that illuminate how the performance of masculinity depends on relations between men. These relations are not always obvious. Falstaff and Percy never communicate directly, but the physical distance that separates them does not undermine the influence of one another. Part of this influence is owed to Rumor. Both Falstaff and Percy are known to the public, and perhaps known to one another. Falstaff certainly knew Percy, and Percy is familiar with Hal’s tavern dwelling. The relations between these men are important because they hint at their disagreement about what constitutes masculinity, often in ways that reveal something about how they negotiate ideals of masculinity. So, Falstaff’s distrust of honour, which he voices in one of his soliloquies, fits with a performance of masculinity

that is antithetical to Percy's pursuit of honour. Percy, on the other hand, is careful to resist all appetites of the flesh, situating himself in opposition to Falstaff. By playing on these relations, Hal gains mastery over them, cultivating a Machiavellian control over others that finds its ideal in absolute rule. These three characters are therefore interconnected and through this interconnection they reveal several forms of masculinity.

Greater attention paid to the appetites does not, of course, entail greater protection against emasculating behaviour. Falstaff is highly effeminate in his unregulated pursuit of appetite. He is an image of Mikhail Bakhtin's grotesque body. Imbued with the carnival spirit, he inverts the traditional social order—that which prioritizes the highly regulated behaviour practiced by the nobility—and replaces ordinary social values with those of the tavern. Even among his company, Falstaff is excessive, showing no restraint towards vices of the flesh. His character forefronts the experience of embodiment, with its endless desires and corrupting influences, in a way representative of what is fundamental, but regulated, in every man.

The ridicule Falstaff receives as a consequence of his vicious practices is directed towards his body. His enormous size is a spectacle to those around him. Hal is especially skilled at ridicule, seeming to set up wherever possible the conditions for its production. There is a maliciousness in this kind of speech that speaks to Falstaff's status as both an insider and an outsider. He shares with everyone his common appetites, but he also displays them shamelessly. Whereas society demands regulation of the body, Falstaff flaunts his natural appetites, reminding others that they too are like him.

Language is the predominant means of control over the body, and the way that language controls the body is revealed in the way in which other characters speak about

Falstaff. However, problems emerge in the plays from paradoxical attempts to, for example, conflate medical diagnosis with its moral significance, diminishing, rather than enlarging, the difference between Falstaff and the other characters. Falstaff's typical response to ridicule is to refocus their language on itself, deflating their ridicule in the process. With his own wit, Falstaff pushes ideology—the basis for their attacks—to absurdity.

He also shows that ideology and the language used to express it are inseparable from the body. The inseparability of ideology from language is particularly obvious from the fact that language production becomes impossible after the death of the body. Thus, all language expresses some aspect of the body, and for Falstaff specifically some aspect of its appetite. Despite his copious lying, Falstaff always indirectly offers a transparent reason for whatever lie he tells.

Percy is the subject of my second chapter and seems to be the simplest of the three characters. He blindly attempts to pursue masculinity through honour and rumour. After receiving a deathblow from Hal, he recognizes that honour is a transient property, which is never materialized, and thus remains beyond the control of those who possess it. In his dying moments, he recognizes the futility of his martial ideal, as Hal promises to distort the language of his epitaph, the source of his memory, after Percy's death.

Percy's obsession with honour also blinds him to his own physiological innerworkings. Despite carefully protecting himself from emasculating influences, he is reckless in caring for his choleric imbalance. Percy is effectively doomed from the beginning, since his refusal to come to terms with his physiological imbalance places him

at a severe disadvantage to other men. By approaching every situation with a choleric temperament, he transforms everyone around him into an enemy.

The final chapter focuses on Hal. It begins with a meditation on the ambivalence of his presence on stage. He always appears preoccupied with matters elsewhere. There are aesthetic reasons for this ambivalence, such as the clash between Hal's royal dignity and the vulgarity of the tavern, but beyond this there persists a sense in which Hal is concealing his intentions. He is, to put it simply, duplicitous.

One possible reason for Hal's duplicity is his inhuman control over his physical body. Appearance is for Hal a primary means to masculinity, and by never appearing out of control over his body he constructs the image of an ideal. His ability to take counsel and practice good earwitnessing is another aspect of this ideal, and Hal apparently does it perfectly from the beginning. He is careful to listen to others when necessary, although there is a distinct sense in which he listens to appease others rather than to moderate his body.

Hal's physiology is directly related to Kantorowicz's theory of the king's two bodies in a way that the physiologies of most of the other characters are not. Because he is heir apparent, Hal threatens to reveal the natural body that lies concealed beneath the political body of the king. He expresses his concern about the image of a weeping king and decides that any revelation of the natural body poses a danger to the ability to control both his natural and political bodies. The gendered implication of this recognition follows the distinction between the uncontrolled, and therefore effeminate, body and its controlled, masculine counterpart.

As a master of persona, Hal coopts the narrative of the prodigal son for himself, playing the part of the prodigal son to mask his ambition with the semblance of humility. The parable allows Hal to appear more virtuous, since, following his wayward habitation of the taverns, he promotes himself as experienced in both vice and virtue. His persona of the prodigal son extends across the entire arc of the two plays, portraying Hal as artificial and calculating. Because it covers the entirety of his story, there is no way to separate him from his duplicity, with the result that his actions always seem suspicious.

To combat the appearance of duplicity, Hal invokes Machiavellian strategies that allow him to appear more at the mercy of *fortuna*. As will become evident, Hal is an expert at setting up situations to his advantage. The other participants of these situations operate as if according to their own agency, but their behaviour is limited to possibilities that Hal has established in advance.

CHAPTER 1: FALSTAFF

Falstaff performs the body's appetites unrestrained by ideas of propriety.⁴

Because he remains unrestrained in his pursuit of appetite his body is never coded to rules of decorum. Although I offer no definition for the body per se, I argue that Falstaff appeals to a sense of embodiment shared by every individual, hence the first part of this chapter's focus on popularity. Falstaff is in this sense an everyman. However, because he remains unencoded by propriety, he is socially inexplicable. Butler argues that language conforming to social values is capable of coding bodies, but Falstaff, for the most part, escapes this influence through his use of wit. After focusing on Falstaff's popularity, I address his body, taking into account its role as spectacle in the plays. As spectacle, Falstaff's body is subject to ridicule. Other characters play with his body by linguistically deforming it. They portray him as essentially different from themselves, denying his status as an everyman. I then devote several paragraphs to Falstaff's speech, in which his wit undermines the ridicule directed towards him. Falstaff's out-of-placeness, another cause for ridicule, has to do with the context-specificity of decorum and Falstaff's complete disregard for it. Finally, I show that denying speech is analogous to death, something that Falstaff proves after he feigns death at the Battle of Shrewsbury. Because he lacks the control necessary to portray a strong masculine character, Falstaff becomes a victim of Rumor. As a spectacle, he attracts the rumormongering of others. Despite his use of wit, he remains susceptible to the control of others—specifically Hal, who projects

⁴ I offer no precise meaning to "body." Instead, I assume that its meaning is clear from the context. I follow Ludwig Wittgenstein, among others, in the assumption that words mean only how they are used, and that the best way to understand the meaning of a word is to take it in its ordinary sense. Contradictions in meanings will obviously result, but Falstaff is a character that consistently contradicts himself in his attempts to satisfy the appetites of his body.

onto Falstaff the instability of the state. Falstaff therefore evokes a troubling mixture of sympathy and condemnation, as both an everyman and a scapegoat.

Falstaff's popularity among Shakespeare's contemporaries is apparent from the "Epilogue" to *2 Henry IV*, which promises its audience to "continue the story, with Sir John in it" (24-25). Although Falstaff does not appear on stage in *Henry V*, his death is recounted in vivid, if uncertain, detail (*HV* 2.1-2.3), and his reappearance in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is said to have been requested personally by Queen Elizabeth (Ostovich 1471). Nor was his popularity limited to the stage. According to John Jowett, by 1623, the year in which the First Folio was published, "*1 Henry IV* had [...] established itself as Shakespeare's most popular play with readers" (14).⁵ On stage and in print, Falstaff's popularity transgresses ordinary boundaries of stratified society by appealing to the common audience as much as to the literate gentry.⁶ But the reason for his popularity is not obvious. He is characterized by an extraordinary appetite for vice, including excessive drinking and eating, womanizing, lying, and stealing. His popular appeal must therefore lie in his vicious pursuits. He freely admits to being "A goodly, portly man, i' faith, and a corpulent; of a cheerful look, a pleasing eye, and a most noble carriage; and, as I think, his age some fifty, or by'r Lady, inclining to threescore" (*IH4* 2.4.383-386), thereby valorizing himself by renegotiating as virtuous the appetites of his body. His popularity suggests the importance of these appetites to an audience (and readership) which in early modern England were under increasing ideological regulation.⁷

⁵ Jowett precedes this by noting that "[n]o edition of *2 Henry IV* or *Much Ado about Nothing* appeared between their first publication in 1600 and 1623" (14).

⁶ James Shapiro speculates that in 1599, "on the average, it's likely that over a third of London's adult population saw a play every month" (9).

⁷ By "ideological regulation," I mean the many ways that society forms an individual into a subject of that society. Conduct books, such as those that teach males how to be men, are instruments of ideological

In his study of *Rabelais and his World*, Bakhtin promotes the grotesque as an ideal which renegotiates early modern social values. Against more classical ideals that prioritize virtuous, and therefore highly regulated, living, “[t]he essence of the grotesque is precisely to present a contradictory and double-faced fullness of life” (Bakhtin 62). Falstaff is an example of the grotesque staged, and his revaluation of vice as virtue fits well with Bakhtin’s insights into early modern culture. However, by the mid-1500s, the carnival spirit which afforded the grotesque the power to repeal ordinary society was increasingly corrupted by official oversight, which sought greater control over unruly elements. By the seventeenth century, Bakhtin argues, there was a “stabilization of the new order of the absolute monarchy” (101), and in 2 *Henry IV* the absolute control over the grotesque body by the governing body of the state is symbolically fulfilled with the banishment of Falstaff. Falstaff’s presence thus offers an anachronistic freedom by staging the grotesque body in its unregulated fullness. The result is something akin to a return of the repressed. Psychoanalytic interpretation is, of course, itself anachronistic to early modern England, but, thanks to the observations of Michael C. Schoenfeldt, the theory of “repressed memory” finds an analogue in “excess corporeal matter” (16). Falstaff’s body poses an excess of corporeality, suggesting that his popularity is the analogous result of a cathected desire for past freedom. An audience who is no longer able to experience their appetites free from ideological regulation might strongly identify with Falstaff.

regulation, since they train the subject to behave in a manner deemed socially appropriate. Sumptuary laws are another example, and it is interesting that Falstaff, whose subjectivity is largely impervious to ideological regulation, breaks these laws through his intense consumption of capons and canary wine.

The strange mixture of attraction to and repulsion from Falstaff's character may be explained by the ideological suppression of the grotesque. Without an authentic means of acknowledging the grotesque body, with its emphasis on consumption and excretion, audience members might have mixed emotions about his character. For example, although Falstaff's banishment seems to invite pity, it also invites a sense of moral righteousness, as the conclusion seems to demand that while Falstaff is sympathetic, he must also be cast out for the good of society. Auerbach, in his chapter on "The Weary Prince," takes up a similar emotional dilemma by analyzing Shakespeare's preoccupation with ideological hegemony. "To be sure," he remarks, "all the characters whom Shakespeare treats in the sublime or tragic manner are of high rank" (314). Auerbach argues that Shakespeare's "conception of the sublime and tragic is altogether aristocratic" (314). His assertion reaffirms the general attitude towards generic boundaries in art, which Bakhtin discovers in early modern attitudes towards laughter. According to Bakhtin, contemporaries of Shakespeare would have held the belief that

[L]aughter is not a universal, philosophical form. It can refer only to an individual and individually typical phenomena of social life. That which is important and essential cannot be comical. Neither can history and persons representing it—kings, generals, heroes—be shown in a comic aspect. The sphere of the comic is narrow and specific (private and social vices); the essential truth about the world and about man cannot be told in the language of laughter. (67)

Auerbach uses Shylock as an example of a character with tragic characteristics who is denied tragic status by the dramatic conventions of the time. Auerbach argues that

[i]n Elizabethan tragedy, we are in most cases confronted not with purely natural character but with character already formed by birth, situation in life, and prehistory (that is, by fate)—character in which fate has already had a great share before it fulfils itself in the form of a specified tragic conflict. The latter is often only the occasion which releases a tragic situation prepared long before. (320)

Shylock's character lacks a tragic nature not because he does not possess qualities which might be present in tragedy, but because he appeals "to customary wrong" (325). Falstaff likewise fails to perform tragedy in the early modern sense. Audience members might pity him for his tragic qualities, but his ignoble status demands a comic conclusion. He remains, like Shylock, a spectacle.

More often than not, Falstaff's presence is a source of ridicule, while his spectacle is further intensified through ridicule that exaggerates his enormity. Characters will often inflate his enormity by comparing him to imperceptibly large objects. Bardolph, for example, accuses Falstaff of being "out of all reasonable compass" (*IH4* 3.3.19). Beyond the obvious moral implication of Falstaff's indulgence in the flesh, Bardolph imagines Falstaff's body as vast to such a degree that it extends to every conceivable point on earth, rendering his location indeterminable by compass. Hal, too, draws a comparison between Falstaff and the earth by referring to him as a "globe of sinful continents" (*2H4* 2.4.256). The comparison might also serve as an allusion to *The Globe*, so that Hal's insult implies that the performance is taking place within Falstaff's body: "I have a whole school of tongues in this belly of mine," Falstaff tells the audience, "and not a tongue of

them all speaks any other word but my name” (4.2.16-18). Falstaff is not only enormous but pervasive. He transforms the world around him into a giant stomach.

Falstaff appears in nearly half of the scenes in *1* and *2 Henry IV*, so the original subject matter, much of which Shakespeare learned from *Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* (Shapiro 20), is also fattened by Falstaff’s presence. Patricia Parker has argued that Falstaff reproduces the trope of the literary fat lady, despite being “not a woman but a man” (21). She derives this trope from the “tradition of rhetorical dilation—with its references to ‘swelling’ style or its relation to the verbal ‘interlading’ produced through an excessive application of the principle of ‘increase’” (14). Literary dilation has several functions, but among them one is particularly pertinent to Falstaff’s character. One “use of ‘dilation’ occurs in the context of propagation or generation, the postponing of death through natural increase” (15). Falstaff dilates history by providing a voice to the countless, unnamed dead on which the historical narrative was built. These vulgar voices are inevitably forgotten within the narrative, but they also constitute the material stuff of history. This explains why Falstaff always appears spectacularly out of place, and, yet, he paradoxically embodies the entire performance. He is representative of the material body.

Falstaff points out that “Men of all sorts take a pride to gird at me” (*2H4* 1.2.5). While to gird is to ridicule (*OED* v2.1b), there is also a pun on “girdle” (*OED* v1.1), implicating Falstaff’s fatness in the act of ridiculing him. As the self-proclaimed “cause that wit is in other men” (*2H4* 1.2.9), Falstaff evokes in others attempts toward regulating his overwhelming presence through ridicule. Hal is especially abusive, in one diatribe referring to Falstaff’s body as a

Bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack, that stuffed cloak-bag of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly, that reverend Vice, that grey Iniquity, that father Ruffian, that Vanity in years” (*IH4* 2.4.409-413).

At first harping on the excessive fatness of Falstaff’s body, Hal redirects his ridicule towards the cause of that fatness in vice. Hal has, as is evident at this point in the play, been enabling Falstaff’s vicious behaviour by allowing him access to money, suggesting that he is not interested in redeeming Falstaff’s character but in perpetuating it. By ridiculing Falstaff, Hal reveals vice, and by allowing Falstaff to perpetuate his vicious practices, Hal is able to reveal vice numerous times over. There is therefore something in the act of revealing vice that is more important to Hal than authentically attempting to do away with it. One possibility is that by ridiculing Falstaff, Hal maintains his distance from vice, despite his inhabiting the same environments and taking part in many of the same vicious practices. Hal appears to be situating Falstaff as essentially different from himself, suggesting that ridicule can be used as an instrument for distinguishing the vicious from the non-vicious. Vice is projected into Falstaff’s body, and is situated in opposition to socially acceptable behaviour.

According to Judith Butler,

Language sustains the body not by bringing it into being or feeding it in a literal way; rather, it is by being interpellated within the terms of language that a certain social existence of the body first becomes possible. To understand this, one must imagine an impossible scene, that of a body that has not yet been given social definition, a body that is, strictly speaking,

not accessible to us, that nevertheless becomes accessible on the occasion of an address, a call, an interpellation that does not “discover” this body, but constitutes it fundamentally. (5)

Language in conformity with social values transforms bodies into ideologically meaningful objects. While the ridicule directed towards Falstaff exposes him as transgressive of these social values, Falstaff’s wit deflates the ridicule and frees his body from the power of language to regulate his body. Falstaff cannot be girdled because he cannot be reduced to ideology. He represents the body in its pre-ontological status, which is only after the fact neatly classified into social, historical, and scientific registers. When Falstaff’s newly acquired page, Robin, delivers news of his master’s uroscopy, he reports on behalf of the doctor that while “the water itself was a good healthy water but, for the party that owes it, he might have more diseases than he knew for” (2*HA* 1.2.2-4).⁸ The diagnostic conflation of “water” and “party” is problematized by Falstaff’s inexplicable health, which leads the physician to divide the medical body between the “disease,” or defect, of Falstaff’s character and the healthy urine that he produces.⁹ As with ridicule, medical diagnosis reverts to a cause in order to explain the body. As with vice, disease is projected into the body. What remains ungirdled, inexplicable, and unregulated, is Falstaff’s health, which is disavowed in favour of a diagnosis that can explain his moral failure.¹⁰

⁸ According to Nancy G. Siraisi, “the proliferation of brief handbooks and color charts giving rules for diagnosis by inspection of urine leaves little doubt that, in actuality, many practitioners relied primarily and perhaps exclusively on such observations of urine” (125).

⁹ By “medical body,” I mean the subject matter of medicine that, for the early modern *medici*, had its historical roots in Aristotle and Galen, among others. Quoting Avicenna, Siraisi defines medicine as “the science by which the dispositions of the human body are known so that whatever is necessary is removed or healed by it, in order that health should be preserved or, if absent, recovered” (78).

¹⁰ Paster offers a possible alternative in “the dangerous changeability of water” (47). “Like strumpets with false colors and fair exteriors, like strumpets who flattered their customers with false promises of

Falstaff's typical response to ridicule is to deflate it by emptying the language of its social value. When the Chief Justice accuses Falstaff of having slender means and producing great waste (1.2.128-129), Falstaff points out his desire for greater means and a slender waist (1.2.130-131). Falstaff implies that despite the ostensible difference between them, they both desire the same thing. Consequently, he deflates the Chief Justice's attempt to ridicule him. This tactic appears to have two functions. The first is that it refocuses discussion away from Falstaff's body and onto the language being used against it. Falstaff's witty responses fit his cowardly nature through his refusal to confront his attacker by directly addressing the subject matter of the ridicule. Secondly, Falstaff's wit removes the distance generated by ridicule between himself and other characters. As in the above example, Falstaff regards himself as in agreement with the Chief Justice. Falstaff, as representative of appetites, which are the product of the experience of embodiment, reveals the power of wit to free the body from ideology. Consequently, pursuit of power, primarily had through ideological control over other bodies, perceives Falstaff as a potential threat. This is especially true of a legal entity. The Chief Justice aspires towards a set of universalizable laws that govern exchangeable bodies.

While Falstaff remains quick-witted, he is greatly impaired by rules of decorum. Conformity to decorum is context-specific, and Falstaff's unwillingness to regulate his appetites means that he cannot conform his body to the situation. Yet, the kind of conformity is not established across contexts, and even when the early modern man took part in behaviour that might be construed as destructive of the body's constancy, there are

pleasure, a fair-colored urine might flatter patient and uroscopist with the promise of health but really betoken disease and death" (47).

situations that enable the production of appropriate behaviour through controlled inconstancy. In her essay on “Manly Drunkenness,” Gina Bloom offers a gendered reading of this point by showing that binge drinking in taverns can be construed as highly regulated practices of masculine decorum. Drinking games were used to test the participant’s manhood, and “[h]owever chaotic such scenes may be,” she argues, “they must be interpreted within their fuller context” (28).¹¹ The problem for Falstaff is less his embrace of vicious practices than his contextually inappropriate practice of vice. On the battlefield, Hal discovers a bottle of sack in Falstaff’s gun case, and admonishes him, asking “What, is it a time to jest and dally now?” (*IH4* 5.3.52). Hal admonishes Falstaff not for his drinking but for drinking without consideration of his environment. The image of a bottle of sack in a gun case is conducive to representing Falstaff’s out-of-placeness, which, on the battlefield, is destructive of the responsibilities with which Hal has charged him. In replacing the gun, the bottle of sack has become a metonym for Falstaff and enclosed within the gun case forms a symbol of Falstaff’s perpetual impropriety. He remains all sack, regardless of the situation.

Language, and specifically speech, is what allows the body to conform to rules of decorum, but complicating matters are the material origins of speech within the body. As Bloom points out, speech manipulates sound, and “[f]or [this specific] sound to result, there must be a flow of air, of breath, from the lungs, through and out the body cavity” (*VM* 30). In ridiculing Falstaff’s body, characters, such as Bardolph and Hal, are

¹¹ Phil Withington associates drinking with both wit and society, arguing that “to not drink as fashion demanded was not merely to be sober but to be unsociable” (646). The range of societies informed by drinking, “in the market, the alehouse, the tavern, at the dinner-table” (645), to name a few, extends to many statuses and classes, and in line with Bloom’s argument depends strongly on the capacity to moderate oneself in accordance with propriety against increasing intoxication.

projecting vice into the body—into the place of articulation. Ridicule is used in *1* and *2 Henry IV* in order to protect the sanctity of speech. To speak, and more importantly to be heard, is often a sign of authority. Thus, if Falstaff is vicious, his speech will fail to attract an audience and he will be rendered un-authoritative. To be heard in most situations requires an authoritative voice, and an authoritative voice produces speech that conforms to rules of decorum.

Falstaff's function is to reveal all speech as inseparable from the living body. His initial appearance in *1 Henry IV* shows him stupidly asking Hal the "time of day"

(1.2.1).¹² Hal admonishes him, telling him that

Thou art so fat-witted with drinking of old sack, and unbuttoning thee after supper, and sleeping upon benches after noon, that thou has forgotten to demand that truly which thou wouldst truly know. What a devil hast thou to do with the time of the day? Unless hours were cups of sack, and minutes capons, and clocks the tongues of bawds, and dials the signs of leaping houses, and the blessed sun himself a fair hot wench in flame-colored taffeta, I see no reason why thou shouldst be so superfluous to demand the time of the day. (1.2.2-10)

¹² This question is stupid because it is entirely contrary to his character. Falstaff has no use for time. In fact, there are many ways to locate him outside of time. He resembles the diminishing carnival spirit, which, according to Bakhtin, was at the time of *1* and *2 Henry IV* between the 16th century, "the summit in the history of laughter", and the 17th century, "marked by the stabilization of the new order of the absolute monarchy" (101). Falstaff also poses a problem specific to written language. According to Walter J. Ong, "formal logic is the invention of Greek culture after it had interiorized the technology of alphabetic writing, and so made a permanent part of its noetic resources the kind of thinking that alphabetic writing made possible" (52). Falstaff is explicable only to the additive, aggregative, and redundant aspects of language that Ong finds as signatures of older, oral cultures, and which persist as part of written language only in an attenuated state (38-39). Finally, see Falstaff's argument with the Chief Justice in *2H4* 1.2.

“Indeed you come near me now, Hal” (1.2.11), responds Falstaff. He has forgotten himself and told a falsehood by asking for the time. Falstaff’s confusion is the only occasion where, in spite of his copious lying, he can be said to tell a falsehood. Every instance of his lying is true to *his* truth—true to the appetites of the body. After feigning death in order to escape being killed by Douglas, Falstaff’s body is found by Hal, who seems to believe that Falstaff is actually dead. When Falstaff reappears, Hal is noticeably confused. He asks Falstaff to speak (5.5.133), as proof that Falstaff is alive. The implication is that the dead cannot speak, so speech becomes an illocutionary proof of life.¹³ Speech here lies in contrast to Percy’s epitaph, which is malleable and, consequently, susceptible to falsehood. At stake in the regulation of speech is life itself.

Alternatively, the absence of speech can be a signifier of death. Such is the case when Hal kills Percy. Hal soliloquizes that “Thy [Percy’s] ignominy sleep with thee in the grave / But not remembered in thy epitaph” (5.4.99-100). Who Percy was in life no longer has influence on how he is perceived, since Hal intends to alter Percy’s memory to his own advantage. Falstaff muses on this truth in his soliloquy on honour, arguing that honour is “A word” (5.2.133), which exists only as long as “air” can manifest it from within the body (5.2.134). The dead, he claims, are insensible to honour (5.2.136). They cannot produce the air necessary to materialize words as speech. Death in *1* and *2 Henry IV* seems to mean having another speak on one’s behalf, hence, on Falstaff’s deathbed, Mistress Quickly tells his coterie that “The King has killed his heart” (*HV* 2.1.82) by banishing him and denying him a voice.

¹³ There are exceptions, such as the ghost of Hamlet’s father. But ghosts are supernatural entities that suspend ordinary judgement, whereas *1* and *2 Henry IV* depict the natural world. There is nothing supernatural about Falstaff’s re-appearance, which is the point.

Botelho argues that Hal has apprenticed himself to Falstaff in order to learn how to distinguish truth from falsehood. He argues that

Crucial to Prince Harry's eventual rise to the throne is his ability to be a scrutinizing listener to counsel. Despite Falstaff's assertion that Hal speaks "quips" and "Quiddities," Harry's wordplay is in effect the basis for keeping Falstaff talking, to give him more access not only to the speech from all corners of the realm, but also to give him ample opportunity to partake in discerning truth from what Poins calls Falstaff's "incomprehensible lies" (65).

But it is difficult to credit Falstaff's lies with requiring or cultivating the power to discern truth from falsehood. Nearly every lie that Falstaff tells is conspicuous to the characters he is attempting to convince.¹⁴ When confronted about the events at Gads Hill, he recounts his valiant defence against "two rogues in buckram" (*IH4* 2.4.175), a number that quickly multiples over the course of the story, leading Hal to condemn the monstrosity of "Eleven buckram men grown out of two" (2.4.201-202). Hal, of course, already knows what took place at Gads Hill, since he and Poins were the rogues that robbed Falstaff of his stolen gold. Hal cannot but know that Falstaff is lying, since the lies being told are simply outrageous. Contrary to Botelho's argument that Hal's

¹⁴ One possible exception occurs when Falstaff feigns his death. Falstaff claims that Percy survived Hal's deathblow and that he, instead of Hal, deserves credit for killing Percy. It is significant that no other character saw Falstaff complete the act, which generates an ambiguity about the truth of his claim. Hal is generally careful to control this ambiguity, as discussed in chapter 3. It may be that believing Falstaff dead, Hal had no reason to keep his eye on him, although this conjecture becomes problematic when taking into account Hal's desire to embalm Falstaff's corpse (*IH4* 5.4.108). It is also possible that Hal knew that Falstaff was alive and was counting on Falstaff taking credit for killing Percy. If he could expect that others would doubt Falstaff's claim, he could give Falstaff a knighthood (which, I argue in chapter 3, was a Machiavellian move by Hal), while implicitly taking credit for the kill. The latter possibility seems more in line with Hal's character, who is everywhere else one step ahead of every other character.

proximity to Falstaff constitutes an apprenticeship in discerning truth,¹⁵ not intending to deceive, Falstaff merely speaks to satisfy the appetites of the body.¹⁶ His lies, which are revealed by contradictions between his speech and what others have perceived, are not exposures of his duplicity but, rather, paradoxes of the body.

Between bodies there must also be agreement, without which no society could exist. Characters negotiate their appetites around shared values, but Falstaff serves to reveal the immense oppression of those appetites. By locating speech outside of the body, characters practice behaviour that alienates the appetites of the body. Walter Blount, “A gallant knight he was” (*IH4* 5.3.20), according to Percy, is killed by Douglas, who mistakes him for Henry IV. Blount is one of several soldiers disguised in regalia in order to protect the king’s life on the battlefield, but Douglas points out that Blount was a fool, since “A borrowed title hast [Blount] bought too dear” (5.3.23). Concealed in regalia, Blount no longer recognizes himself as an individual. The image of him dressed as Henry IV is apt, since he has so alienated himself that he can no longer distinguish his subjectivity from that of the king. When Douglas tells Blount that “some tell me that thou art a king” (5.3.5), Blount responds that “They tell thee true” (5.3.6). He is protecting the body of another, at the cost of his own. The mindset that makes possible the degree of this desire to protect the king is contingent on an ideology which no longer recognizes the body.¹⁷

¹⁵ Botelho asserts that “Falstaff, full of sack and ambiguity, must be met with open ears, and Harry sharpens his skill of discerning listening as he keeps this man of rumor in check” (67).

¹⁶ One possible criticism of my argument is that lying is always deception, even if it is not the intention of the liar to deceive. This seems to me to miss the point. If I tell someone something that I know on further reflection to be true, I more often than not do so without consideration of its truth-value. One simply takes what another says as truth, unless there is specific reason not to. Talk of truth and falsehood abstracts from the practice of speech, whereas Falstaff functions by embodying that practice.

¹⁷ Elias, in *The Civilizing Process*, compares conduct books over several centuries and argues that there is a dialectical progression that over time increasingly conceals the body from social discourse. In the early

CHAPTER 2: PERCY

Percy is the primary antagonist of *1 Henry IV*. The conflict of the play, culminating with the Battle of Shrewsbury, unfolds as a result of his desire for revenge against Henry IV.¹⁸ He provides the rebels with the military force needed to challenge Henry IV's rule, and following his death, Mortimer's forces are easily tracked down and their leaders executed, suggesting that it was Percy, and not his allies, who posed a serious threat to the stability of the state. His choleric temperament, well known to the other characters, transforms his every encounter with other men into a power struggle and reveals his preoccupation with masculine status. In opposing himself to others, Percy practices an ideal of martial masculinity. His fundamental problem resembles Falstaff's in that he remains unable to adapt to context-specific rules of decorum. Also, much like Falstaff's, the reason for his inability to adapt is that he attempts to transform every situation into one that conforms to his temperament. His indiscriminate use of martial rhetoric both mobilizes and undermines his masculine status, and he demands the subordination of everyone, regardless of whether they hold a status above, below, or equal to, his.¹⁹ I will begin the chapter with an analysis of his death, which follows an

modern period, an emerging mercantile class was attempting to imitate the conduct of the nobility. In order to clarify class boundaries, the nobility continually introduced novel rules of conduct, often resulting in the removal of behaviour associated with the physical body.

¹⁸ In Act 1, Scene 1, Henry IV sends a messenger to tell Percy to send back prisoners from his victory against the Scots at Humbleton. By Act 1, Scene 3, Percy has refused the demand but returns to court on Henry IV's orders. The king admonishes Percy and threatens violence if he does not comply with his original request for prisoners. Percy interprets the admonishment as an attack on his honour and pursues revenge against Henry IV under the justification that he is reclaiming the throne for Mortimer, whom he deems the rightful king.

¹⁹ Percy offers a textbook case of neurosis. His obsession with honour is, I argue, rooted in anxieties surrounding his masculine status. No source for his neurosis is given, but he consistently shows resistance towards acknowledging his physical body, towards his subordinate status in relation to other men, and towards his fulfillment of domestic obligations. Percy is deeply anxious about the nature of manhood, something he shares with much of early modern English society. These anxieties are discussed in depth by Mark Breitenberg in his *Anxious Masculinities in Early Modern England*.

unsuccessful attempt to take power. Next, I will analyze Percy's notion of honour and its implications. Finally, I will focus on his use of martial rhetoric, Bloom's interpretation of male anxiety on the early modern stage, Percy's relationship with other men, the role of the earwitness, and the question of Percy's heirs.

Percy's death scene is crucial, since it reveals that the ability to speak depends on the living body. In his final moments, Percy, who is earlier in the play referred to as "the theme of honor's tongue" (*IH4* 1.1.80), turns his attention to how "the earthy and cold hand of death / Lies on my tongue" (5.4.83-84). Percy's identity has been ruptured. On the one hand, the idea of Percy, as "the theme of honor's tongue," is the product of speech. On the other hand, Percy is the name given to a dying body, soon to be incapable of speech. "No, Percy," he tells himself, "thou art dust / And food for—" (5.4.85). Slain midsentence, his final line is concluded by Hal's "For worms" (5.4.86), punning on the sound of "words," which reaffirms the rupture by again identifying Percy with both the idea and the body.

Percy's claim that "the earthy and cold hand of death / Lies on my tongue" (5.4.83-84) also suggests that his body is betrayed through speech. Similar to Falstaff's method of proving that he is alive,²⁰ Percy's inability to speak is proof of his death. There is irony in Percy's dying remark that he "could prophesy" (5.4.82), since the power to prophesy is reserved for the dying, who recognize their mortal situation.²¹ Moreover, if

²⁰ In chapter 1, I examine how Falstaff proved he was alive by the act of speaking.

²¹ Socrates in *The Apology* attributes to dying men the power to prophesy. My take on this is that immediate knowledge of death leads to greater perspective about the limits of life. The irony of Percy's position is that he both can and cannot prophecy. He can in that he is finally coming to recognize his body. He cannot in that this recognition comes only at the point in which speech becomes impossible. There is overlap here between Martin Heidegger's concept of being-toward-death, which is a state of being that recognizes the inevitable impossibility of all possibilities. Experience is for Heidegger conditioned by available ontological possibilities, and their totalizing impossibility is always recognized as a pending possibility. Where Heidegger and Shakespeare seem to disagree is in the nature of death. I argue that

the ability to speak conceals its dependence on the body by detaching speech from the body, the relationship of speech to the body becomes linguistically inexplicable. By detaching speech, Percy transforms it into an unknown, and therefore uncontrollable, force, which threatens the stability of the speaker. His cryptic advice to Glyndwr to “Tell the truth and shame the devil” (3.1.57) can be translated as “speech (‘truth’) can be used to shame the body (‘devil’).”²² By associating the body with the devil, Percy accuses the body of lying, an act that paradoxically produces an accusation articulated from the body. Percy has recognized that speaking about the body entails a lie, such that the body cannot be put into words without lying, since speech detached from the body lies about its origin in the body. There are gendered implications to this, as well. Truth-telling is characteristic of masculinity, suggesting that to shame the body is to emasculate, or feminize, it.^{23,24}

When Percy dies, he leaves behind a corpse for those still living to exploit. When Falstaff “*takes up HOTSPUR on his back*” (5.4.126), Percy’s corpse is reduced to a commodity, allowing Falstaff to capitalize on “those proud titles,” which Percy feared Hal “hast won of me” (5.4.78). “I am not a double man” (5.5.134), Falstaff tells Hal, still

Shakespeare locates it in the body, whereas Heidegger remains at all times abstracted from the body. By locating death in the body, Shakespeare also undermines Socrates’s position, since the body is for Socrates an obscuration of reality—a position which Percy might be thought to share with honour’s detachment from the body.

²² Hal frequently refers to Falstaff as a devil, Satan, and evil. If Falstaff represents the body, then Percy promises truth by shaming the body, and by extension Falstaff.

²³ Although he denies the possibility “of any convenient, single definition,” Gary Spear argues that “effeminacy in early modern culture possesses a twofold critical relevance, signifying at the same time a disarticulation of masculine authority and the ‘unnatural’ empowerment of biologically and socially ‘inferior’ women, and signalling within one conceptual frame the deployments of both gendered discourses” (409-410). *1 and 2 Henry IV* problematize the sexual aspect of this term with their predominantly male casts and masculine females.

²⁴ For discussions on truth as masculine see Breitenberg’s chapter on “Bacon’s New Science” in *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* and Botelho’s *Renaissance Earwitnesses: Rumor and Masculinity in Early Modern England*. See also Percy’s response to Kate’s “in good sooth” (1H4 3.1.241).

carrying Percy, conjuring a monstrous image of two bodies bound together. Percy too admits to exploiting the death of others in pursuit of honour. Indignant at Henry IV's portrayal of "revolted Mortimer" (1.3.92), Percy explains that honour "Needs no more but one tongue for all those wounds" (1.3.96) inflicted in battle and fatal to the receiver. They are "mouthèd wounds" (1.3.97), which, like Percy, have had their tongues stopped. Percy spoke on behalf of many mouthèd wounds until, like them, he was killed, and his titles were passed on to another.

After being struck by Hal, Percy recounts how the loss of his titles "wound my thoughts worse than thy sword my flesh" (5.4.79). More harmful to Percy is the loss of his honour, which, having become intensely aware of his own mortality, is revealed to him as inevitable. Hal has allowed Percy to recognize that "thoughts," are "the slaves of life" (5.4.80), repeating Falstaff's earlier prioritizing of "life, which if I can save, so; if not, honor comes unlooked for, and there's an end" (5.3.56-57). As dust for worms, Percy's titles find renewal in the mortal body of another, conflating the two bodies. The proliferation of corpses resulting from the pursuit of honour is unacknowledged by speech, which resists the body by abstracting and socially codifying it. Ironically, Percy neglects more certain ways of assuring his immortality, such as producing heirs.²⁵ There is a weightlessness to Percy's existence that finds its contrary in Falstaff's embodied enormity. Unlike the theory of the king's two bodies, explained in greater detail in chapter 3, which is successful because of its capacity to assuage the mortal consequences

²⁵ According to Shepard, "[i]n early modern England, patriarchy was literally understood to signify rule by fathers" (3). She goes on to note that "men who failed to be patriarchs, either because they did not live up to the expectations of the patriarchal position they occupied [...] or because they did not have access to patriarchal manhood [...] nonetheless found plenty of ways in which to assert their manhood. Such men, like unruly women, could be 'domestic dangers', but that did not stop them being men; instead they pursued different codes of manhood which often existed in tension with patriarchal imperatives" (6).

of generation by theorizing an uninterrupted double body of both the king and his incorporated subjects, Percy entirely refuses to acknowledge his mortality.

Percy's martial rhetoric allows him to resist the body. As "the theme of honor's tongue" (1.1.80), he draws attention towards an idea of martial masculinity, which has no basis in the natural body. His birth name, "Henry Percy," which relates him as a son to Northumberland, a nephew to Worcester, and a husband to Kate, is replaced by the denaturalized "Hotspur," which signifies his ferocity in battle. His ferocity is also revealed in his movements, which are battle-like. He goes to the court of Henry IV to defend himself against accusations that he refused to send back prisoners, telling "My liege," Henry IV, "I did deny no prisoners" (1.3.29), but quickly goes on the offensive, recounting how "a certain lord, neat and trimly dressed" (1.3.33), tasked with requesting prisoners on behalf of the king, insulted him. As a seeming afterthought, he acknowledges that this lord "amongst the rest demanded / My prisoners in your majesty's behalf" (1.3.47-48), but that he "Out of my grief and my impatience / Answered neglectingly" (1.3.51-52). Percy dances around the issue of his inability to control his anger. He then ends his account with what might be construed as a threat to Henry IV. "I beseech you," he says, "let not his report / Come current for an accusation / Betwixt my love and your high majesty" (1.3.67-69). He effectively demands that Henry IV turn a blind eye to Percy's own dishonourable action, and by suggesting that the messenger's offence undermines his refusal to give up prisoners, Percy limits Henry IV's choice to an ultimatum of peace or war.

Yet Percy's most offensive gesture manifests in a form which is only barely linguistic and speaks to the embeddedness of speech in the body. After Henry IV exits the

court, Percy's anger at him is articulated through Mortimer's name, which he imagines shouting into the king's ear while the latter is asleep. He promises to

[...] find him when he lies asleep,
And in his ear I'll holler "Mortimer!"
Nay, I'll have a starling shall be taught to speak
Nothing but "Mortimer" and give it him
To keep his anger still in motion. (1.3.220-224)

The language clearly articulates Percy's desire to viscerally subordinate the king, with "Mortimer!" penetrating the ear of the sleeping king. Significantly, the neglect which Percy shows to his own marriage bed, expressed by his wife, who later refers to herself as "A banished woman from my Harry's bed" (2.3.34), implies that the suggestion of sexual violence in Percy's imagery is essentially homosocial, since sexuality seems not to enter his mind at all.²⁶ Percy's martial rhetoric situates male bodies in relation to one another as a battleground, where individuals either successfully defend themselves or are forced into subordination.²⁷

Bloom has discussed the early modern dramatic preoccupation with male anxiety. More specifically, she draws on the idea of a "crack," which she defines as "a partial fracture, not a full breakage" (*VM* 40), and attributes the use of the word to youths who, at the onset of puberty, waver "between childish and manly sound" (40). She argues that "[b]ecause the commercial theater industry relied on pubescent boys for the production of

²⁶ Writing on early modern sexual violence, Garthine Walker argues that "[r]ape commonly required three criteria: sexual intercourse, defined as penile penetration of the vagina (sometimes stipulating ejaculation too); force (the degree and nature of which varied), and the (necessarily female) victim's non-consent" (431). Although not rape in the conventional sense, Percy's imagination approximates the act by subordinating Henry IV to an effeminate role. He performs the homosocial equivalent of a rape fantasy.

²⁷ Percy perceives the state as a virtual state of nature: a war of all against all.

plays, it continuously produced the conditions for ideological discomfort about male identity” (40). She draws on Shallow’s account of “young Falstaff as a ‘crack’” (43) in 2 *Henry IV*, arguing that he is careful to distinguish his own manly behaviour from its imitation by Falstaff. “Certainly,” she argues, “Shallow seems oddly compelled to reiterate the success of his own violent brawl, as if to confirm to himself and his audience that the ‘crack’ who could ‘break Scoggin’s head’ was not in the same league as the ‘swinge-bucklers’ who rule the school” (44). Shallow laughs at the comparison, apparently too ridiculous to give serious consideration, and yet that laughter seems compelled by his memory. Bloom’s interpretation can be extended to Robin’s own defiance of youthful propriety. Having been ambushed, Falstaff calls for aid. His page enters, commanding “Away, you scullion, you rampallian, you fustilarian! / I’ll tickle your catastrophe” (2H4 2.1.49-50). Obviously intended to evoke laughter, Robin’s command articulates with precision the controlled voice of an ideal, adult man. His apparent frustration with Falstaff’s unregulated behaviour further exposes the anxieties that Falstaff intensifies on the stage.

Bloom continues her discussion on staging male anxiety with an interpretation of Coriolanus, a choleric figure who resembles Percy in his temperament and pursuit of masculine status. She argues that “[t]he notion that a ‘crack’—with all the historical implications of the term—lurks behind every articulate, masculine man is, in Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus*, a thematic device” (VM 48). She focuses particularly on pre-pubescent Martius, Coriolanus’s son, who is imitating the latter’s martial behaviour, again exposing anxieties about the distinction between boys and men. She argues that just “[a]s the young Falstaff’s fighting threatens to expose the childishness of ‘swing-

bucklers' [sic] who pick fights at the Inns of Court, the young Martius's game of killing insects on the playfield undermines the seriousness of Coriolanus's valiant work on the battlefield" (46). In *I Henry IV*, when Percy confronts the inexperienced Hal, he tells him that he "would to God / Thy name in arms were now as great as mine" (5.4.68-69).

While, on the one hand, Percy's disappointment might imply that little honour can be gained from killing the prodigal Hal, it seems equally plausible, on the other hand, that Hal's inexperience is construed by Percy as boyishness, and thus challenges Percy's masculine status by situating it in contest against a boy.

Smith has argued that ideals of masculinity "entail certain fundamental conflicts" (64), and notes that "Paul Smith's general observation about identity formation seems particularly apt for men in an evolving society like early modern England: an individual possesses not just one identity but several" (64). Percy's singular choleric approach to every situation therefore offers another reason for his function as the plot's antagonist, in contrast to "Shakespeare's male protagonists" (65), which Smith argues, "are apt to find their identities *vis-à-vis* not one ethical ideal but several" (65). Percy does not evolve, in contrast to Hal, whose coming of age story is the source of constant uncertainty to those around him. Falstaff appears fixated on Hal remembering him after he becomes king, while the Chief Justice worries that Hal will be unable to do away with his unruly way of life. Hal is on the cusp of manhood, which, according to Smith, begins at twenty-five (74).²⁸ Yet Percy, like Coriolanus, was a man from youth onwards. Although the historical Percy was closer to Henry IV in age, his character in *I Henry IV* is given an age similar to that of Hal, as if to highlight Hal's relative unmanliness. Percy, however, fails

²⁸ Shepard argues that "[a]part from gender, age was the most directly acknowledged difference to inform constructions of normative manhood" (9).

in many of the areas where his superior masculine status should allow him to succeed. He rebels against his sovereign and neglects his wife. His pursuit of honour presents no change in the structure of the state. Rather than evolving into manhood, Percy represents a state of manhood that has degenerated into simplicity.

Smith acknowledges the singularity of Percy's masculinity, arguing that

Harry [Hal] illustrates another conflict involved in the achievement of masculine ideals as he negotiates a tension between affiliation and aggression. If masculine identity is something that men give each other, they do so under a complicated system of rules whereby they alternately abet and oppose one another. Harry's relationship with Hotspur offers a case in point. In terms of body chemistry, what we witness in the rivalry between Harry and Hotspur is a contest between Hotspur's choleric-driven anger and Harry's calculated reasonableness. In terms of ethical ideals, it is an act of collaboration, an achievement of masculinity in terms of one another's identity. (66)

If Hal's first soliloquy is to be believed, then the act of collaboration has been planned by him in advance. Percy's martial consistency is easily manipulated and when the two Henrys finally clash it is unsurprising that the one who had been planning the battle long beforehand is victorious.

The paucity of boyish or female characters in *1* and *2 Henry IV* obscures masculinity by diminishing differences in gender that help to distinguish it. The boyish and female characters that do appear are often manly, taking on labour and behaviour that

is more conventionally male.²⁹ Without clear gender and sex distinctions, the predominantly male *dramatis personae* stratifies gender across an almost exclusively male world.³⁰ Thomas A. King focuses on male behaviour by emphasizing the importance of homosocial relationships. Emasculation is less directly the product of effeminacy than the result of having a status which subordinates one male body to another. In King's own words,

[i]n this earlier economy of bodies and spaces, power was not shared among men qua men but was a function of one's (actual or potential) proximity to bodies possessing publicness, within the household or within the state. This was manliness that could never be finally achieved but was domain and context specific. Superordination in one domain was subordination in another. Manliness was not a set of privileges accruing to the membership of a "natural group" of biological men, but the performative effect of preferment and autonomy within a patriarchal society in which not only all women and children but "many men," as Randolph Trumbach has reminded us, "were the property of other men."
(4-5)

Politics and property are directly conflated when the rebel leaders redraw the map of England. Percy argues that his "moiety, north from Burton here, / In quantity equals not" (*IH4* 3.1.94-95) those of Glyndwr and Mortimer. Whether imagined, real, or the product of greed, Percy's anxieties about status undermine the democratic attempt to divvy the

²⁹ Robin, Falstaff's page, was discussed above. Mistress Quickly, Doll Tearsheet, and Kate, or Lady Percy, are all manly in their own ways.

³⁰ Shepard argues that "manhood in early modern England were as dependent on perceptions of difference between men themselves as between men and women" (21).

land equally amongst them. The event nearly breaks the rebellion, as Glyndwr refuses to alter the map.³¹ Masculinity's conflation of status with property suggests that Percy's choleric approach to every situation might be a way of defending his body against potential robbers.

Percy's function in *1 Henry IV* is to generate conflict. As the play's primary antagonist, the conflict that unfolds over its course originates with his character. Despite his inability to adapt to situations, Percy can wreak havoc because of the weakness of Henry IV's rule. At the beginning of the play, Henry IV tells Westmoreland that

So shaken as we are, so wan with care,
Find we a time for frighted peace to pant
and Breathe short-winded accents of new broils
To be commended in strands afar remote. (1.1.1-4)³²

Henry IV's desire to unify England by starting a war with a foreign power suggests the possibility of assuaging internal discontent with the promise of external gain. Percy shows the limitations of this strategy when used indiscriminately. He perceives among

³¹ Percy claims that he would "give thrice so much land / To any well-deserving friend; But, in the way of bargain, mark ye me, I'll cavil on the ninth part of a hair" (*1H4* 3.1.134-135). It is difficult to believe that there exists such a "well-deserving friend". Percy occasionally invokes his selflessness, but always to his own advantage.

³² Westmoreland's office as council and messenger to Henry IV invites suspicion. He refers to Percy's achievement at Humbleton as "a conquest for a prince to boast of" (*1H4* 1.1.76), possibly inducing anxieties about the patrilineal nature of kingship—anxieties which are later explicitly meditated on by Henry IV. Westmoreland also advises Henry IV that Percy's pride is a result of "Worcester, / Malevolent to you in all aspects" (1.2.95-96), and, in a later scene, Worcester is accused by the king of "Danger and disobedience in thine eye" (1.3.16). As the king's messenger, Westmoreland may be the "certain lord, neat and trimly dressed" (1.3.33) who angers Percy and reports his denial of Henry IV's request for prisoners. It is especially interesting that his disappearance from the stage corresponds to Hal's reappearance as king. Although accompanying Hal's brother, John, for most of *2 Henry IV*, and playing a pivotal role in the surrender of Archbishop Scroop and his party, Westmoreland's name is not included among those in Henry V's company in the final scene. Instead, only the Chief Justice and Prince John are named, suggesting that Hal, the great Machiavel of the tetralogy, may have seen in Westmoreland a threat to his authority. It seems also worth mentioning that Westmoreland's council, which Henry IV depended on, is on every occasion in *Henry V* rejected by the king.

both the state and his allies a potential threat to his masculine status. At one point he even finds an enemy in himself, and imagines dividing “myself and [going] to the buffets” (2.3.28), an image that has Percy embodying civil conflict, and by extension the conflict of the *1 Henry IV*.

Percy’s ability to generate conflict derives from his martial rhetoric, rather than his physical actions. In fact, the only battle in which he appears in *1 Henry IV* is the battle of Shrewsbury, which he loses and in which he is killed by a supposedly inexperienced Hal. His only victory is against Douglas at Humbleton, an event recounted by Henry IV in the first scene. The effectiveness of this victory is, however, suspect, since he soon after allies himself with Douglas in order to rebel against Henry IV. Since there is no indication that Douglas is a vassal to Percy, Percy’s actions appear by and large ineffective. His reputation for martial prowess is his remaining source of authority, and he reminds others of it at every opportunity. But martial rhetoric is an instrument of appearance.

Botelho argues that early modern masculinity was contingent on what one said and heard. In order to control the transmission of information, sensory organs, such as the tongue and the ear, had to be regulated. It was the responsibility of men within society to regulate the transmission of speech. Percy complicates this process by introducing into speech his anxieties about his manhood. As an earwitness, he repeatedly fails to take account of himself and others. According to Botelho, good earwitnessing is the “hallmark of good government in the Renaissance” (51), requiring “a space of male speaking and listening, a mutually constitutive relationship that at once reveals men’s authority over information as well as their anxiety about protecting their ears against potentially

dangerous information” (51). Since Percy perceives everyone else as a threat, he believes all information to be dangerous. Percy, on occasion, gives the illusion that he practices good earwitnessing. He refuses to divulge secrets to his wife, telling her that “Constant you are / But yet a woman; and for secrecy / No lady closer” (*IH4* 2.3.101-103), but on many more occasions he is called out by other characters for telling falsehoods. When Percy recounts Mortimer’s fight with Glyndwr, Henry IV responds that “Thou does belie him, Percy; thou dost belie him. / He never did encounter with Glyndwr” (1.3.113-114), and receiving the letter denying him military aid, but offering him counsel instead, he begins arguing with its contents in order to convince himself of its author’s foolishness (2.3.1-30). Botelho contends “that men in Renaissance drama often mistakenly define their informational authority against female talkativeness. In fact, men’s own loose talk posed the most serious threat to the maintenance of their authority” (22). In a play comprised almost exclusively of male characters, Botelho’s argument holds true, and the importance that he attributes to earwitnessing is reaffirmed by the dangers associated when the ability to speak conceals its origin in the body.

In a similar vein as Botelho’s concept of an earwitness, Bloom argues for a “principle of ‘active audition’” (*VM* 112). She argues that this concept

is defined with particular urgency by early modern Protestant preachers, whose sermons instruct parishioners in how to attain salvation through hearing God’s Word. In sermons on the biblical parable of “the sower and the seed,” the Word is imagined as a generative germ that enter parishioners’ ears and, if sowed effectively, takes root in their hearts,

helping them produce the “fruit” of good deeds. Salvation is thus contingent on parishioners’ aural receptivity (112).

From the responsibility to hear God’s Word properly grew an anxious distinction about “the line between what [Bloom] call[s] *constructive defensiveness* and *disruptive deafness*—a line that helps maintain early modern gender hierarchies and a patriarchal social order” (116). The preference is for the first option—constructive defensiveness—since this kind of hearing, as with earwitnessing, allows the hearer to specifically listen for truth. Percy, however, seems to fall within disruptive deafness. Comparing the ear to a fortress, Bloom argues “that every aural fortress is beneficial to the self. Sometimes, the aural fortress is represented as excessive or misplaced, and thus defensiveness becomes disruptive rather than constructive. She notes that Shakespeare’s later plays are concerned with male characters that disrupt “the regeneration of a family line” (131) through their defensive attitudes towards women, although in many of the cases she mentions, these characters do eventually find salvation by configuring their aural fortress to allow them to locate “a fertile womb to produce future heirs” (131). For these characters, and for Percy, “the reproductive body is very much at stake” (131).

At the moment when he is struck down by Hal, Percy fails to achieve his ideal of martial masculinity, since his death also signals his dishonourable subordination to Hal. Percy’s death exposes honour as fleeting and, ultimately, insubstantial. Through his neglect of other ideals of masculinity, he also fails to establish alternative means to achieving masculine status. Despite honour’s insubstantiality, it is shown to depend entirely on the living body, which suggests that Percy’s ethos obscures the fact of his embodiment, rather than allowing him to escape its mortal limits. While Falstaff and

Percy are contraries of one another, they ultimately succumb to similar deaths, except that whereas Falstaff confronts morality, Percy refuses to acknowledge it. In death, the ways of life that separate the two characters are no longer relevant to how they are perceived, and it is up to the living, with their own embodied interests, to speak on behalf of them both.

CHAPTER 3: HAL

Hal is the great Machiavel of the tetralogy, and arguably its most complicated character. In part, his complexity is due to the obscurity of his intentions, which remain hidden to a degree that classifies him alongside villains such as Edmund and Iago. I begin this chapter by exploring Hal's presence on stage. There is a persistent sense in which he is never *with* the other characters, despite his physically being with them. He appears aloof but, oddly, not in an immediately discernable way. He also retains complete control over his body and speech. Following an exploration of his ambivalence, I will look at how he controls himself, as well as how he controls others. Following that, I will provide a summary of Kantorowicz's *The King's Two Bodies* and apply it to Hal. The form of masculinity that Hal performs is bound up with Kantorowicz's concept. Then, I will turn to the image of a weeping king, the concept of persona, the parable of the prodigal son, and Machiavelli's *The Prince*, before, finally, explicating Hal's Machiavellianism.

In scenes wherein Hal occupies the Boar's Head Inn, he appears out of place with his surroundings. His status as royalty distinguishes him from his social inferiors in the tavern. On several occasions he uses this distinction to his advantage, reaffirming his status as superior to his companions. Yet, his presence appears nearly transient, as if he were an illusion. If Falstaff is excessively embodied and Percy excessively disembodied, then Hal straddles the two contrary positions. On the one hand is a portrait of Hal as wayward, reveling in the appetites of the body, while terrifying those like the Chief Justice who are concerned with the stability of the state. On the other hand is a portrait of Hal as a Machiavel, who wields the first portrait as an instrument of power. This chapter argues for the second conception, and that the sense of ambivalence present when Hal

appears on stage is a product of his Machiavellianism. Bloom, quoting Kaja Silverman, points out that “[a]s the disembodied voice is given a ‘definitive localization,’ it ‘loses power and authority.’” (*VM* 166). Percy evidently takes this to heart, as he remains in continuous motion from one scene to the next, until he dies settling both his location and his authority. Falstaff, by contrast, must be prodded into movement. His authority is almost always located in and nearly limited to the Boar’s Head Inn. Hal, however, is able to bring together aspects of both characters in a way that ambiguates location and allows him authority.

Hal’s physical body is, of course, fictionally located in whatever setting he appears. Yet, his body is never really *in* it, in the sense that his mind is never absorbed in present conditions. When Falstaff brags about “The Prince” being “a jack, a sneak-up”, and threatens “cudgel him like a dog” (*IH4* 3.3.77-78), he does so in Hal’s absence. When Hal enters the scene, ostensibly ignorant of what Falstaff has been saying, his mere presence challenges Falstaff to make good on his threat, while also implying that Hal is indeed “a sneak-up.” At the Battle of Shrewsbury, one of Hal’s exits is timed immediately before Douglas’s entrance. Douglas and Henry IV begin to fight, and “The KING being in danger, enter PRINCE of Wales” (5.4.36), who forces Douglas to flee the scene. It is as if Hal baited Douglas with an opportunity to kill his father. If Hal is as calculating as these two examples make him seem, then his visible presence does not delimit his control over how events unfold.

When Hal is present on stage, he appears in control of his body. Like Falstaff, he does not suffer from an overabundance of phlegm, nor, like Percy, of choler. Auerbach’s reading of the discussion between Hal and Poin, where Hal explains that he is

“exceedingly weary” (2*H4* 2.2.1), is arguably the closest that Hal comes to showing any physiological imbalance. Auerbach attributes Hal’s weariness to “the elements of mixed style” (313) that engender Hal with social ambivalence. Aesthetically, Hal is out of place as a royal fraternizing with commoners. Hal tells Poinc that “it is not meet that I should be sad now my father is sick, albeit I could tell to thee, as to one it pleases me for fault of a better to call my friend, I could be sad, and sad indeed, too” (2*H4* 2.2.34-37). He asks Poinc “What wouldst thou think of me if I should weep?” (2.2.46), to which Poinc responds that he would be “a most princely hypocrite” (2.2.47). The high style of nobility is expected to suppress displays of excessive emotion.³³ The failure to suppress has gendered implications, as well, as shown when Northumberland admonishes Percy after one of his outbursts by asking him whether he will “break into this woman’s mood” (1*H4* 1.3.235).

The difference between Henry IV at the beginning of *1 Henry IV* and Henry V at the end of *2 Henry IV* is also telling. Henry IV, who in light of growing instability, resolves that

My blood hath been too cold and temperate,
Unapt to stir at these indignities,

³³ In his “Preface” to Baldesar Castiglione’s influential *The Book of the Courtier*, Daniel Javitch points out that “[t]he Courtier’s comportment is regularly characterized by [a] paradoxical and hence difficult balance of opposites: rehearsed spontaneity, reticent exhibitionism. It is reiterated that he must avoid being presumptuous, yet he is also asked constantly to impress beholders” (xi). The combination of *sprezzanatura* and *mediocrità* demand a degree of dissimulation, “[t]he standards [of which] are so high that for many they are unattainable [...] Castiglione’s speakers establish the criteria of proper style for an aristocracy” (xi). Shepard comments that “[t]he prescriptive literature of this period was largely written by and for a comparatively elite group of men, and, unless stated otherwise, it was generally assumed by authors that the reader was male and reasonably well educated” (8). She goes on to argue that “[d]espite their different emphases, all these words sought to define manhood in broadly patriarchal terms of discretion, reason, moderation, self-sufficiency, strength, self-control, and honest respectability. More importantly, they all expressed considerable concern about the ubiquity of all tendencies antithetical to the ordered, rational ideal” (10).

And you have found me, for accordingly
You tread upon my patience. But be sure
I will from henceforth rather be myself,
Mighty and to be feared (*IH4* 1.3.1-6).

He is speaking to Northumberland, Percy, and Worcester, all of whom, following their meeting, rebel against him. The play leaves unanswered whether a calmer disposition could have salvaged the relationship between the king and his nobles. But Henry V, by contrast, calmly commands Falstaff to “Presume not that I am the thing I was, / For God doth know, so shall the world perceive, / That I have turned away my former self” (*2H4* 5.5.54-56). Against Falstaff’s excesses, Henry V displays complete control over his body, even promising “competence of life [...] That lack of means enforce you not to evils” (5.5.64-65).

Botelho argues that “in Shakespeare’s *Henriad* it is the King and his son whose powers of earwitnessing are the focal point of the plays” (60). Despite Henry IV’s turbulent rule, Henry V proves a perfect earwitness upon ascension, reaffirming a clear hierarchy that draws its authority from himself.³⁴ Shortly after Henry V’s judgement against Falstaff, Prince John tells the Chief Justice that

I like this fair proceeding of the King’s.
He hath intent his wonted followers

³⁴ Botelho states that “[w]hile Richard II closely parallels Gorboduc in his failure to listen to wise counsel, King Henry and Prince Harry (reminiscent of Marlowe’s own depiction of Edward III) become earwitnesses of the realm, hearing all counsel, male and female, and thereby securing England’s fame by avoiding civil war” (60). By “King Henry,” Botelho seems to have in mind Bolingbroke from *Richard II*, since England under his rule, as staged by Shakespeare, is far from secure. Henry IV’s first line, and the first line of *1 Henry IV*, “So shaken as we are, so wan with care,” (*IH4* 1.1.1), immediately presents a state in conflict. This conflict is only resolved after his death.

Shall all be very well provided for,
But all are banished till their conversations
Appear more wise and modest to the world. (*2H4* 5.5.93-97)

Prince John's assessment entails that Henry V has managed to "quell the rumors of his former life and prove his willingness to listen to counsel" (Botelho 70), a condition which Botelho argues was a necessary step towards his ascension. Compare this scene to that of Henry IV's, quoted above. After Percy's acerbic, and potentially threatening, response to Henry IV, Walter Blount attempts to mollify hostilities by advising Henry IV that

The circumstances considered, good my lord,
Whate'er Lord Harry Percy then had said
To such a person and in such a place,
At such a time, with all the rest retold,
May reasonably die, and never rise
To do him wrong, or any way impeach
What then he said, so he unsay it now. (*1H4* 1.3.70-76)

Blount's diplomatic solution is scorned by Henry IV, who continues to block every attempt by Percy to save face against his prior offence. Counsel in the case of either king proves an important mediation of the body, which, in the case of kings, can have serious repercussions for the state.

Hal, as Henry V, speaks only once in *2 Henry IV*. His final monologue banishes Falstaff and replaces his status as heir apparent with kingship. There is a double sense in which the body is cast out. Falstaff's body as representative of the grotesque body is banished, while Hal's natural body is overlaid with the political body of Henry V. In his

study on *The King's Two Bodies*, Kantorowicz writes at length on the dual nature of kingship.³⁵ Kantorowicz argues for a division “between the King’s sempiternity and the king’s temporariness, between his immaterial and immortal body politic and his material and mortal body natural” (20-21). As the body politic, the king incorporates every individual member of the state into a single entity. The authority of one individual member over another is ultimately derived from the king, who retains absolute power over every other member. All hierarchies, whether they explicitly mention the king, draw their legitimacy from him. Alternatively, the king possesses a second body—the body natural—which refers to the body in its ordinary sense. As shown by Henry IV’s poor earwitnessing, the body natural can transgress the boundary between the two bodies and produce a lasting effect on how the state functions. Hal’s discussion with Poinas as to the public display of weeping invokes the danger of this transgression. By weeping in public, Hal would reveal his body natural. The danger results from the design of the body politic, which retains immortality by concealing the body natural. In the event of death, the body politic is quickly transplanted from one body natural to another, giving rise to the expression, “The king is dead. Long live the king.” Hence when *Hamlet*’s Barnardo answers Francisco’s call to “Stand and unfold yourself” (1.1.2), his response, “Long live the King” (1.1.3), speaks to a wrong done to the body natural of Hamlet’s father by leaving out the first part of the expression. And as for Richard II, the subject of

³⁵ According to Kantorowicz, “should [Shakespeare] have chanced upon the legal definitions of kingship, as probably he could not have failed to do when conversing with his friends at the Inns, it will be easily imagined how apropos the simile of the King’s Two Bodies would have seemed to him” (25). He continues by arguing that “[t]he legal concept of the King’s Two Bodies cannot [...] be separated from Shakespeare. For if that curious image, which from modern constitutional thought has banished all but completely, still has a very real and human meaning today, this is largely due to Shakespeare. It is he who has eternalized that metaphor. He has made it not only the symbol, but indeed the very substance and essence of one of his greatest plays: *The Tragedy of King Richard II* is the tragedy of the King’s Two Bodies” (26).

Kantorowicz's second chapter, after being usurped he goes through a ritualistic disrobing where "kingship itself comes to mean Death, and nothing but Death" (30). Kantorowicz then points out how "[b]it by bit he deprives his body politic of the symbols of its dignity and exposes his poor body natural to the eyes of the spectators" (36). Appearance is therefore what protects kings and states from instability, and Hal's weeping, seemingly innocent on its own, is a dangerous sign of weakness to the ideal of kingship.

Weeping is also a sign of what Paster calls the "leaky body," and therefore has the power to emasculate. Paster argues that there persists in early modern England

a culturally familiar discourse about the female body, an anxious symptomatological discourse to be found in a variety of other texts including Renaissance medical texts, iconography, and the proverbs of oral culture. This discourse inscribes women as leaky vessels by isolating one element of the female body's material expressiveness—its production of fluids—as excessive, hence either disturbing or shameful. It also characteristically links this liquid expressiveness to bodily self-control or, more precisely, the representative of a particular kind of uncontrol as a function of gender. (25)

Returning to Bloom's essay on "Manly Drunkenness," one of the key features of maintaining masculine status while binge drinking is maintaining the appearance of being sober. Of drinking games, Bloom points out that "[t]here is nothing lazy or idle about this manner of consuming alcohol. To the contrary, such maneuvers require the kind of strength and manual control characteristic of a swordsman or athlete" (29). In fact, there were rules against allowing even one's eyes to water. She explains that "[i]nsofar as

watering eyes announce a man's inability to control his body—which if secreting fluid, exhibits the excess of moisture Galenic physiology associated with women and children—the cost of losing the drinking wager is appropriate” (30). To lose this appearance would be revealing of the “poor body natural,” with perhaps lower stakes than those of Richard II.

Hal has a way of avoiding revealing his body natural. For example, when Falstaff takes on the role of Henry IV, pretending to have summoned Hal to answer “why, being my son, art thou so pointed at?” (*IH4* 2.4.370-371). Falstaff soon changes the course of his questioning, instead drawing attention to “a virtuous man whom I have often noted in thy company, but I know not his name” (2.4.380). When Hal asks who this man is, Falstaff begins to describe himself.³⁶ Falstaff's performance of Henry IV becomes transparent due to his incorrigible self-interest, which strongly commends Hal's companionship to himself. Hal then demands that they reverse roles, with Hal replacing Falstaff as Henry IV, while Falstaff performs Hal. This time Falstaff changes the course of his answers and similarly valorizes himself without consideration for the character he is performing. More interestingly, however, is that Hal, as Henry IV, directs the king's judgement against Falstaff, scolding “Hal” for lowering himself to the company of scoundrels. Unlike Falstaff, Hal actually performs Henry IV, and does so without revealing (at least through his words) himself as the real speaker. Hal transforms himself into his father and directs his father's judgement against Falstaff. This performance suggests that the danger of weeping, although very real, poses no serious threat to Hal, since he has already mastered the art of concealing his body natural through performance.

³⁶ By ‘himself’ is meant Falstaff, not Henry IV.

Hal's performance of Henry IV also reveals his ability to develop personas. According to Smith, "in Latin, *persona* designated the mask that actors wore on the stage, a mask that was often equipped with a megaphone for projecting the voice, hence *per-sona* or 'through-sounding'. Also implicit in the Lord Chief Justice's choice of 'persona' is a fourth sense of the word as physical body" (9). "Through-sounding" suggests an object that mediates the voice, and physical bodies that produce voices are human bodies. Despite persona requiring a physical body through which it can manifest, Hal's real interests, which for Falstaff are always articulated from the body, are never made explicit.

Hal's imitation of the prodigal son of the Biblical parable forms his greatest persona in which his ambitions are concealed behind an illusion of humility. In the Biblical parable, a father bestows on his two sons their inheritance, allowing them to use it how they see fit. While one son follows the father by investing in a respectable life for himself, the other son—the prodigal son—spends his inheritance in pursuit of vice. After becoming destitute, the prodigal son takes up work as a servant, but recognizing the error of his ways returns to work in his father's household. The father not only forgives him but demands that the brother share his inheritance with him. The parable follows the narrative of a fall followed by redemption, and early in *I Henry IV*, Hal explains to an audience familiar with the parable that his objective is to "imitate the sun, / Who doth permit the base contagious clouds / To smother up his beauty from the world" (1.2.172-174).³⁷ By returning to the fold, Hal intends to shine all the brighter for having thrown off vice, promising to "so offend to make offense a skill" (1.2.191). Hal's words are

³⁷ According to Shepherd, "Metaphors of (male) youth featured prominently in conversion literature, catechisms, sermons, and religious drama, a common subject of which was the parable of the prodigal son. Emblematic of the fraught pathway to salvation, youth was characterized as the period in which an individual was suspended between the contrasting prospects of virtue and reprobation" (25).

especially pernicious to Richard II's memory, since, as Kantorowicz notes, the latter's "personal badge was the 'Sun emerging from a cloud'" (32). Kantorowicz goes on to argue that in *Richard II* "[t]he Sun imagery [...] reflects the 'splendour of the catastrophe' in a manner remindful of Brueghel's *Icarus* and Lucifer's fall from the empyrean" (32-33). Significantly, Falstaff includes himself among those that "go by the moon and the seven stars, and not by Phoebus, he, 'that wand'ring knight so fair'" (*IH4* 1.2.12-13), thereby situating himself and his companions in opposition to Richard II. By banishing Falstaff, Henry V returns to the fold and effaces the memory of Richard II by taking his place as the triumphant sun.

Unlike the prodigal son, however, Hal has planned out his narrative in advance. His promise to Henry IV, that he "shall hereafter, my thrice-gracious lord, / Be more myself" (3.2.92-93), is a show of humility that begs forgiveness of the father. Although the prodigal son narrative proves an effective instrument for convincing Henry IV that Hal has recognized his waywardness, the king's skepticism is resolved only when Hal promises to

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 will wear a garment all of blood,
And stain my favors in a blood mask,
Which, washed away, shall scour my shame with it (3.2.132-137).

Hal is able to convince Henry IV of his humility through martial imagery. He imagines bathing in the enemy's blood, cleansing himself of vice by taking part in the calculated

killing of another. The resulting bloodshed is promoted by Henry IV, who rebukes Hal by calling attention to his “vassal fear, / Base inclination, and the start of spleen,” which he imagines “To fight against me under Percy’s pay, to dog his heels and curtsy at his frowns / To show how much thou art degenerate” (3.2.124-129). But it is evident from their discussion that bloodshed is held as a virtue, ironically giving weight to many of the criticisms levelled against Henry IV for violently usurping the crown from Richard II. And it would give weight to Hal’s calculated violence, except that Hal has so effectively transformed the vices of his character into virtues through his use of a persona that his similarities to Bolingbroke remain hidden.³⁸

The parable of the prodigal son is embedded within the patriarchal culture of early modern England. This culture was strongly dependent on patrilineal succession. Much of *1* and *2 Henry IV* is concerned with Hal’s own succession, and the danger that he will not be ready to reaffirm control over the state. This danger is exacerbated by civil war, which divides the state against itself. In order for Hal to take control of the state, he needs to suppress internal dissent against the authority of the king, and this requires his achievement of a new masculine ideal.

Niccolò Machiavelli, who was no stranger to civil conflict, recognized the need for rulers who understood control. In his conduct book, *The Prince*, dedicated to Lorenzo de’ Medici, he instructs the young noble in the art of politics. Around the midway mark of the book, Machiavelli makes an important assessment. He states that

³⁸ It is possible that the Boar’s Head Inn offers Hal a way of distancing himself from Henry IV. As Henry IV’s firstborn son, his body natural is presumably thought of as more or less identical to his father’s. By physically distancing himself from his father, Hal can circumvent speculation that he will struggle with the same shortcomings once king.

[a] ruler [...] should have no other objective and no other concern, nor occupy himself with anything else except war and its methods and practices [...] And it is of such efficacy that it not only maintains hereditary rulers in power but very often enables men of private status to become rulers. On the other hand, it is evident that if rulers concern themselves more with the refinements of life than with military matters, they lose power. The main reason why they lose it is their neglect of the art of war; and being proficient in this art is what enables one to gain power. (50)

Machiavelli's portrait of the ideal ruler immediately suggests Percy as a candidate, but his use of the word "war" does not seem to entail a martial ideal. Rather, he argues that peace is often preferable to open war, and that war for the ideal ruler is often a struggle against how his people perceive him. Elsewhere, he advises keeping "the people entertained with feasts and spectacles. And since every city is divided into guilds or family groups, he should pay due attention to these groups, meeting them from time to time, and performing acts that display his own affability and munificence." (77). Hal is clearly the better example of a Machiavellian prince.

Barbara Spackman argues that "throughout his life, and throughout the various genres of his work, Machiavelli saw relations of power and autonomy through often dramatically gendered lenses. In this respect," she continues, "he belongs to a long tradition of Western thought for which gender is a primary means of representing relations of power and subordination" (236). Keeping this in mind, Machiavelli's preoccupation with the control of *fortuna* through *virtù* should be understood as the

control over masculinity. Spackman argues that Machiavelli drew on the medieval notion of Fortune, “a two-faced cruel, and violent goddess who inflicts harsh blows upon men” (224).³⁹ By contrast, “Machiavelli’s *virtù* is a densely weighted term that departs from Christian virtue to encompass a range of qualities from boldness and decisiveness to shrewdness and foresight” (225). The idea, according to Spackman, is not to do away with *fortuna* but to transform it, since “good laws make good fortune” (224). Machiavelli offers insight into this near the end of *The Prince*, when he argues that “fortune is a woman, and if you want to control her it is necessary to treat her roughly” (85). Spackman notes this “moment in *The Prince* when the Latin *vir*, man, behind the Italian *virtù* steps forth most virulently, and the relation between men and their circumstances is most starkly gendered and sexualized” (226-227). She, following Hannah Pitkin, suggests that by comparing fortune to a woman, Machiavelli sets up “a challenge to the masculinity of its readers—perhaps specifically Lorenzo de’ Medici” (227). The challenge is to maintain control to the highest degree, and thereby rule a state as a man would a woman.

Hal’s effectiveness as a Machiavel is largely a result of his ability to adapt to specific situations. As I have attempted to show, this was a characteristic lacking in Falstaff and Percy. For Spackman, “Machiavelli understands fortune to be the consequence of men’s inability to change their character with the times” (228). Several examples of Hal’s *virtù* should reveal what separates his brand of masculinity from those of others.

³⁹ Compare this to Bakhtin’s comment, quoted in chapter 1, as “[t]he living essence of the grotesque is precisely to present contradictory and double-faced fulness of life” (62). Mutual abuse, a feature of the egalitarianism prompted by the carnival spirit and festive worldview, might be perceived as cruelty. The point is that Falstaff represents exactly what Hal is attempting to control.

After discovering Falstaff “Fast asleep behind the arras” of the Inn (*IH4* 2.4.482), Hal directs Peto, who “*searcheth his pocket and findeth certain papers*” (2.4.484). The papers include a list, which Peto reads:

“*Item: a capon, 2 shillings, two pence. Item: sauce, four pence. Item: sack, two gallons, 5 shillings, eight pence. Item: anchovies and sack after supper, two shillings, six pence. Item: bread, ob.*” (2.4.487-490).

This provides Hal with the opportunity to comment, indignantly, on the “intolerable deal of sack” (2.4.492) consumed in great disproportion to “one halfpennyworth of bread” (2.4.491). No reason, however, is given for checking Falstaff’s pocket, nor for Peto checking it on Hal’s behalf. While there is no way to prove that Hal knew about the list beforehand, his interest in the contents of Falstaff’s pockets invites suspicion, and if Hal is a Machiavel then it would be out of character for him to check Falstaff’s pockets without warrant. A pattern also emerges in how Hal interacts with those around him. Generally, another character, such as Peto, will make a discovery and present it to the group. Hal then corrects it, pointing out its fault. Much of the time, Hal finds the fault in Falstaff, with the above example being one such case. Peto emblazons Falstaff’s body,⁴⁰ comparing the greatness of his capacity to consume to the greatness of his debts. Hal then points out the disproportion of those debts, and therefore the disproportion of Falstaff’s body. By pointing out Falstaff’s fault, Hal appears more honest, following a pattern which is explicitly outlined in his first soliloquy. Having shined brighter for correcting Peto, Hal appears more honest—a better earwitness. He has made his own offence against Falstaff a skill.

⁴⁰ Mark Johnston suggested to me in conversation that Poin’s reading was effectively a blazon.

After Falstaff and his company have decided to rob the treasury at Gads Hill, Poins suggests to Hal that they

Set forth before or after them and appoint them a place of meeting, wherein it is at our leisure to fail; and then will they adventure upon the exploit themselves, which they shall have no sooner achieved but we'll set upon them. (1.2.147-151).

When Falstaff returns and attempts to lie in order to save face from his cowardice, Hal, who is perfectly aware that Falstaff is lying, oscillates between invalidating Falstaff's lies and calling him names. "These lies are like their father that begets them," (2.4.206), Hal reasons, before outpouring on "thou clay-brained guts, thou knotty-pated fool, thou whoreson obscene greasy tallow-catch" (2.4.207-209). Only well after several oscillations does Hal tell Falstaff to "Mark now how a plain tale shall put you down. Then did we two set on you four, and, with a word, outfaced you from your prize" (2.4.233-235). Despite being "a plain tale," Hal's own duplicity was a condition of his truth-telling. With attention directed towards Falstaff, Hal again shines brighter for having corrected a falsehood, while his own dishonesty is displaced by the appearance of superior honesty.

Hal and Poins team up a second time, to "Put on two leathern jerkins and aprons, and wait upon [Falstaff] at his table as drawers" (2H4 2.3.148-149). Hal responds by contemplating his position "From a god to a bull: a heavy descension! It was Jove's case. From a prince to a prentice: a low transformation—that shall be mine. For in everything the purpose must weigh with the folly" (2.3.150-154). Hal evidently has in mind some ulterior motive which can match in weight the servitude that he will perform. When Hal

and Poins enter the Boar's Head Inn, Falstaff begins to brag at Hal's expense. Warning Hal that Falstaff "will drive you out of your revenge and turn all to a merriment / if you take not the heat" (2.4.269-270), Poins urges Hal to interrupt the performance. He does and, as before, appears more honest for doing so. From Falstaff's perspective, repeated disguises amplify the sense of *fortuna*, as well as the consequences of acting according to *virtù*. One can imagine what would happen if Falstaff, thinking him a servant, were to strike Hal.

Finally, having taken credit for killing Percy, Falstaff receives a knighthood before the events of 2 *Henry IV*. Despite his title, Falstaff struggles to take advantage of his position. He sends to "Master Dommelton about the satin for my short cloak and my slops" (2H4 1.2.26-27) but is denied, requiring, according to Robin, "better assurance than Bardolph" (1.2.28-29). He also despises his new page, claiming that "If the Prince put thee into my service for any other reason than to set me off, why then I have no judgement" (1.2.10-12). Granting Falstaff a knighthood is one of Hal's more sinister moves. It is a way of setting Falstaff apart, essentially, as if he were somehow naturally unfit to hold the title. With Robin beside him, Falstaff strikes a ridiculous figure, with his enormity exaggerated by Robin's smallness. Falstaff's fatness seems to explode his status, making a mockery of the distinction between nobility and common folk. Even his signature invites further abuse of the title, leading Poins to point out that he refers to himself as a knight "as oft as he has occasion to name himself" (2.2.97).

Falstaff seems unaware of Hal's Machiavellian control over his body, as is especially evident when he is banished. Rendered nearly speechless, Falstaff commands sympathy, despite his comic expectation that Henry V would welcome him into the court.

Yet Henry V is also sympathetic, appearing in the right for having banished his old drinking companion, and by extension his old wayward life. *2 Henry IV* ends with a sense that the world has returned to how it ought to be, and if one body needs to be banished to achieve this end then this is a worthwhile price to pay. The problem with this sense, which he is careful to conceal, is that Hal had it planned from the beginning, with the result that the end is not naturally but artificially constructed. On the one hand, this is a world that limits *fortuna* through *virtù* but as *Henry V* shows the world after Hal's ascension is as much pervaded by uncontrollable elements as the world that came before it. This implies that masculinity too is mere appearance, and that the control it offers benefits only those with authority.

Despite its sharing Machiavellian characteristics with several of Shakespeare's villains, Hal's strategic solidifying of power speaks more to a bitter truth about early modern politics than as a condemnation of his character. Schoenfeldt, following George Herbert, points out that "passions were to be feared particularly in those who have power to hurt, both because they tempted the powerful to abuse that power, and because in doing so the powerful subsequently endangered that power" (92). Schoenfeldt quotes Thomas Wright's observation that "it is particularly necessary for one in power 'to conceale, as much as thou canst, thy inclinations, or that passion thou knowest thy selfe most prone to follow...therefore great prudence wise men account it, for grave and great persons, not to lay their passions open to the censure of the world'" (92). Hal's ability to control himself and others is ideal for countering violence, and whatever his natural inclinations he virtuously fulfills his duty as king by removing uncertainties about where authority is derived. According to Schoenfeldt, "[s]ocial life demands the salutary

deceptions of civil conduct” (110). One such deception is masculinity, and *1* and *2 Henry IV* expose the problematic conflict between an individual man, embodied, and having appetites in excess of propriety, and the individual being socially responsible towards all men.

CONCLUSION

Hal's use of the prodigal son narrative situates Falstaff and Percy as models of manhood that threaten to divide the state rather than secure it. Falstaff and Percy pose obstacles to Hal's ascension, which demands a new model of masculinity. Aleandra Shepard notes that "[y]oung men were depicted as 'polluted' with 'the burning lustes of the carnall affections', which, combined with their own surfeit of heat, generated an explosive bodily concoction'" (26), so for Hal to expose the shortcomings of their ideals requires that he also overcome his own youthful physiology. Percy's death and Falstaff's banishment correspond to significant advances in Hal's apparent mastery over himself. From this new model of masculinity, by which Hal breaks from his youth, emerges a capacity to control both oneself and others. As masculinity in early modern England is principally constructed through the subordination of other men, Hal's achievement of kingship, which entailed during the period an absolute authority over members of the state, is an ideal of masculinity. The character of Henry V is the summation of a conflict between competing ideals of masculinity that combines aspects of them to form a new ideal.

Despite the appeal of masculine status, Falstaff's popularity reveals a longing for the experience of embodiment free from the highly regulated world of early modern England. To live according to the body at the expense of higher ideals is thus consolatory and, in a Bakhtinian sense, it regenerates a sense of self that is free from subordination. Propriety denies this sense of self, as exemplified by Falstaff's appearance at court. When he wittily responds to one of Henry IV's questions, Hal commands him to "Peace" (*1H4* 5.1.29), and his silence for the remainder of the scene implies that for the lowly Falstaff

to speak at court threatens those with authority by eliminating the real distance between those at the top of the hierarchy and those at the bottom of it. By admonishing Falstaff, Hal reaffirms both Falstaff's place at the bottom of the hierarchy and the distance between Falstaff and those at the top of the hierarchy. This distance disappears in the absence of propriety.

Percy, on the contrary, upholds this distance. His superior status is, however, mortally limited, as he comes to recognize in the moments before his death. Percy comes to the same end as Falstaff does, revealing honour as something constituted by the transient materiality of breath. The only way to produce honour is, ironically, to articulate it from the body, where it becomes susceptible to the will of others. Had Percy spent his time on other endeavours, such as attempting to produce an heir, his name would not depend on his epitaph, which Hal promises to degrade. Instead, however, he pursues a life with connection to mortality. In death, his name becomes fodder for self-interest.

The theory of two bodies also introduces the potential for masculine females, since, by displacing their female physiology, women can perform roles normally confined to the public world of men. It is especially interesting that in *1* and *2 Henry IV*, labour, a practice typical of manhood, is carried out not by male characters but by their boyish and female counterparts. Francis and Robin are two such examples of boy labourers, but more compelling examples of subverting conventional masculine boundaries are found in the female characters who inhabit the Boar's Head Inn. In her analysis of the "semiology of excretion," Paster points to Ursula, of *Bartholomew Fair*, as "a proprietor of the booth and supplier of the chamber pot, [who] crosses over the boundaries of gender to become the agent of culture, the instrument of patriarchy (37).

Ursula's subordinate status as a woman allows her access to the private space of the chamber pot, which remains concealed to both the characters within the play and to the audience.⁴¹ Although the physical trace of urine is out of view, as an agent of culture Ursula is tasked as its caretaker. As an instrument of patriarchy, she absolves her superiors of responsibility over the undesirable waste of the body. There appears a degree of autonomy, or agency, cultivated through possession of this knowledge, since it transgresses ideological distinctions between male and female places within society, while retaining a necessary function in upholding it.

Several of the women in *1* and *2 Henry IV* also act as agents of culture, and within specific environments they remain autonomous of their status as women. Among them are included Mistress Quickly, whose ownership of the Boar's Head Inn provides a meeting place for the unruly men of society. As a haven for general debauchery, and even criminality, she hides from public view its carnival underbelly. As with Ursula, Mistress Quickly takes offence at the notion that her "womanhood" is at stake as a proprietor. When Falstaff challenges her status as an honest woman, she responds that she is "an honest man's wife" (*IH4* 3.3.108), reaffirming her subordinate status to her husband, and thereby her female status within stratified society. But she is also masculine through her privileged position as caretaker of those unfit for civilized society. Even Doll Tearsheet, a

⁴¹ Stephen Pender has criticized this argument by pointing out Sir Thomas Erskine, who was Groom of the Stool for King James, as an example of males overseeing chamber pots. Paster, in her discussion on this topic, draws on Elias's argument "that the rules of hierarchical society allowed the great to expose their bodies before their inferiors without shame or self-consciousness precisely because the knowing gaze of their inferiors did not count socially" (32). She finds in *Twelfth Night's* Malvolio's misreading of Olivia's letter a "presumptive familiarity with Olivia's manner of producing bodily waste, knowing *her* great P's, [which] enacts a narrative revealing his compulsory inferiority of rank" (31). Erskine, as an inferior to King James, fulfills a masculine role in one sense through his proximity and favour to the king; but he also performs a position subordinate to the king, and is thus feminized in another sense. Ursula is no different, except by degree of social status, since she gains masculine authority by upholding patriarchal society, and is also, in another sense, subordinate within that society because of her sex and her low social status.

prostitute that inhabits the Inn, defends her propriety as an instrument of patriarchy, while reaffirming her masculine oversight of the carnal body. When Falstaff invites Pistol to use her body for sex, she invokes her autonomy by asserting herself as “meat for your master” (2.4.108), not only denying Falstaff’s authority over her body but pointing out his inferior status. These women are portrayed as having two bodies: their female body and a masculine double. As proprietors over their own bodies or the bodies of others, they perform privileged roles that subordinate men to them.

Despite their ability to take on masculine roles, women remained severely limited by their female physiology, as the character of Lady Percy reveals. Lady Percy performs a masculine double by reminding her husband of his domestic responsibilities, referring to herself as “A banished woman from my Harry’s bed” (2.3.34). However, within the domestic sphere her ability to perform masculinity is limited, and she remains, in Percy’s words, “Harry Percy’s wife” (2.3.101). Moreover, without an heir, Percy’s death also extinguishes Lady Percy’s public authority. She laments that her womanly status has not

[...] length of life enough
To rain upon remembrance with mine eyes,
That it may grow and sprout as high as heaven
For recordation to my noble husband. (2.4.26-29)

Lacking the virility of a man, Lady Percy can no longer hope to have a voice, and, after speaking these final lines, she does not reappear for the rest of the play.

Nonetheless, the subversive function of masculinity was occasionally available to women. As a construction largely conditioned by social status, masculinity can be performed by whomever is capable of the public subordination of other men. As

earwitnesses, these women ensured the stability of the state, as well as protected themselves, or at least attempted to, against dangers to their reputation, forming for themselves ideals of masculinity that allowed them to function as members of society.

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VITA AUCTORIS

Nicholas was born in Ottawa. After graduating high school in British Columbia, he returned to Ottawa and completed a B.A. in English at Carleton University. Pending successful completion of the M.A., he plans to pursue a Ph.D. in English at Queen's University.