

en R. Schneider, Jr
English/Emeritus
Lawrence University
Appleton, WI 54912

ben.r.schneider@lawrence.edu
October 13, 1995
June 9, 1996
April 21, 1997

Work in progress

Chapter 4 of Shakespeare's Morals:

Henry IV, 1 & 2: The Education of a Prince

In Act III of Henry IV, part 1, the King calls Prince Hal to account in these terms:

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

Hal replies respectfully that, granted that some charges are true, his father has been listening to false reports. The King's answer con-tains the following lines

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

On the other hand the weak and unpopular King Richard

Mingled his royalty with cap'ring fools,
Had his great name profaned with their scorns. . . .
And in that very line, Harry, standest thou,
For thou hast lost thy princely privilege
With vile participation. (3.2.11-86)

The Virtue of Affability

There is a real question, however, when you look at the royalty manuals, whether making rare and lofty appearances is good counsel either, and whether it isn't Hal who is on the right course for suc-cessful kingship. Henry's formula jibes well with our modern demo-cratic idea of kingship as a high and mighty pageant designed to intimidate the people and keep them under subjection, but does it work? The moralists favored a less haughty approach. Both Cicero and Seneca quote the following anonymous tyrant's brag:

"Let them hate, if only they fear."

But hatred leads to repression and repression leads to more hatred in case after case until the people rise up and kill their

tormentor; an ideal sovereign earns the love of his people. Elyot recommends "affability" to his "Governour," for it

is of a wonderfull efficacie or power in procurynge loue. And it is in sondry wise, but mooste proprely, where a man is facile or easie to be spoken unto. . . . Contrary wise, men vehemently hate them that haue a proude and [haughty] countenance.

Being approachable, Elyot holds, is a defence against flatterers who inevitably, having selfish motives, create a false image of reality in the ruler's mind, as they do in King Lear. Cicero says that of all reasons why men obey a leader, "none is better adapted to secure influence and hold it fast than love; nothing is more foreign to that end than fear." Affability is beautifully defined in the following anecdote of Queen Victoria in Mrs Delaney's diary: (Mrs. D. was asked to stand by with her famous needlework during the Queen's visit to the Duchess of Portland.)

I took that time to take a breath and sit down quietly in the dining room; when they returned the Queen sat down and called me to her to talk about the chenille work, praising it much more than it deserved, but with a politeness that could not fail of giving pleasure, and indeed her manners are most engaging, there is so much affability blended that it is hard to say whether one's respect or love predominates.(151)

It's what Diana does so much better than Charles, and Kennedy so much better than Nixon. If, as Elyot lays down, affability had an important intelligence-gathering function for Governours and if love fosters more cooperation than fear, is Hal's "participation" as "vile" as his father says? Is he not, in his dealings with his companions in the stews, more of a detached observer than a vile participator? Lord Warwick, a trusted advisor in Part 2 of the Henry IV, defends Hal against his dying father's fears for the happiness of England once Hal becomes king and his "headstrong riot hath no curb."

My gracious lord, you look beyond him quite:
The Prince but studies his companions
Like a strange tongue, wherein, to gain the language,
'Tis needful that the most immodest word
Be look'd upon and learnt, which once attain'd,
Your Highness knows, comes to no further use
But to be known and hated. (4.4.67-73)

He studies his companions as one studies a language. One learns all the dirty words, though in practice one never uses them. Hal is never "vile" himself; he is an amused and critical observer of other's vileness. His performance in the episode in Part 1 in which Flastaff and companions rob a packtrain and are robbed in turn by the disguised Hal and Poin is typical: clearly he only wanted to see what Falstaff would do when confronted with his arrant cowardice. It cannot be denied that, while enjoying Falstaff's brilliant evasions, Hal was also exploring the depths of his bottomless depravity. In support of Warwick's thesis in Part 2 we also have Hal's rejoinder to Falstaff's panegyric of himself in Part 1, ending with the

prophetic words, "Banish plump Jack and banish all the world:"
"I do, I will," says Hal.

Hal's detachment

Though he does stave off the Sherriff by vouching for Falstaff, he never really collaborates emotionally with Falstaff. In fact, given the high standards of friendship in the Renaissance, Falstaff cannot qualify as Hal's friend, since both parties must be virtuous to begin with, and be compatible many other ways, like Bassanio and Antonio of *The Merchant of Venice*, or the legendary Damon and Pythias. For example, Hal could not easily lay down his life for a man who would under no circumstances reciprocate. It's hard to distinguish affectionate banter from insult, but when Falstaff ends a long complaint about the harrassment of brigands by "old father antic the law" concluding, "Do not thou, [Hal,] when thou art king, hang a thief," Hal answers abruptly, "No, Thou shalt." Falstaff takes this as a "rare" jest and, with characteristic aplomb, pretends that he would enjoy the work and make a big profit from the victims' clothes. But associating a man with the gallows in any way is insulting, and the hangman is even more despicable than the hanged one. (The hangman in *Measure for Measure* is called "Abhorson.") This is only one of many instances in which the sybaritic Falstaff shamelessly turns Hal's patent insult into an ingratiating joke. Among his other great talents, he is one of the best grovelers in Shakespeare.

Falstaff and discord

Hal begins the much discussed soliloquy in which he swears off lowlife and predicts the impact the image of his true self will have on the public when they see it, with the words "I know you all." What does he know about about his lowlife companions? He knows that Falstaff and friends are a typical result of a country whose king's throne is insecure and the insecurity trickles down, and weakens the King's peacekeeping apparatus. The best, like Hotspur, choose this time to rebel, and the worst, like Falstaff, make the high roads unsafe for commerce. Falstaff is "out of all compass" in fact and in metaphor. Falstaff is perforce, as Hal says, a "tun" of "Vice" and "Iniquity" (2.4.448, 453-4). Bishop Hall had observed his type closely, as his acute Character of The Unthrif testifies:

He ranges beyond his pale, and lives without compass. His expense is measured, not by ability, but will. His pleasures are immoderate, and not honest. A wanton eye, a liquorish tongue, a gamesome hand have impoverished him. His senses are too much his guides and his purveyors; and appetite is his steward. He is an impotent servant to his lusts, and knows not to govern either his mind or his purse. (123-4)

The King as Fount of Justice

Paradoxically, Falstaff also symbolizes the effect of peace on character. For if war is the only training ground of manliness and virtue, what is peace? Yes, it's a breeder of effeminacy and vice. Falstaff's effeminacy is signified mainly by his cowardice, the worst of his emasculating self-indulgences.

Sixteenth-century statecraft favored war as a good means of flushing out a country's riffraff, who would immediately become soldiers eager for booty and ready for any chance to get rich quick. (Hale??) Undeniably this is why Falstaff's likes war so much, besides the high frequency of maidenheads. So he is a symptom both of a weak throne and of an effeminizing peace. What does Hal learn from him? The need for a king who exemplifies and enforces justice in the land, and who sets an example of virtue for all to see and emulate. Looking through the lens of early modern statecraft, we see that Falstaff's function is to teach Hal such things.

The importance of justice in the Hal/Henry V plays has been overlooked in critical studies, probably for the same reason I suggested in my treatment of the subject in King Lear: our intellegentia is more inclined to compassion than justice. But Shakespeare made up the Falstaff material out of whole cloth and he must have had a reason. Of course he needed some of his famous low-life comic relief, but why this particular low-life? I propose that it gave him an opportunity to dramatize the part played by justice in the happiness of a common-wealth. We have already seen how much Falstaff hates justice. He rails against it all the time. In each of the three plays Shakespeare introduces material not in his sources to show the need for and the way to justice. In Plutarch, rulers get highest marks for three things: leadership in war, the maintenance of justice, and the erection of public buildings; for example, Alexander excels in war, Lycurgus in justice, and Pericles in buildings. Elyot, in his Governour is ecstatic in his praises of Henry VII (who ended the War of Roses at Bosworth Field, where Richard III would have given his kingdom for a horse), because

nat withstandynge his longe absence out of this realme, the disturbance of the same by sondrye seditions amonge the nobilitie, Civile warres and battles, wherin infinite people were slayne, besyde skirmishes and slaughters in the private contentions and factions of divers gentilmen, the lawes layde in water (as is the proverbe), affection and avarice subduinge justice and equitie; yet by his moste excellent witte, he in fewe yeres, nat onely broughte this realme in good ordre and under due obedience, revived the lawes, [and] advanced justice.

In Part 1, justice is fobbed off in the episode of the sherrif. In Part 2, one of biggest sources of fun is Mistress Quickly's attempts to make Falstaff pay the huge bill he has run up at her public house, and her calling in the bailiff to that end. Again justice is fobbed off. Certainly the climax of the play is Hal's rejection of Falstaff upon becoming king. Our modern victimologists, who also suffer somewhat from the "real people" syndrome, think that this banishment was a terrible thing to do to an old friend, something like snubbing your old associates when you get admitted to the best country club. But Falstaff is a conceit, not a person. He is rank disorder, and this first act of Hal's kingship announces his determination to give justice the upper hand in the nation of England. It is of a piece with his interview with the Chief Justice, who comes to meet him shaking his head and sure that his tenure is ended. He has good cause to believe so because he once sent Hal to jail, and he tells the story (lifted piecemeal from Elyot's Governour),

of how Hal, to rescue a servant of his from prosecution, raged into court and ordered the Justice to release his man. On being refused, he threatened to remove the accused by force, at which the Justice had him seized and sent to jail, declaring his duty to the King Hal's father. When the Justice reported his action to the king, Henry praised him for his impartiality, and announced himself most fortunate to have such a fine man on the bench.

Well, much to the Chief Justice's surprise, Hal, now King Henry in his own right, instead of banishing him from grace forever, praised him warmly more for having taken strong measures against his unruliness, and reappointed him Chief Justice on the spot, with orders to keep up the good work. I don't think Shakespeare lifted this bit of history from Elyot simply because it was there. The whole point of the first two plays taken together is that he did not banish the judge; he banished his antithesis Falstaff (as he knew he would in act 2 of Part 1). If you must think of Falstaff as a real person and not a showcase for all the most interesting vices, then it was a most cruel thing to do. But you can't say he hadn't been warned.

This coldness toward "friends" escalates in Henry V when Bardolph steals a pax from a church just after Henry has decreed that there will be no looting on penalty of death. The King oversees the execution in person??, because it is no trivial matter. Certainly, but why did it have to be dear old Bardolph? Again, the fact that it is a companion is the whole point.

Plutarch tells the story of Lucius Junius Brutus, ancestor of Caesar's assassin, who became Rome's leader after putting down the conspiracy of the Tarquins. It was discovered that his own two sons had participated in conspiracy. Brutus ordered their heads stricken off??, and sat imperturbably in the Forum to see it done. For this magnificent sacrifice of self-interest to justice, this elder Brutus goes down in history.

Shakespeare had prepared us for Henry's no-nonsense approach to justice at the beginning of Henry V, when he made the Bishops certify that his cause against France was just and when he summarily sentenced to death the traitorous lords Cambridge, Scroop, and Grey, who had just been arrested. All three had received his favors and one was his personal confidant.

But prior intimacy counts for nought when justice is at stake, "For," says Cicero "[a man] lays aside the role of friend when he assumes that of judge." The first thing John of Salisbury thinks of when he turns his attention to justice in Policracticus (12th century) is this statement of Cicero's. Of course. When friendship functions in a courtroom we call it corruption. Hal must be severe with Scroop, Falstaff, and Bardolph to show his justices and enforcers right down to the bottom of the ladder that he will have no patience with favoritism or any sort. As Lily B. Campbell, has well documented??, in Shakespeare's "Histories"; Mirrors of Elizabethan Policy, the undue influence of the king's favorites was a main cause of discontent in the reigns of Edward II, Richard II, and Elizabeth I (where Essex's influence was the bone of contention). As we have seen, because flatterers interpose themselves between the ruler and his people and in effect usurp

his title, my ethical authorities rail bitterly against them. It is therefore no wonder that the peers of the realm were greatly troubled at Hal's accession. The Bolingbroke family would never have gained the crown but for the ascendancy of unpopular favorites over Richard II. Under the circumstances Henry's banishment of Falstaff at his accession was necessary and inevitable, as also his punishment of Scroop and Bardolph. "Ye sit not [in the courts of justice]," King James tells his son, "for rewarding of friends or servants, nor for crossing of contemners, but only for doing of Justice." (39)

Hotspur: false honor

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to our understanding of Hal is that we disapprove of war, whereas from ancient times until Elizabeth's, war was the sole focus and occupation of the great ones, and a main topic of classical literature. Not engineering, rock music, medicine, football, or physics, but war. The principal history book was Plutarch's Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans, leaders of men most of whose fame was based on military achievement, and its purpose was to offer these worthies for comparison in terms of the standard virtues and vices, as desirable or undesirable models for imitation. This is the gist of Amiot's address to his readers in the French translation of Plutarch from which Thomas North crafted the English translation that Shakespeare used.

[History, he says] is a certaine rule and instruction, which by examples past, teacheth us to judge of things present, and to foresee things to come: so as we may knowe what to like of, and what to follow, what to mislike, and what to eschew. It is a picture, which (as it were in a table) setteth before our eyes the things worthy of remembrance that have bene done in olde time by mighty nations, noble kings and Princes, wise governors, Val liant Capteines, and persons renowned for some notable qualitie, representing unto us the maners of straunge nations, the lawes and customes of old time, the particular affaires of men, their consultations and enterprises, the meanes that they have used to compasse them withall, and their demeaning of them selves when they were comen to the highest, or thrown downe to the lowest degree of state. [Therefore] it is not possible for any case to rise either in peace or warre, in publike or private affaires, but that the person which shall have diligently red, well conceived, and throughly remembred histories, shall find matter in them whereto take light and counsell wherby to resolve himselfe to take a part, or to give advice unto others, how to choose in doubtfull and dangerous cases that, which may be for their most profit and in time to find out to what poynt the matter will come if it be well handled; and how to moderate him selfe in prosperity and how to cheer up and beare him selfe adversities. These things it doth with much greater grace, efficacie and speede, than the bookes of morall Philosophie doe: forasmuch as examples are of more force to move and instruct, than are the arguments and proofs of reason, or their precise precepts, bi cause examples be the very formes of our deedes and accompanied with all circumstances. Whereas reasons and demonstrations are generall, and tend to the prooffe of things, and to the beating of them into

understanding: and examples tende to the showing of them in practise and execution, because they doe not only declare what is to be done, but also worke a desire to do it, as well in respect of a certaine naturall inclination which all men have to follow examples, as also for the beawtie of vertue, which is of such power, that wheresoever she is seene, she maketh herselfe to be loved and liked. . . .

In a society ruled by accident and death, history is the repository of a man's reputation, the "immortal part" so precious to Cassio (see above, p.???) Thus, like civil lawes, it rewards and punishes, but with more effect:

[For it] hath his maner of punishing the wicked, by the reproch of everlasting infamies wherewith it defaceth their remembrance, which is a great meane to withdraw them from vice, who otherwise would be lewd & wickedly disposed. Likewise on the contrarie parte, the immortal praise and glorie wherewith it rewardeth welldoers, is a very lively and sharpe spurre for men of noble corage and gentlemanlike nature, to cause them to adventure upon all maner of noble and great things. For bookes are full of examples of men of high corage and wisdom, who for desire to continue remembraunce of their name, by the sure and certain recorde of histories, have willing yeilded their lives to the service of the common weale, spent their goods, suffered infinite peines both of bodie and minde in defence of the oppressed, in making common buildings, in establishing of lawes and govern ments, and in the finding out of artes and sciences necessarie for the maintenance and ornament of mans life: for the faithfull registering thereof, the thanks is due to histories. And al though true vertue seeke no reward of her commendable doings like a hireling, but contenteth her selfe with the conscience of her well doing: yet notwithstanding I am of opinion, that it is good and meete to draw men by all meanes to good doing, and good men ought not to be forbidden to hope for the honor of their vertuous deedes, seeing that honor doth naturally accompanie vertue, as the shadow doth the bodie. (xv-xvii)

For Montaigne, speaking of Tacitus, history "is a seminary of morall and a magazine of pollitique discourses, for the provision and ornament of those that possesse some place in the managing of the world." Elyot (280) quoting Cicero, says it "is the light of virtue." This, is the light in which Hal, with Shakespeare's help, sees himself. And Shakespeare's histories, too, must be understood as lessons in morality. But lessons in Amiot's morality, in which war is the omnipresent and necessary testing ground of virtue, not yours or mine in which lethal aggression is a paramount vice. And there were of course lots of wars; Europe was never without war from 1400 to 1600. (Hale) Throughout her reign Elizabeth's armies waged war, in the Low Countries, France, Scotland, and Ireland, spending more than 3 million pounds. (Campbell 200)

To stand on the same ground as Prince Hal, the first thing we must do is change our attitude toward war. Our life-oriented society has much more to lose by war than Shakespeare's, in which death was always imminent. Having 25 years more life-expectancy than they, we have 25 more precious years to lose by an early

death in battle, and even more if we compare with the common soldier from the starving countryside or the disease-ridden city. But with death imminent, war is as good a prospect as any for earning a place in posterity's note-book: "Your great-grandfather died for his country at Agincourt." Montaigne declares flatly

Life must be military. . . . We [have] nothing to doe but with paine. . . . And if it were not so, who then hath brought ver tue, valour, force, magnanimitie, and resolution into credit? Where shall they play their part if there be no more paine de fied? . . . If a man must not lie on the hard ground, armed at all assaies, to endure the heat of the scorching Sunne, to feed hungerly upon a horse or an asse, to see himselfe mangled and cut in peeces, to have a bullet pluckt out of his bones, to suffer incisions, his flesh to be stitcht up, cauterized, and searched, all incident to a

martiall man; how shall we purchase the advan tage and preheminance which we so greedily seek after, over the vulgar sort? (1.313-4)

Montaigne wrote this in his younger days, but though he mellowed in many respects, he was even fonder of war in what he called his "old age" (his fifties):

No profession or occupation is more pleasing then the military; A profession or exercise both noble in execution (for the stron gest, most generous and prowdest of all vertues, is true valour) and noble in it's cause. No utility, either more just or univer sall then the protection of the repose or defence of the great nesse of ones country. The company and dayly conversation of so many noble, young, and active men, cannot but bee well-pleasing to you; the dayly and ordinary sight of so divers tragicall spec tacles; the liberty and uncontroled freedome of that artelesse and unaffected conversation, masculine and ceremonillesse maner of life; the hourelly variety of a thousand ever changing and differ ing actions; the courageous and minde stirring harmony of warlike musicke, which at once entertaineth with delight and enflameth with longing, both your eares and your minde; the imminent and matchlesse honour of that exercise; yea the very sharpnesse and difficulty of it. Who cares if sudden death ensues?

As a voluntary Souldier or adventurous Knight you enter the lists, the bands, or particular hazards, according as your selfe judge of their successes or importance; and you see when your life may therein be excusably employed.

"Pulchrumque mori suc currit in armis." [It's beautiful to die in arms] (Virgil, Aeneid 2.317)

As Seneca said, "Vivere, mi Lucilli, militare est: (Epistle xcvi) -- 'Friend mine, to live is to goe on warre-fare.' (Montaigne 3.411-13; cf. De Officiis 215).

At the beginning of Henry IV (part 1) we may imagine that Hal is pondering where and when "his life [not likely to be long] may be excusably employed." In his station, an early modern youth of the ruling classes had no other choice than to offer his life to

the fortunes of war. The question was not whether to seek honor on the battlefield, but when. Hall's "Truly Noble Man" is "equally addressed to war and peace; and knows not more how to command others, than how to be his country's servant in both." Castiglione's *Courtier* (translated 1569), the leading Renaissance authority on manners, starts with the premise that there is no other ticket of admission to polite society than demonstrated courage in battle. (Castiglione, 274)

We also make the mistake of responding to the characters as if they were real people living in our time. Thus we totally miss their iconographic force, making all over again that same mistake of reading Shylock as a victim. Only here it is the lovable clown Falstaff who is so treated. So well does his life-oriented anti-war philosophy match ours that we cannot resist making him a flower child. When Hal tells Falstaff, "Thou owest God a Death," his fat friend answers, "'Tis not due yet." (5.1.126) So well does this response agree with our sensibilities that one recent critic (Alexander Leggat in *Shakespeare's Historical Drama* 1988) argues that Falstaff's sham death and resurrection at the battle of Shrewsbury

signifies a victory over time, fact, and mortality itself; it illustrates his ability . . . to live on his own terms. We recognize the limits of those terms, but we respect their authority. (93)

We radical individualists, ready to march in protest at the drop of a hat to protect our right to do as we see fit, certainly do respect Falstaff's terms, but it seems impossible that the early modern men and women who composed Shakespeare's audience would ever have had any respect for them. T. S. Eliot once observed that the profusion of jokes about horns in Elizabethan drama does not indicate that Elizabethans took marriage lightly. On the contrary, he thought, the topics that give rise to our favorite jokes are the ones the deal with our greatest fears. Certainly being named a coward is another greatest fear of the Elizabethans, and that's why Falstaff is so funny. He's similar to a bold-faced cuckold. But since his vice is so familiar and commonplace--even if never caught in the act, we must all confess to fear of death-- he, unlike Shylock is a lovable clown: sympathy, perhaps--there's some coward in us all and that's why we laugh-- but respect, never. There are two kinds of comic: the Jack Benny kind, who makes us laugh at him; and the Groucho Marx kind, who makes us laugh with him at others. We are reading Falstaff as a Groucho, when he's actually a Jack Benny. But in Elizabethan terms, applauding Falstaff's cowardice as "a victory over time and mortality" is as unthinkable as applauding a racist today.

Cicero's *De Officiis*, the pre-eminent moral authority of the Renaissance, divides morality into the same four virtues as Plato does: Wisdom, Justice, Courage, and Temperance. (17,51,155,373) Without Courage, no man may be Wise, Just, or Temperate, because acting in accord with any of these may entail the endurance of loss, pain, suffering, or death. The most astonishing feats of courage are recorded in Stoic writings. There was, for example, the German captive who, rather than become a slave, rammed his head against a wall so hard as to kill himself instantly. And, of course, there was the famous Regulus, a Roman captive of the

Carthaginians, who was sent to Rome with peace terms, on the understanding that he would return to Carthage and that if the terms were rejected, he would be tortured to death in the worst way known; they were, he did, and they did. What's more, he advised the Senate not to accept the terms. He is often called to mind in Seneca and Cicero. The question "Should Regulus have returned to Carthage?" was disputed regularly in examinations for the Bachelor's degree Cambridge at least until Wordsworth's time. This is the kind of discourse in which Shakespeare's Falstaff participates as a horrible example.

However, it is Falstaff to whom Shakespeare gives the honor of stating the moral of the play, when, after playing dead on the battlefield, he rationalizes that "the better part of valor is discretion." (5.4.119-20) As usual, he is exactly right in theory, though nowhere close in practice. All the best authorities support him; in theory, that is. For this maxim goes right back to Plato, who defines courage as the "spirited part of [our] nature [which] holds fast to the injunctions of reason about what [we] ought or ought not to be afraid of." (Cornford 140) Falstaff, for example, ought to be more afraid of lying, cheating, stealing, and running away, than of standing his ground. Seneca reiterates Plato's rational curb in slightly different terms: "bravery is . . . the knowledge which enables us to distinguish between that which is evil and that which is not." (2.303)

Falstaff's maxim also identifies the play's main structural principle: a three-way comparison in which his character illustrates discretion without valor. Hotspur illustrates valor without discretion, and Hal combines both. (Campbell and Grady) The three are usually compared on a scale of honor, with Hotspur at the top, Falstaff at the bottom, and Hal in the middle. Thus, since Hotspur is a bad representative of honor, Falstaff is justified in rejecting it and Hal's pragmatism is read as the scheming of a Machiavel. That's wishful criticism deriving from irrelevant modern attitudes to honor, war, and monarchy.

Falstaff's misappropriation of the "better part" is relatively harmless compared to Hotspur's utter disregard of it. Although he appeals to some critics nowadays as a romantic figure, a last gasp of chivalry "who did it his way," he is actually a classic example of the loose cannon. Cicero knows him well:

The more notable a man is for his greatness of spirit, the more ambitious he is to be the foremost citizen. . . . But when one begins to aspire to pre-eminence, it is difficult to preserve that spirit of fairness which is absolutely essential to justice. The result is that such men do not allow themselves to be constrained either by argument or by any public and lawful authority But the greater the difficulty, the greater the glory. (67)

And again:

There are many . . . who place the achievements of war above those of peace, so one may find many to whom adventurous, hot headed counsels seem more brilliant and more impressive than calm and well-considered measures. We must, of course,

never be guilty of seeming cowardly and craven in our avoidance of danger; but we must also beware of exposing ourselves to danger needlessly. Nothing can be more foolhardy than that. . . . It is . . . only a madman who, in a calm, would pray for a storm. (83)

Hotspur's favorite word, "honor," is a slippery one, because it may mean either "worth" or "glory." Hotspur, apparently unaware of the distinction, thinks like an athlete. He is a collector of conquests, victories, trophies, awards: he needs and desires honor in the sense of glory. He refuses to give up his prisoners (1.1.92) because that would diminish his honor. But "honour," says Seneca, "permits of no addition." It can't be stockpiled: you either have it or you don't: it's a state of character. (Epistles 2.9. Essays 3.41; Epistles 2.127, 3.299, 435; Montagne 1.36, 331; Hall 119)

Hotspur may be to some extent forgiven, for it is such an easy mistake to make that King Henry himself makes it, when he wishes, at the beginning of Part 1 that Hotspur were his son instead of Hal. (1.1.91). But Hal has Hotspur's character dead to rights:

I am not yet of Percy 's mind, the Hotspur of the north, he that kills me some six or seven dozen of Scots at a breakfast, washes his hands, and says to his wife, "Fie upon this quiet life! I want work." "O my sweet Harry," says she, "how many hast thou kill'd today?" "Give my roan horse a drench," says he, and answers, "Some fourteen," an hour after; "a trifle, a trifle." (2.4.1??)

Is this the behavior of a paragon of honor, or that of a swaggering braggart?

Vices [says Seneca] creep into our hearts under the name of virtues, rashness lurks beneath the appellation of bravery, moderation is called sluggishness, and the coward is regarded as prudent; there is great danger if we go astray in these matters. (Epistles 1.295; see also 2.303, 3.387)

Plutarch records a great many examples of counterproductive rashness. Coriolanus, with whom Shakespeare sympathizes more than Plutarch does, is one such. Metellus, whose eagerness to win glory caused him to engage Hannibal under the worst possible circumstances, brought on the total rout of the legions under his command, is another. His fellow commander, Fabius Maximus, who did no more than occupy strategic positions as he followed Hannibal about Italy, was so slow to close with Hannibal that he was reviled as a coward in Rome, but at last destroyed the overly-extended Carthaginians and went down in history as the savior of his country. Valor by itself is a useless commodity. Therefore I reject the traditional thesis that Hotspur=honor, Falstaff=dishonor, Hal=something in between. Honor dwells only in Hal. Hotspur, merrily leading his army to certain death, is just a menace, however brave and merry he is.

Though Hotspur differs from Falstaff in the matter of courage, one thing the two have in common is bragging, a much greater offense in the days when virtue was more important than celebrity. Cicero is particularly contemptuous of the type of

person who "amid the derision of one's hearers" play[s] 'The Braggart Captain,'" (141) and Montaigne observes that "Custome hath made a mans speech of himselfe vicious, and obstinately forbids it in hatred of boasting. (2.62) Such a man, according to Bishop Hall,

is ever on the stage, and acts a still glorious part He is a Spanish soldier on an Italian theatre; a bladder full of wind, a skin full of words; a fool's wonder, and a wise man's fool. [He] loves to attempt great things, only because they are hard and rare; his actions are bold and venturous, and more full of hazard than use. . . . His purposes are measured, not by his ability, but his will; and his actions by his purposes. Lastly, he is ever credulous in assent; rash in undertaking; peremptory in resolving; witless in proceeding; and in his ending, miserable. (119-20)

The fact that Hotspur's outrageous vaunt, beginning "By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap,/To pluck bright honor from the pale-fac'd moon" (1.3.201-202), evoked only impatience from Worcester and Vernon perhaps indicates the way Shakspeare wants us to react. For indeed, a truly valiant man "talks little, and brags less." (Hall 96; see also Seneca Essays 3.509) Montaigne explains why: "I doe not thinke that any Spartane Citizen did boastingly glorifie himselfe for his valour, because it was a popular vertue in that nation. (Mont. 2.66) Just so no sensible football player would brag about his prowess in the locker room.

Hal: true honor

Hal doesn't brag about his prowess, but sinks it in apparent debauchery at the Boar's Head Tavern in East Cheap. I say "apparent," because he is certainly more of an observer and critic than a participator. He does tell his father in some highly-charged words (3.2.153-160) that he will redeem his good name on Percy's head, but that is not an empty brag; it is a "promise" and a "vow," (3.2.128, 160) that engages him in a fight to the death. Otherwise, it is Hal's silence about his abilities that most distinguishes him from Hotspur. In fact, there is no way to find out whether or not he has the capacity to defeat Hotspur than to wait and see. I will suggest that this silence has a moral dimension, but first, we must deal with Hal's much-discussed soliloquy at the end of act 1:

I know you all, and will a while uphold
The unyok'd humor of your idleness,
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted, he may be more wond' red at
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapors that did seem to strangle him.
If all the year were playing holidays,
To sport would be as tedious as to work;
But when they seldom come, they wish'd for come,
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.
So when this loose behavior I throw off

And pay the debt I never promised,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes,
And like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
I'll so offend, to make offense a skill,
Redeeming time when men think least I will.

(1.2.195-217)

Is this the revelation of a Machiavellian political scheme in which Hal cold-bloodedly poses as a dissolute ne'er-do-well in order to increase the public's amazement and delight when he subsequently puts on a show of reform? This is the consensus of the age of the anti-hero. (Leggatt 87-91; Greenblatt, *Negotiations* 41-7) Is it Shakespeare's way of preparing the audience for the improbable course of events that follows, an alternative sometimes suggested? (E.g., Leggatt 91; Holderness, *History*, 100-103.)

Or is it simply the kind of strategic planning that any public figure must undertake? Again the Stoics provide what I think is a definitive answer. This time it is Cicero, who devotes a good part of *De Officiis* to what we would call public relations, assuming that gaining the confidence of the public is necessary to effective leadership. In one passage he comes very close to stating Hal's own career plan:

The third of the three elements that constitute glory [charisma] was this: that men judge us worthy of holding public offices and grant us their affection at the same time. The general rule is that people admire everything they notice that is impressive or beyond their expectations. But when they become aware that certain individuals possess good qualities whose existence they did not suspect, then they feel a particular affection. (Edinger 36)

Hal's emphasis on "Redeeming time when men think least I will" raises the strong probability that *Henry IV Part 1* has been reading *De Officiis*. At any rate, Cicero's doctrine of expediency seems to be at the bottom of this soliloquy play, rather than some nefarious and underhanded plot. Let's admit that politics is an art, after all. It's no use for a politician to be a virtuous if the people don't know it. Plutarch's *Lives* is full of exemplary leaders who map out strategies for maximum public impact.

Consider what Hal's reform eventually entails and how Machiavellian it is: wounded, he refuses to leave the battle; then he forces the renowned Douglas to flee; and then he kills the most successful warrior in the land. Is there some duplicity here that I don't see? Is the Prince faking something? Is Hotspur taking a fall? Can we really say that his East Cheap shenanigans are just a background for reform? I find it difficult to believe that Hal is planning anything in this soliloquy. He simply realizes that he happens to be in a position where his reform can have the greatest possible positive impact. He tells the audience at this point because Shakespeare wants us

to start us wondering whether he can really pull it off.

This soliloquy also introduces an ethical parameter that further distinguishes Hal from Hotspur:

. . . when this loose behavior I throw off
And pay the debt I never promised,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes. (1.2.208-211)

The debt he has not promised to pay is the debt to his father and, as Prince, the debt to his country. How does one promise to be a good king? How does one even know whether he can do it at all? If one did promise, who would pay any attention? The proof of the pudding is in the eating. So the fact that he's not given his "word" enhances the degree to which he will "falsify men's [expectations]" if and when he does something promising. Here, I think, Hal raises a basic principle of Stoicism, that morality, as we have seen it in of Cordelia and Kent, consists in actions, not words.

Just before he fought Douglas and Hotspur, we find him bleeding so much that the king and Westmoreland urge him to leave the field, which he refuses to do. (5.4.1-9) That episode establishes his fortitude. Then, on the last two pages of the play, he does several things in rapid succession, to which we should give our full attention, because they form the final impression that Shakespeare wants to leave with us. First comes Falstaff, lugging Hotspur's body and claiming that he killed him. Hal says, "If a lie may do thee grace, / I'll gild it with the happiest terms I have." Then Hal reports to the king he has Douglas prisoner, and asks if he may have the honor of disposing of him. The king instantly grants the honor. Just as instantly Hal frees Douglas and gives the honor of telling him so to his younger brother John. Hal has now given away the honor of killing Hotspur, the honor of defeating Douglas, and the honor of freeing Douglas. And now Hotspur, who started all this by refusing to give up his prisoners, and who collects honors the way hunters collect trophies, is not only physically but morally dead.

By these generous deeds Hal has exemplified another great principle of Stoicism, the law of reciprocating benefits, Seneca's three graces dancing in a ring. According to Linda Levy Peck, in her recent book, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Stuart England*, reciprocity was the ground of political theory in Shakespeare's England, and it began with the crown, conceived of as the fountain of all good things, the "guarantor of justice and giver of favor" (12), the primer, so to say, of England's reciprocating pump. Keith Wrightson in *English Society, 1580-1680*, finds that reciprocity held the country together, vertically and horizontally. It is in giving away honor to foster social harmony that Hal exemplifies the discretion without which valor produces nothing but chaos and eternal night.

As we leave the theatre perhaps our mind turns to that excellent fellow Hotspur, lying dead at Hal's feet. It was really great, the way he joked with his darling wife and how he

put down that preten-tious ass Glendower. He had a no-nonsense approach. So what went wrong? He got so enthusiastic about the thought of fighting another war that Worcester and Vernon easily made him their tool. And when he lay there mortally wounded he realized that his whole life had been wasted, chasing after an illusion. For honor, fame, glory, whatever you call it, is one of those goods subject to fortune over which the individual has no control. Virtue is the only possession one cannot lose. And who owns Hotspur's precious glory now? Falstaff? Oh no.