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Prince Hal the Machiavel:

How-To Succeed in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV part I*

*“It is not titles that honor men, but men that honor titles.”*

 *-*Niccolo Machiavelli

The prologue to Christopher Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta* explored the thoughts of a Machiavellian archetype who stated, “I count religion but as a childish toy, and hold there is no sin but ignorance” (Marlowe, 10). Those lines, which discard the values of society, resonate with what the psychology and ideology of a Machiavel figure would exhibit. The ability to break away from society’s norms and ideals, such as religion, friendship, honor, or virtue opened gates to surviving and succeeding that were closed to those who held on to those values set up by society. I plan to examine Shakespeare’s *The History of* *Henry IV part I*,looking at the characters of Prince Hal, Hotspur, King Henry IV, and Falstaff in an attempt to demonstrate how Machiavellian qualities brought about the success of some characters, while those who dealt as “men” (Machiavelli, 127) and took hold of virtues or laws defined and enforced by their society, eventually failed to accomplish their goals. Since I plan to delve into societal norms and class struggles and then examine the ability of individuals such as Prince Hal to exploit those prescribed ideals to their benefit, I will open by analyzing Marxist theory and how it will be relevant in providing a framework and prospective for the play covered in this discourse.

***Understanding the Relationship between Power and Government***

The distribution of power and how it is used was a critical concept in developing Marxist theory. The idea of the bourgeoisie suppressing the proletariat by an established hegemony ran by a small percentage of upper-class aristocrats controlling and exploiting the lower-class was filled with the language of power and how it was used; it was the DNA that gave life to Marxist literary analysis and politics, and it is a very real part of actual society. Michael Foucault broke down the use of power into different stages, that of sovereign power and bio-power. In examining sovereign power, Foucault stated that the power of a sovereign was that of death or life. In other words, the sovereign’s right in controlling an individual was limited to exterminating that individual or allowing him or her to continue to live. This was a highly limited source of power, given that the individual maintained freedom over almost all areas of life. In sovereign power there was much left outside the control of the government: birth-rate, land space, mortality rate, and normalized knowledge were outside the governments control (Foucault, 244). This apparent freedom of the individual was further argued by Thomas Hobbes, who stated, “For if wee take Liberty in the proper sense, for corporall Liberty; that is to say, freedome from chains, and prison, it were very absurd for men to clamor as they doe, for the Liberty they so manifestly enjoy” (Taylor, 42). There is, however, an inherent issue with sovereign power and Hobbes argument and definition of liberty. Foucault himself later looked at the idea of liberty and determined that freedom must be looked at as a way to “understand how we have been molded in ways that certain things please us rather than others” (Taylor, 79). Foucault called this a change from sovereign power, which can only enforce death on a subject, to bio-power, which was “a matter of taking control of life and the biological processes of man-as-species and of ensuring that they are not disciplined, but regularized” (Foucault, 246-247). Bio-power was essentially the government extending its power beyond that of death or let live, and extending its reaches to include control over every individual by manifesting its intentions and ideals in the fields of medicine, education, judicial systems, and institutions of entertainment. Therefore, while Hobbes may have been shocked that a life without chains and prison would still be filled with violence, he does not consider that there were social chains which shaped and helped define society and how it behaves, which in turn, was shaped as the government saw fit since it has control over the institutions that mold society (Foucault, 244-247).

Keeping in mind that government guided societies through its extension into institutions that shape society, it was only natural that hegemonies prescribed the values that society would mirror (Dobie, 88). For example, American society today values being prompt and working hard to make money in hopes that doing so will move them up in life, although it generally does not. None the less, these values are promoted by the ruling classes (which make up the government) and, according to Karl Marx, ought to be opposed by the working class in order to bring about a change that fits for the working class. For the most part, however, individuals accepted what society upheld. Althusser, a contemporary of Marx, stated that the reason why the working class is not in constant rebellion was that they too embraced the prearranged value system through interpellation, where the working class was manipulated into accepting the ideology of the dominant class (Dobie, 88). Hence the working class in today’s society struggles endlessly trying to fulfill the values set up by the bourgeoisie. Meanwhile the bourgeoisie uses these abstract values to manipulate the lower classes, allowing the bourgeoisie to continue reaping the rewards of the proletariat’s labor. Marx claimed, “It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness” (Dollimore, 153), and since it was the elite government that shaped society and established the abstract ideals that were to be followed, it was no wonder why interpellation existed. Even in trying to be an individual, a person may find himself submitting to the institutions and values set up by the hegemony. For example, an individual may choose to yell profanity while running across a library as a way of expressing some personal outcry, but in choosing a library and more importantly the outcry that a certain individual is expressing is most certainly derived from an issue which has been in some way shaped by the society that that individual is a part of.

Another paradigm used by Marxist scholars was that of the concrete versus the abstract. According to Marx, reality was based on the material, since “it is not our philosophical or religious beliefs that make us who we are, for we are not spiritual beings but socially constructed ones” (Dobie, 91-92). Yet this was not what the hegemony placed on the pedestal. Returning to the above example, it is society that enforces being quite in libraries and churches, giving those institutions that promote the abstract (churches, schools, libraries, etc.,) a seemingly holy priority over the more concrete concerns of an individual. It was always the untouchable and subjectively definable qualities that were exalted by the hegemony and maintained by society. How do we define friendship? There is no definite answer as it will change determining the person asked. Yet love, friendship, honor, and faith hold high standing, even today, placing the individual who was attempting to deal with these abstracts in the secondary. This idea of accepting what society upheld was more prevalent in renaissance society. In helping to understand the psychology that dominated much of the Renaissance era, Dollimore states, “The paradigm of Christian essentialism presented the soul as metaphysically derivative and to this extent simply disallowed the idea of the autonomous” (Dollimore, 155). Christian essentialism was the template to which the soul must adhere to, barring the personal expressions of the individual, less it was acceptably Christian. The soul of the community was the primary concern, not the body of the individual. This was perhaps why, according to Walter Ulmann, people during the renaissance did not care about the individual, “but society, the corpus of all individuals” (Dollimore, 156). If society followed the abstract beliefs of religion that were able to save the soul, then the individual within that society would be saved, as such, renaissance society focused on the spiritual so that the material needs of the individual were abandoned. In fact, it was not until the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century that ‘the individual as a substantial entity’ arose (Dollimore, 156). It was after the works of Shakespeare and other writers began to explore the use of society and the individual as autonomous, that there was any move toward the self and in turn the concrete. Later, Marx argued that human kind was not spiritual, but concrete and as such constructed by the concrete actions of society. His ideas challenged prior notions of spirituality and thus Christian essentialism and all the abstract values that accompanied it, leaving humanity as an entity shaped and defined by the concrete actions, individuals, and situations in history.

***Equipping the Tools: A look at Machiavellianism***

There were those who manipulated what society exalted and used it to their benefit. Notoriously known as Machiavellian, or the philosophy of praxis, this ideology “bases itself on the concrete action of man, who, impelled by historical necessity, works and transforms reality” (Dollimore, 155). Instead of becoming a victim of interpellation, the Machiavel looked at society’s ideals as a tool, which could be equipped when needed in order to bring about success for that individual. In *The Prince*, Niccolo Machiavelli stated that there were two ways to contend with life’s situations—by law or by force—and in comparing these two to a man and a beast, he wrote, “A Prince should, therefore, understand how to use well both the man and the beast” (Machiavelli, 127), meaning that by whatever means possible, a ruler should succeed, whether he must lie, steal, blaspheme, cheat or not, break oath or not, kill or not, so long as it brings success. He mentioned how this was something that was hinted at by the ancient writers in the classical writings about Hercules, Jayson, and other such heroes. The fact that these demi-gods were left with the half-man half-horse, Chiron, in order to train and become successful heroes, demonstrated the point that Machiavelli made on being able to call on both identities, man and animal. Stephen Greenblatt analyzed this in a chapter in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* entitled “The Improvisation of Power”. He examined a story called *De orbe novo* by Peter Martyr, which mentioned how the Spaniards used trickery and lied to Native Americans about who they were, in order to obtain more slaves to use for mining. The Native Americans had a belief that gods would come from the sea to take their souls away to a better place. The Spaniards took advantage of this belief and pretended to be those gods, allowing them to gather up the Natives without engaging in war. Greenblatt called this mode of dealing with a given situation as *improvisation*, which was “the ability to capitalize on the unforeseen and to transform given materials into one’s own scenario” (Greenblatt, 227). Yet, it was not simply capitalizing on the unforeseen that allowed an individual to gain power. The individual obliged to, or appeared to follow, the abstract ideals of that society, while simultaneously manipulating those given ideals and exploiting them in order to transform the situation. In essence, I will argue that, much like Chiron, Shakespeare exhibits the man and beast, upholding society’s values in his plays, while demonstrating in the character of Prince Hal that it is through manipulation that success and power is truly obtained. After all, it was Prince Hal’s ability to improvise, manipulate, and equip society’s values that made him successful in war and politics, while King Henry IV, Hotspur, and Falstaff all failed to do so in one sense (or all senses) and it was their holding on to the abstract that caused their failure.

From the onset of the play King Henry IV made a presence as a firm defender of the faith, using language that was thick with allegory and spiritual innuendo. In speaking of the Crusades, King Henry IV stated, “Forthwith a power of English shall we levy, to chase these pagans in those holy fields over whose acres walk’d those blessed feet…” Bolingbroke constantly engages in the language of honor and his use of language is crucial in pinpointing his belief system (1.1.19-25). Bolingbroke also represented the hegemony that enforced ideals on those that were subordinate to it. He stated of Hotspur, “What think you, coz, of this young Percy’s pride? The prisoners, which he in this adventure hath surprised, to his own use he keeps; and sends me word, I shall have none but Mordake Earl of Fife” (1.1.93-95). King Henry was the sovereign to which all under him were subjected. Thus even the noble born Hotspur was a proletariat of his will, and in not submitting to him the prisoners, the king only found it right to wage war and make an example of anyone who did not follow the established rule.

However, Bolingbroke also questions his own authority in a self-waged war on his legitimacy as king. In act 3 scene 2 the king voiced his worry, “I know not whether God will have it so, For some displeasing service I have done, that, in His secret doom, out of my blood he’ll breed revengement and a courage for me… to punish my mistreadings,” (3.2.4-11) his “mistreadings” being how he deposed Richard II and took the thrown for himself. This doubt reflected in his nature and he realized that his respect was falling to have its desired effect on his subjects. He attempted to remedy this lack of established power when he stated, “My blood has been too cold and temperate... I will from henceforth rather be myself, mighty and be fear’d, than my condition, which hath been smooth as oil, soft as young down, and therefore lost that title of respect which the proud soul ne’er pays but to the proud” (1. 3. 1-9). He distinguished between how he was acting, weak and ignoble, and who he was, a man mighty to be feared. His doubting of power was something that Bolingbroke struggled with throughout the play. Unlike Hotspur, a complete anti-machiavel that shaped his life on honor and titles, King Henry was a flawed version of the young valiant Percy he so admired. In commenting on who he was and how he acted, he revealed that he embraced an ideology that exalts being proud and respected, since it came with his title as king. Yet, his actions often demonstrated a man willing to break away from those values to obtain or maintain power. For example, at the end of *Richard II* King Richard was killed by Henry IV and he then took the throne. While his values upheld the ‘divine right of kings’ as a power given from God, therefore unable to be challenged by man, he excused this by casting Richard II “but as the cuckoo in June, heard but not regarded” (3. 2. 75-76).

According to Henry, it was due to the fact that Richard was not upholding the ideals of honor, respect, and pride, but rather making himself a common presence that made him unfit for kingship, leaving the “mighty and fear’d” persona of Henry as the fitting ruler. Jesse Lander writes, “Bolingbroke establishes his own value by using Richard II as a “foil”; in contrast to Richard’s frequent appearances, he appeared rarely, ‘like a comet’, and won men’s hearts” (Lander, 148). Clearly King Henry understood how sovereign power truly worked, yet he seemed to be unsteady with himself on how he obtained power. On one hand, he grasps that there was a concrete strategy to becoming king, which he exemplified at the end of *Richard II,* yet, he also demonstrated that he bought into the values of his day by showing disappointment in Prince Hal for his worldly behavior, and love for Hotspur’s honorable ways: “See riot and dishonor stain the brow of my young Harry. O, that it could be proved that some night-tripping fairy had exchanged in cradle clothing our children where they lay, and called mine Percy, his Plantagenet!” (1.1.84-88).

Throughout *1 Henry IV*, Bolingbroke engaged in a war with himself—a war over the abstract values he wished to stand for, and the concrete actions he ultimately chose in their stead. Like Falstaff, Bolingbroke was a counterfeit, though he wished not to be. Meanwhile, Hotspur was an absolute abstract thinker. Unlike Bolingbroke, who was willing to break values (though he wouldn’t admit it) to insure power, Hotspur was fully committed to the metaphysical values of his day. In act 1 scene 1 King Henry stated “[I] sin in envy that my Lord Northumberland should be the father to so blest a son, -- a son who is the theme of honour’s tongue” (1.1.78-79). According to Bolingbroke, Hotspur was the ideal son to have because he was the very incarnation of honor. He called him “Mars in swathing-clothes” and refered to his own son as being “the shadow of succession” (3.2.99). In fact, King Henry was so concerned with honoring abstractions as essential to ruling that he claimed that Hotspur had “more worthy interest to the state” (3.2.98) than his own flesh and blood. Because Bolingbroke was a flawed version of an absolute abstractor, he obsessed himself with Hotspur.

As a noble and son to Lord Northumberland, Hotspur was raised courtly, saturated in the rhetoric of honor and pride since childhood. His speech was filled with the language of war and titles and currency of values, referring to his horse as his “throne” (2.4.65), Prince Hal as "sword and buckler” (1.3.228) and his view on life was that “we must have bloody noses and crack’d crowns” (2.4.85). He was both the extreme case of the interpolated subject and the bourgeoisie, for although he was of high standing and technically aristocratic, he was also the one who did the fighting for the king: “I remember when the fight was done… when I was dry with rage and extreme toil, breathless and faint, leaning on my sword” (1. 3. 29-31). He embraced his position, however, and it was not until King Henry questions his honor and challenges his family that Hotspur rebelled. In respect to his role as the working class, he was often mentioned as doing the king’s dirty work, while the king collected his prisoners, reaping the rewards of his labor. Although Hotspur questioned the authority of the King when he first was asked to surrender his prisoners, he later stated “My liege, I did deny no prisoners,” to which he stated that it was because of the situation that he was in, “breathless and faint” that forced him to answer “indirectly” to Bolingbroke’s request for prisoners (Act 1 Scene 3). It was only after the King refused to help Hotspur save a member of his family, that Hotspur decided to rebel, and when he did choose to rebel it was not against the established system he believed in, but against the person of the King, to which he defended his rebellion by obtaining evidence of Bolingbroke’s usurpation of King Richard. Once the king was removed from the protection of “divine” Hotspur’s entire rhetoric changed from calling him “my liege” and “your sovereign”, to referring to him as “Bolingbroke” and “a vile politician” (1.3). Hotspur made a mental readjustment, removing Henry IV’s title of king, thus allowing him to be seen as an enemy and no longer as a sovereign. His evidence for removing the king from a higher standing position was found in act 1 scene 3, when Hotspur discovers that it was his own cousin Mortimer who was proclaimed the next king by Richard II. He asked, “But soft! I pray you; did King Richard then proclaim my brother Edmund Mortimer Heir to the crown?” (1.3.152-154). This fact allowed King Henry to be seen as a complete usurper and someone who was preventing Hotspur from engaging in aid to his kinsmen, a bond which was important to him, and provided Hotspur with a sovereign figure—Mortimer—to commit his ability and service toward.

While in the play Hotspur was nearly the same age as Hal, his mind was nearer to that of the older generation—concerned with values and obsessing himself with gaining honorary titles and defending the reputation of his family. However, Hotspur’s pride was often dangerous to his cause. In act 3 scene 1 he was speaking with his ally, Glendower, who believed he was born under a sign: “at my birth the front of heaven was full of fiery shapes… These signs have marked me extraordinary” (3.1.36-39) and his rhetoric was one of superstition and wizardry. Hotspur insulted him and his beliefs to which his uncle Worchester stated, “In faith, my lord, you are too willful-blunt; and since your coming hither have done enough to put him quite beside his patience. You must needs learn, lord, to amend this fault: though sometimes it show greatness, courage, blood—and that dearest grace it renders you, -- yet oftentimes it doth present harsh rage” (3.1.176-179). Ken Jacobsen stated, “A good Machiavellian general must be “politic,” aware of the interpenetration of politics and warfare and ready to exploit strategic opportunites” (Jacobsen, 504). Hotspur’s mental state did not allow him to engage in the rhetoric of those he must befriend, a stark contrast to Prince Hal who was able to use the language of whoever he spoke with to his advantage. Hotspur was also a man concerned with status—of his wife he tells her, “swear me, Kate, like a lady as thou art… and leave in sooth, and such protest of pepper-gingerbread, to velvet guards and Sunday citizens” (3.1.249-252). Because of these qualities Hotspur was seen as the “theme of honour’s tongue” by King Henry and “the king of honour” by Douglas. It was something that he felt he must live up to, buying into the virtues beset on him by society. Jennifer Low examined this aspect of Hotspur: “Hotspur’s conception of himself as a soldier is based on the old values of chivalry—not primarily the literary chivalry of Spenserian romance, but the military chivalry of honor, reputation, and glorious deeds” (Low, 281). Because he was unable to equip the ideology without committing to them, Hotspur was eventually killed by Prince Hal. In regards to engaging in war, Machiavelli wrote that it was not “the natural courage of men… but order and good discipline” that produces a victorious outcome. Hotspur, however, concerned himself with gaining glory, so even when his father and essential ally, Glendower, decide to not commit to the coupe in overthrowing the king, Hotspur heeded them not and continued to battle. And even in death, Hotspur said to Prince Hal that he envied “those proud titles thou hast won of me. They wound my thoughts worse than thy sword my flesh” (5.4.78-89) demonstrating his obsession over the abstract.

On the other end of the spectrum Prince Hal demonstrated how to live and succeed as a Machiavel. He was able to engage in the rhetoric of his father when needed and with the rhetoric of his very carnal friends when needed. He was aware of his superb ability to sport whatever talk was needed in order to succeed. In act 2 scene 5 Prince Hal was speaking with Poinz about where he’d been and stated, “With three or four loggerheads, amongst three or fourscore hogsheads… They take it already upon their salvation, that though I be but Prince of Wales, yet I am the King of courtesy… I am so good a proficient in one quarter of an hour that I can drink with any tinker in his own language during my life” (2.5.8-17). Machiavelli mentioned how important it was to be able to change mannerism of speech and mind in *The Prince* when he stated, “Thus, it is well to seem merciful, faithful, humane, religious, and upright, and also to be so; but the mind should remain so balanced that were it needful not to be so, you should be able and know how to change to the contrary” (Machiavelli, 129). Unlike Hotspur, who was unable to respect Glendower’s beliefs, Prince Hal’s rhetoric fluctuated with everyone he talked to. He was witty with Falstaff, scheming with Poinz, and courtly with his father. In act 3 scene 1 he engaged in the rhetoric of honor with his father and although Prince Hal was not a spiritual character he was able to successfully argue with his father by using spiritual language in making a religious analogy of restoring his honor and reputation by defeating Hotspur in battle: “I will redeem all this on Percy’s head, and in the closing of some glorious day be bold to tell you that I am your son… That I shall make this northern youth exchange his glorious deeds for my indignities” (3.2.132-146). Here again we see the how Prince Hal used spiritual words and abstract concepts for two reasons. One reason was in order to appease his father (representative of the abstract values of older generations). And two, to create for himself a way to reestablish his honor by placing his shame on Hotspur: “For every honour sitting on his helm… and on my head my shames redoubled! For the time will come, that I shall make this northern youth exchange his glorious deeds for my indignities” (3.2.142-146). His rhetoric was abstract, using the allegory of Christ’s death to resemble the actions that Hotspur and Hal would engage in to cleanse him and make him righteous in his father’s sight. He was manipulating circumstances once more, in order to gain himself power where it would not be so otherwise, and in using the language befitting him, he was able “to put a good colour on this nature, and to be skillful in simulating and dissembling” (Machiavelli, 129).

Likewise, Prince Hal’s relationship to Falstaff and company was a tool for him in order to create for himself a notorious image which he could later shed and expose his true valor. Hugh Grady writes, “This brave new world is of course a theatre, not only for Falstaff, but for Prince Hal, whose identity crisis is, in many ways, the dramatic center of 1 and 2 *Henry IV*” (Grady, 3). Prince Hal had no identity crisis. He stated in his famous soliloquy at the end of act 1 scene 2 “I know you all, and will a while uphold the unyoked 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 wondered at” (1.2.175-179). He knowingly surrounded himself with a crowd that would mask his brilliance. Therefore, when King Henry accused his son of being well-known like Richard, and advised that he should be more like a “comet”, the king overlooked the fact that Hal was able to take one form, but be of a completely different nature. Also, Hal’s manipulation of friendship in this instance demonstrated an important facet of his character—he was witty, but more so he was uncommitted to the abstractions that his society valued. He was using Machiavellian devices by engaging in friendship as a tool and not committing himself to it. Tom McAlindon argued in “Swearing and Foreswearing in Shakespeare’s Histories” that Prince Hal did not exemplify the characteristics of a Machiavel, but instead Shakespeare demonstrates through Hal that only truth would succeed, and breaking oaths would not. He wrote, “If there is a single, definable and encompassing theme in *Henry IV* it is surely that of truth, signifying truthfulness, fidelity, loyalty, authenticity, and also justice…” (222). McAlindon continued his argument by providing examples of how Hal told the truth to Falstaff about banishing him: “I do, I will”, and overcame the egocentric Hotspur, thus saving the country from a bad king (McAlindon, 224). He stated, “If it is wrong to see Falstaff as the percipient debunker of royal sham, it is an even more serious but nonetheless common mistake to treat Hal as another deceitful Lancastrian. Shakespeare’s whole strategy is to establish an opposite impression: subtle and astute Hal undoubtedly is” (McAlindon, 226). Aside from a very blatant fallacy in stating that the author knows Shakespeare’s strategy behind the play, McAlindon also failed to understand how the Machiavel figure truly works. It was not so much whether Hal was constantly lying to Falstaff or his father, but that he was using them and their ideals to advance his motives. In fact, he admits that he would lie in order to keep Falstaff around a bit longer: “For my part, if a lie may do thee grace, I’ll gild it with the happiest terms I have” (5.4.150-151). However, while Prince Hal may have been friends with Falstaff he understood that his image was tainted because of that bond. Regardless of whether he stated that he would banish Falstaff, it was the fact that he engaged in a friendship that he used to advance himself that makes him a Machiavel.

There was another animalistic analogy that Machiavelli used in giving advice on being a successful prince, he wrote, “Since a ruler, then, needs to know how to make a good use of beastly qualities, he should take as his models among the animals both the fox and the lion,” (Machiavelli, 128) to which he further explained that the fox was able to avoid traps and the lion able to defend from wolves. Prince Hal exemplified both models that were expressed by Machiavelli. First, he was a fox by providing himself a scapegoat in Falstaff and Hotspur and allowing them to take the blame for his faulty behavior. With Falstaff he simply banished him, and with Hotspur he metaphorically exchanged his bad for Hotspur’s good and then killed him, thereby giving himself a clean slate. He was a lion by engaging with Hotspur in battle when he needed to show that he was the Sun and using that to his advantage in restoring his ‘honor’ and saving face with his father.

Yet, Hal was not an abstract thinker, he was grounded in the material world and his use of honor, forgiveness, valor, and atonement were for his benefit, much like one uses a saw to cut through wood. It was a rouse that he entertained for the simple fact that it gained him success for the mission he set out to accomplish. Hal’s materialist ideas were most vivid in act 5 scene 4 in the battle between Hotspur and himself, when Hotspur was speaking of titles and honor saying, “I better brook the loss of brittle life than those proud titles thou hast won of me. They wound my thoughts worse than thy sword my flesh…but that the earthy and cold hand of death lies on my tongue. No, Percy, thou art dust and food for--" (5.4.78-85) to which Hal concluded that Hotspur was food for worms. His character was not concerned with honor or ideas of an afterlife. He accepted that humanity was concrete and once dead there was no honor or title that could bring one back. In the same act, Falstaff stabbed an already fallen Hotspur in an attempt to prove himself worthy and claimed that he provided the death blow. Hal killed Hotspur, but in order to return Falstaff to favor in the sight of his father, he stated, “Come, bring your luggage nobly on your back. For my part, if a lie may do thee grace, I’ll gild it with the happiest terms I have” (5.5.149-151). More than showing that Prince Hal was willing to lie, these lines illustrate the fact that Prince Hal was the absolute case of the machiavel figure, engaging in the rhetoric and actions of honor and the virtues of his society when needed, but never fully committing himself to any.

Serving as a middle of the road example of the spiritual vs. the material is Falstaff. He was fat and merry, unconcerned with his reputation as a rogue knight and simply enjoying the fruit of the day. Prince Hal regarded him as “fat-witted”, “father ruffian”, “bombard of sack”, and “worthy, but in nothing”. Unlike Hotspur and Henry IV, Falstaff was a man unconcerned with the rhetoric of honor, and used it only when trying to save face. In defending his job as a pick-pocket and thief he used piety to save his reputation, “Let us be Diana’s foresters…minions of the moon,” (1.2.22-23) and of sin: “Why Hal, tis my vocation, Hal; tis no sin for a man to labour in his vocation” (1.2.92-93). If he was not trying to defend his vocation, then he used the imagery of a valiant knight to try and get himself out of a bind and make himself seem like a man of worth and honor. This was seen in act 2 scene 2 when he was robbed by Prince Hal and Pointz and he damaged his sword and bloodied his clothes in order to tell a tale of fighting off eleven men and slaying seven. In him there was no concern for honor: “Can honour set-to a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honour hath no skill in surgery, then? No. What is honour? A word. What is in that word ‘honour’? What is that ‘honour’? Air. A trim reckoning!” (5.1.130-134). In fact, although he often engaged in the rhetoric of honor it was always to try and persuade Hal to engage in something that was not honorable. This aspect of Falstaff was as Machiavellian as Hal, not concerning himself with the values idealized by their society lest it befit him to do so.

It was not only in his rhetoric that Falstaff is Machiavellian, his actions also demonstrated him to be one that sought to do the best for himself with the resources of others. Of the King’s money, he stated “I have misused the King’s press damnably,” spending most of it on liquor and recruiting “discarded unjust serving men” and “revolted rapsters” (4.2.12-26). When Prince Hal had to go speak with his father, Falstaff offered to help him practice his speech. In playing the role of king he stated, “this chair shall be my state, this dagger my sceptre, and this cushion my crown” (2.5.344-345). He did not take the values of his society seriously, allowing him to make jest of that which was meant to be taken somber. It was this same quality of not staying true to cause that prevented him from reaching the same fate as Hotspur, and it was his perseverance of self over acceptance of abstract that kept him alive and well longer. In act 5 scene 4, just before Hotspur was killed by Prince Hal, Falstaff engaged in battle with Douglas. Since he cared not for honor he fell and pretended to die. Prince Hal later spied him on the floor and thought he has fallen. Falstaff got up and said, “Sblood, ‘twas time to counterfeit, or that hot termagant Scot had paid me, scot and lot too. Counterfeit? I lie, I am no counterfeit. To die is to be counterfeit, for he is but the counterfeit of a man who hath not the life of a man” (5.4.112-115). His ability to counterfeit was something that allowed him to live. While Hotspur died concerned with his title, Falstaff lived by pretending to be dead, because to him, it was being dead that was counterfeit to life.

In much the same way that King Henry represented a flawed version of Hotspur, Falstaff represented a flawed version of Hal in that he was not an archetypal Machiavelli figure. According to Grady, “Much of this role, therefore, imaginatively subverts the reality principle in favour of the pleasure principle and thereby renders irrelevant objections from the real. The fuel to Falstaff’s subjectivity is desire” (Grady, 7). I would dare to narrow “desire” down to immediate pleasure. Prince Hal manipulated circumstance better than Falstaff and desire was also what drove him. The difference was that while Falstaff was constantly pursuing quick fixes, changing the King’s money for sack and a bad posse of soldiers, replacing his pistol with a sack of wine, etc., Prince Hal was able to strategize, plotting small things and waiting patiently until his time came.

While Falstaff placed no trust in some values, he gave full devotion to others. His friendship with Hal was his cornerstone and eventually it was used by the Machiavellian Prince Hal as a way to banish Falstaff and fully denunciate his old, malicious ways. I have mentioned earlier that the relationship between Prince Hal and Falstaff was a tool that Prince Hal used— first to hide his abilities and later to banish and therefore (playing with the values of his time) excommunicate his bad ways from prior days and reveal himself to be a worthy king. Falstaff did not see his friendship with Hal in the same terms, however, and he expressed this in act 2 scene 5 when he role played as Hal and Hal role played as his father. Hal, pretending to be king, stated that Falstaff was bad company for Hal and therefore he would banish him. The lines that Falstaff returned as a defense were piteous and his words sounded like please: “Banish not him thy Harry’s company, Banish not him thy Harry’s company. Banish plump Jack, and banish all the world” (2.5.436-439). Therefore, while Falstaff subjected valor, honor, and pride, and manipulated them in order to survive and steal at will, his inability to mold and redefine his friendship with Hal brought about his banishment at the end of *2 Henry IV.*

 Throughout the play of *1 Henry IV*,fulfilling the Machiavelli ideals were essential in surviving the inner and outer struggles of political warfare. Shakespeare demonstrated the effects of buying into values through the upset nature and incapable dominion of King Henry IV’s rule. Hotspur, while always sure of where he stood, allowed society to define who he would be and what he would strive for. Since honor and pride were hailed, Hotspur pursued those ideals, eventually leading to his downfall. Likewise, Falstaff’s inability to take control of his friendship with Hal allowed him to be manipulated by the masterful strokes of the only true Machiavel in the play, Prince Hal. It is through Machiavellian ideas, by subjecting the value system and thus eliminating its validity as an objective standard of living, that Prince Hal was able to go from the disliked prince to the honorary king he becomes in *Henry V*. The qualities that Machiavelli described in order for a prince to succeed were fleshed out in Prince Hal, and by using the spiritual language around his father and material language around Falstaff, Prince Hal was able to manipulate situations and improvise on power. Shakespeare’s decision to make Prince Hal the machiavel figure and at the same time the successful character in the play demonstrates his stance on the ‘divine right of kings’. It is not through any divine interference that either King Henry IV or Prince Hal obtain power, but through manipulation and by taking advantage of the situations presented them.

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