

Disintegration and Reunification of Political Bodies in Shakespeare's Second History Tetralogy

David A. Watson

In Shakespeare's Second English History Tetralogy the body functions as metaphor for the kingdom. In *The King's Two Bodies* Ernst Kantorowicz argues that a medieval king exists in two ontological phases, two bodies. Shakespeare deconstructs the idea that the monarchy is dual natured in his *Richard II*. Over the next three plays he rebuilds it on a new foundation. The end result is a conception of the monarchy that is more stable and coherent. This thesis argues that, throughout the four plays, Shakespeare uses the metaphor of the king's body to explore how love, particularly erotic love, binds the two bodies of the king together and creates a coherent political system.

When Bolingbroke accuses Richard's counselors of having broken the communion of the royal bed, transforming him from "a happy gentleman" into the shadow of a king, he is effectively arguing that Richard has ceased to act as the incarnation of the system of political order. Though he still maintains the symbolic trappings of kingship, he has become a "hollow crown," a king who is not a king. Richard's fall undermines the symbolic power of the king, and as a result Bolingbroke, though an effective king, is plagued by a kingdom in which degree has been abandoned. This presents itself, in 1&2 Henry IV, in the dual figures of Falstaff and Northumberland, who represent the polemical endpoints of a world without degree. Northumberland's speech in 2 Henry IV, in which he wishes the essential de-creation of the world in his grief over the death of Hotspur is driven by the same lack of respect for order that Falstaff rejects in his ruminations on the value of honor in 1 Henry IV. Throughout 1 & 2 Henry IV the body of the kingdom is described as diseased and venereal imagery is used over and over again as a symbol of disorder. The disunity of the kingdom is depicted as essentially sexual, and stems from the separation of King and Queen in Richard II.

This reading of the separation of Richard and his wife as the root cause of the fall of Richard and the political chaos of 1& 2 Henry IV might seem overly generalized. But this criticism overlooks the notion, common in the 16th century, that Love was the force which ordered Chaos into Nature. Moreover, the separation of Richard and his wife mirror, in their placement, the wooing of Katherine of France by Henry V in the final act of the last play in the cycle. It is in this final act of the final play that Shakespeare reunites, in the generous act of physical love, the two bodies of the King

Disintegration and Reunification of Political Bodies
In Shakespeare's Second History Tetralogy
By

David A. Watson

A Thesis Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

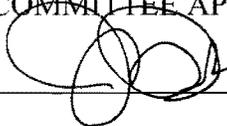
Master of Arts-English

At

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
Oshkosh WI 54901-8621

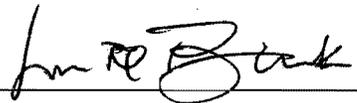
May 2013

COMMITTEE APPROVAL



Advisor

5/9/13 Date Approved



Member

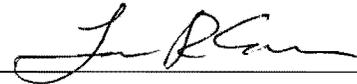
5/9/13 Date Approved



Member

5/9/13 Date Approved

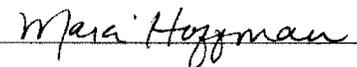
PROVOST
AND VICE CHANCELLOR



5/9/2013

Date Approved

Format Approval



3/12/13

Date Approved

I would like to dedicate this work to Carly—you gave me more support than this project deserved—and too my parents—without you none of this would have been possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the brilliant assistance and exceptional support of Drs. James Pesta, Loren Baybrook, and Christine Roth. A better group of advisors is unimaginable. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the staff at Polk Library, without whom I could not have assembled the resources necessary to complete this work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE BODY POLITIC	3
The Death of Thomas of Woodstock – the Moral Problem.....	8
The “Rash, Fierce Blaze” – the Stewardship Problem	10
Confiscating Lancaster – the Legal Problem	12
The Discharge of the Followers – the Military Problem	14
Quarrelling Lords – the First Challenge	16
Armed Revolt – the Second Challenge	18
Mercy and the Administration of Justice – the Third Challenge	19
Conclusions	21
THE MUSIC PLAYS: PERSONAL RENAISSANCE IN RICHARD II	28
Music and Cosmic Unity	36
Music and Love	37
Music and Personal Renaissance	39
A Difference Kind of Renaissance	42
THE POLITICS OF EXPEDIANCY: CONSEQUENCES OF POLITICAL RENAISSANCE	47
The House of Percy and the Political Problem	50
Stage One- Laying Claim to the Medieval Model	54
Stage Two- Might Makes Right	57
Stage Three- Resignation to Fate	58
Stage Four- Personal Politics	60
THE REALIZED IDEAL	65
The Lesson of Appetitive Time.....	71
The Lesson of (Role) Play	73
The Lesson of Responsibility	77
Consequences and Conclusion	83
WORKS CITED	91

Introduction

During the twentieth century scholars like Pierre Duhem, C.S. Lewis, Randolph Starn, Stephen Greenblatt, and Jacob Burckhart began to debate the validity of the Renaissance as a historical event. Consequently, it has become common to view Renaissance as “a movement of practices and ideas to which specific groups and identifiable persons variously responded in different times and places.”¹ Within this framework, it is possible to speak of the Renaissance as a series of individual moments². These individual renaissance moments signal points of transition between the medieval and early modern world³. What marked these points of transition— artistic, scientific, geographic, philosophical, or literary—was how they demonstrated that the accepted order of the medieval world was not fixed, but fluid.

Ernst Kantorowicz argues that *Richard II* dramatizes the dissolution of the medieval doctrine of divine right and the ascension of the theories of renaissance thinkers like Machiavelli, who embraced political acumen as the primary determinant of monarchical legitimacy. Unfortunately, this reading fails to understand how Shakespeare differentiates between personal and political moments. I would suggest that this failure results in a narrow understanding of how Shakespeare uses the personal and the political to create a detailed panorama of kingship.

The failure to distinguish between personal and political renaissance moments is understandable. Shakespeare's tragedies teach readers to evaluate personal and political consequences as fundamentally linked. It would not make sense to speak of political renaissance in *Hamlet*, *Lear*, or *Macbeth* as distinct from the personalities and "self-fashioned" identities of the titular characters.

Shakespeare depicts personal renaissance as distinct from political renaissance throughout the second history tetralogy. Rather than being conjoined, as in the tragedies, those moments that are distinctly personal from those that are distinctly political are separated. This separation follows the practice of anatomizing, which was so prominent in Shakespeare's London. Just as the anatomist attempts to understand the total function of the human body through an examination of the constituent parts Shakespeare separates the personal from the political aspects of the body politic so that he can explore each individually through a variety of metaphors, ultimately coming to a better understanding of the function of the whole.

This thesis will orient its examination of the question of kingship around the question of monarchal legitimacy through the lens of self-recognition. The first three chapters will examine the varied facets of the relationship between political and personal renaissance through an exploration of the lives and reigns of Richard II and Henry IV. The fourth chapter will show how Shakespeare reunites personal and political renaissance in the person of the tetralogy's great hero Prince Hal, who becomes King Henry V.

The Disintegration of the Body Politic

In 1601, on the eve of the Earl of Essex's unsuccessful coup, *Richard II* was commissioned and performed with the hope that when London audiences saw the deposition of a crowned monarch they would support the rebellion (Ure 671). Ultimately, the play engendered no insurrection and the Earl was executed. Essex failed to understand that *Richard II* does more than depict an armed uprising against a king. *Richard II* presents a new way of thinking about the legitimacy of the monarchy. Peter Saccio, in his survey of the play's history, argues that the orthodox reading of the play argues that the political conflict rises from Richard being incompetent but legitimate, while Bolingbroke is illegitimate but competent ("The Fall of the King"). Recently, new historical critics have begun to focus on Bolingbroke's success as a political subversive (Bergeron 34). In this chapter I will argue that both the traditional reading and the new historical reading incorrectly assign legitimacy/dominance to Richard and cast Bolingbroke as a usurper/subversive. However, Shakespeare portrays Richard as a man whose actions have fundamentally dissolved the legitimacy of the office of the monarch and through the figure of Bolingbroke translates the standards of legitimate rule to a new political mode. Consequently, I will argue that Richard functions as a placeholder, and that Bolingbroke, rather than Richard, is the legitimate king.

The play begins with a set of assumptions about the nature of kingship that come directly from the model of medieval monarchy, specifically the doctrine that the reigning monarch was possessed of two bodies. One, the body natural, was the king's physical body. The other, the body politic, was the embodiment of the kingdom. The idea of the king as corporation draws its parallel from the Bible. Christ is depicted as the head in the body of believers and his followers serve as the direct intermediate between the natural and super natural worlds. The temporal state exists as a microcosm of the greater cosmic structure, and within that microcosm the king, as "the deputy appointed by the Lord" (*Richard II* III, ii), functions as the incarnation of the unifying corporate metaphor. According to Southcote, a respected Elizabethan jurist, "the King has two Capacities, for he has two Bodies, the one whereof is a Body natural...the other is a Body politic" (Kantorowicz 13). For the medieval it was understood that "the king is the head and the subjects are the members" (15).

Shakespeare frequently exploits the poetic potential of the monarch's dual nature. In *1 Henry VI*, he employs the doctrine as a tool to develop the character of John Talbot. In the second act of the play, Talbot, the leading English general, is insulted by the Countess of Auvergne. The Countess has assumed that Talbot must appear as "some Hercules, a second Hector," (*1 Henry VI* II.iii) and instead is greeted by a man whose physical dimensions more resemble a "silly dwarf" and a "writhled shrimp." Talbot's response is based on the doctrine of dual nature. He tells the Countess that what she sees before her is "Talbot's shadow," and warns

that “[his] substance is not here.” When he sounds his trumpet and his soldiers burst into the castle. Talbot concludes “are you now persuaded that Talbot is but shadow of himself? These are his substance, sinews, arms and strength, with which he yoketh your rebellious necks” (ibid).

Talbot is not a king, but he is the king’s representative and the commander of the English forces. In this capacity he serves as a minor *persona mixta*.

Talbot’s soldiers are his “whole frame” and his members, just as Talbot is a member in the frame of his king. The concept of the dual nature is essential in the construction of Talbot as the ideal knight. Shakespeare plays with the concept of the dual nature throughout the first tetralogy, but it is not until *Richard II* that the concept is elevated to thematic focus. In *Richard II* Richard fails to properly order the motions of his various members. This failure precipitates the conflict that results in his deposition and brings to light a paradox that troubled medieval and Renaissance jurists. The king was, in his natural capacity, subject to the various deficiencies that affect any human being. But in his political capacity he is understood to be the embodiment of justice (Kantorowicz 133), the animate Law (135), the mind of reason (139), and the vicar of God on Earth (150).

Robert A. Draffan argues that a king, depending on his aptitude, falls somewhere on a spectrum between being a mere symbol of order and being an incarnation of it. From this initial premise, Draffan argues that Richard’s difficulties “derive from the fact that he wishes to be a symbol without being an

incarnation” (40). This observation requires some modification. The phrase “the better a king he is, *the less* he is a symbol and *the more* he is an incarnation” (emphasis mine) assumes that there is a zero sum relationship between symbol and incarnation. Draffan’s description fits Richard but does not fit Bolingbroke. Instead of perceiving symbol and incarnation as points on a spectrum used to evaluate the quality of a king, it is more useful to perceive of them as the two components of the king’s *corpus mysticum*. Incarnation, for the purposes of this thesis, will be defined as a measurement of the effectiveness and rightness of the king’s actions. By contrast, symbolism will be defined as the way the king is recognized by his subjects as holding a special super-position in relation to those subjects. Incarnation discusses what the king *does*, and symbol discusses how the king is *perceived*.

The function of the king as unifying metaphor raises a question of political epistemology. How does one know that a particular man is meant to be king? In *Richard III*, Shakespeare explores the ends-based (teleological) model of Richard III and concludes that the willingness to embrace any means to achieve the end is not a sufficient standard of monarchical legitimacy. Returning to the subject in *Richard II*, Shakespeare explores two new possibilities; the hereditary (ontological) model of divine right, embodied by Richard, and the duty-based (deontological) model embodied by Henry Bolingbroke.

Through the first three acts of *Richard II*, the effectiveness of the symbolic properties of the king's office are fading away. Richard's actions have undermined the legitimacy of the office of the king and, as a result, have undermined his control over his subjects. Richard explains his condition when he says that he is "like glist'ring Phaeton, wanting the manage of unruly jades." This allusion to Phaeton refers to the second book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, when Phaeton, son of Phoebus Apollo, asks his father for the right to drive the chariot of the sun. Phoebus, bound by an oath sworn on the river Styx, grants his son's wish. But the boy is unable to control the horses of the sun, and the chariot flies so close to the Earth that it threatens grave destruction. Jove knocks Phaeton from the chariot with a thunderbolt to prevent a catastrophe (Harris 162). When Richard describes himself as a charioteer who is unable to control violent horses, implying that the fault is in the "unruly jades," he is more like Phaeton than he realizes. He is incapable of controlling his kingdom. His removal is necessary if the kingdom is to prosper and survive.

Richard's twenty-two year reign contained instances when he "distinguished himself in...crises by great personal courage" (Saccio *Shakespeare's English Kings* 7). The other characters acknowledge that Richard has, previously, been a good king. When Bolingbroke tries Bushy and Greene, he accuses them of misleading Richard (III.i). The implication is that the flattery of wicked counselors has shifted Richard's focus to the trappings of kingship, and

away from the proactive responsibilities that make a king a true incarnation of order.

The shift from successful king to “hollow crown” (*Richard II* III.ii) is worked out in four ways. Richard loses his moral authority when he is complicit in the death of his uncle Thomas Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester. He loses his authority as steward of the realm with the “rash fierce blaze” of his extravagant lifestyle. He loses his legal authority when he confiscates the lands of his cousin Bolingbroke. Finally, he loses his military authority when he fails to act in order to secure his Welsh soldiers, and even dismisses his army in Ireland. This dismissal renders him incapable of addressing the threat posed by Bolingbroke’s army (Saccio “The Fall of the King”). Since Richard is responsible for the loss of his legitimacy, it is unjust to Bolingbroke to argue that he is a usurper.

The Death of Thomas of Woodstock—the Moral Problem

Prior to Shakespeare’s composition of *Richard II* there was an anonymous Elizabethan play, *Woodstock*, dedicated to the life and death of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester (Saccio *Shakespeare’s English Kings* 18). Woodstock, one of the senior Lords Appellant who had led a purge of Richard’s favorites in 1388, was hostile to the crown. By 1397 this hostility had boiled over into a crisis. Woodstock, along with the Earls of Warwick and Arundel, was arrested. Warwick was exiled. Arundel was beheaded. But Woodstock died under

ambiguous circumstances in Calais, where he was in the care of Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk (who, along with Henry Bolingbroke, was one of the Junior Lords Appellant). While Holinshed, Shakespeare's historical source, depicts Woodstock as a rash and ambitious man who "was ever repining against the king in all things" (24), *Woodstock* presents him as a plain spoken man. Shakespeare utilizes the dramatic, as opposed to the historical, characterization of Woodstock, and strongly implies that Richard lay behind the assassination. Whether Woodstock died on Richard's orders was never conclusively established in the source material, but his death ignites the conflict depicted the opening scenes of *Richard II* (Saccio *Shakespeare's English Kings* 23-24). In the first act John of Gaunt and the dowager Duchess of Gloucester discuss Woodstock. Gaunt says that "God's substitute, his deputy anointed in his sight, hath caus'd his death." Saccio argues that the question of guilt creates "a moral weakness in the king's position...[Richard's] hands are stained with the royal blood" (24).

The Duchess compares the lineage of Edward III, patriarch of the late House of Plantagenet, to a tree with seven branches "springing from one root". With the death of Woodstock "one vial full of Edward's sacred blood, one flourishing branch of his most royal root, is crack'd, and all the precious liquor spilt" (*Richard II* I.i). This royal blood is the emblem of what York later calls "fair sequence and succession" and is the vehicle that passes the mystical dignity of the king's corporate body from one generation to the next. Southcote describes the process as the "...separation of the two Bodies, and that the Body politic is

transferred and conveyed over from the Body natural now dead...to another Body natural” (Kantorowicz 13). Kantorowicz adds that “this migration of the “Soul,” that is, of the immortal part of kingship, from one incarnation to another...is certainly one of the essentials of the whole theory of the King’s Two Bodies” (13). To be complicit with the death of a royal Duke and potential heir to the crown is to undermine the whole basis of medieval kingship.

The “Rash, Fierce Blaze”—the Stewardship Problem

Richard II emphasizes the tense economic situation that existed at the end of Richard’s reign. Richard kept an extraordinarily extravagant court, a fact that would have been especially apparent to Elizabethans. The Queen was notoriously frugal in her orchestration of the government, as opposed to Richard who is forced to “farm the realm,” or allow private parties to tax his own subjects, in order to fund his expedition to Ireland (Saccio *Shakespeare’s English Kings* 26).

The concern about Richard’s habits is so intense that Gaunt, as he is dying, remarks that “his rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last. For violent fires soon burn out themselves...Consuming means, soon preys upon itself” (*Richard II* II.i). This is not merely an economic issue. The imagery he uses resembles the description of out of control power that Shakespeare uses in *Troilus and Cressida*.

Then everything includes itself in power,
 Power into will, will into appetite;
 And appetite, an universal wolf,
 So doubly seconded with will and power,
 Must make performe an universal prey
 And last eat up himself. (I.iii)

The similarities between Gaunt's description of Richard's spending habits and Ulysses's description of power's appetite indicate of two greater problems.

The first is a political problem. Richard's habits reveal a personal satisfaction in the exercise of power, and a total disregard for those on whom the power acts (Berninghausen 7). Only a king with a total disregard for his function could allow his realm to fall into the condition that Gaunt describes when he says that "England, that was wont to conquer others, hath made a shameful conquest of itself" (*Richard II* II.i).

Richard's capriciousness is evident in the first act of the play. Bolingbroke and Norfolk are unwilling to allow their quarrel to be resolved by Richard and Gaunt, and a date is set for a trial by combat. Richard waits, lets the time pass, allows the combatants prepare themselves, and watches until the trial has begun. Only then does he throw "his warder down," and issue the sentences of banishment. The king revels in his power to stop a fight to the death between two

powerful knights. This attitude carries over into the sentences of banishment. Because nothing has been resolved between Bolingbroke and Norfolk it is “manifestly unjust” (Saccio “The Fall of the King”) to banish one of them for ten years, later reduced to six, and one of them for life. Bolingbroke’s response to the reduction highlights the danger of frivolity in a king. “How long a time,” Bolingbroke says “lies in one little word! Four lagging winters and four wanton springs end in a word: such is the breath of kings” (*Richard II* I.iii). Frivolity is a disastrous quality in a king because “the word of the king corresponds more closely to reality than the word of [private citizens]” (Saccio “The Fall of the King”). Pleasure in the exercise of power undermines Richard’s claim to be a divinely appointed deputy.

The second problem, which I will address in greater depth in chapter two, is personal. Richard’s appetite, like a universal wolf, “digests the world, which simultaneously digests [him]” (Hoffman 361). This image of self-consumption and self-dissolution explains why Richard lacks the force of identity to offer any resistance to Bolingbroke’s ascension.

Confiscating Lancaster—the Legal Problem

The turning point in the dramatic action of *Richard II* comes when Richard confiscates the county of Lancaster. Dennis Klinck, in his essay “Shakespeare’s Richard II as Landlord and Wasting Tenant,” says that “the law of

property, [is] perhaps the most sacred form of law to Medieval and Renaissance Englishmen” (1). If the king is the embodiment of the law, then this is the moment when Richard ceases to be a legitimate king. Gaunt tells Richard that if Edward III had known what king Richard would become “he would have laid thy shame, deposing thee before thou wert possess’d.” He goes on to say to Richard that “landlord of England art thou now, not king, they state of law is bonds slave to the law,” (*Richard II* II.i). As soon as he dies, Richard confiscates his property.

While any confiscation of an heir’s direct inheritance would have been unusual, Richard has chosen to confiscate Lancaster “a county palatine, a semiautonomous political entity, [where] Gaunt had nearly regal powers” (Saccio *Shakespeare’s English Kings* 20). The Duke of Lancaster was the “greatest magnate in England” (20), and Bolingbroke, as Gaunt’s heir, was the most powerful subject of the realm. The confiscation horrifies York.

Was Gaunt not just? And is not Harry true?

Did not the one deserve to have an heir?

Is not his heir a well-deserving son?

Take Hereford’s rights away, and take from time

His charters, and his customary rights;

Let not to-morrow then ensue to-day:

Be not thyself. For how art thou a king

But by fair sequence and succession? (II. i)

York warns Richard that the confiscation of Lancaster will “pluck a thousand dangers” upon his own head. By violating the law of inheritance Richard has destroyed the idea that “fair sequence and succession” are tied to some higher law. Immediately after the confiscation, the Earl of Northumberland, “head of the greatest of the noble families of the north...and a former supporter of Gaunt” (Saccio *Shakespeare’s English Kings* 27), expresses a concern that the king will “severely prosecute ‘gainst us, our lives, our children, and our heirs” (*Richard II* II.i). By directly confiscating Bolingbroke’s inheritance, Richard has translated the permanent wealth associated with the land itself into a kind of chattel property that can be seized and dispensed with. This dispensation lies at the heart of Bolingbroke’s complaint against “the caterpillars” of the realm in the third act when he accuses them of disparking and deforesting his lands, translating them from a stable source of wealth and legitimacy into portable property⁴.

The Discharge of the Followers—the Military Problem

When Richard returns to England, he is confronted with an immediate problem. Bolingbroke has broken exile and landed at Ravenspur in force. In response to this threat Richard kneels down and strokes the earth, saying to the soil, “I do salute thee with my hand...and do thee favors” (III.ii). He goes on to

request that the earth itself “feed no thy sovereign’s foe, my gentle earth, nor with thy sweets comfort his ravenous sense, but...yield stinging nettles to mine enemies.” The very stones, according to Richard, will “prove armed soldiers”. When the Bishop of Carlisle reminds Richard that “the means that heaven yields must be imbrac’d and not neglected,” the king responds:

But when from under this terrestrial ball
 [the king as the sun] fires the proud tops of the eastern pines,
 And darts his light through every guilty hole,
 Then murders, treasons, and detested sins...
 Stand bare and naked trembling at themselves...
 The breath of worldly men cannot depose
 The deputy elected by the Lord;
 For every man that Bolingbroke hath press’d
 God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay
 A glorious angel. (III.ii)

The king ignores Carlisle’s warning that, while Heaven provides opportunity, Richard must provide initiative and action. Richard wants to claim all of the glory of the sun, without doing the work to banish the “creatures of the night” (Saccio “The Fall of the King”). Such banishment requires sound and responsible military policy. After this speech the Earl of Salisbury comes to

Richard and tells him that the Welshmen have gone over to Bolingbroke Richard, who could still have escaped to sea and joined with his army from Ireland, instead tells Aumerle to “discharge my followers” and hands himself over to Northumberland.

Richard’s failure to act as a manifestation of divine order creates a structural invitation to compare his performance as king to Bolingbroke’s. Richard and Bolingbroke each face quarrelling lords, the prospect of armed revolt, and the necessity of issuing a just verdict in a trial scene. When we compare Richard to Bolingbroke, we see that the new man on the throne is legitimate in precisely the ways that Richard was not. The question is not whether it is better to have a legitimate king or a competent one. The real question is how one identifies as king as legitimate or illegitimate. Examining the mirrored challenges, and how Richard and Bolingbroke respond to them, allows us to understand monarchical legitimacy as a product of job performance.

Quarrelling Lords—the First Challenge

In the opening act of *Richard II*, Bolingbroke and Norfolk are asked to make peace. When no resolution is reached they are assigned to trial by combat. Richard’s decision to the trial by combat and dispense uneven sentences of banishment escalates the conflict.

Bolingbroke is confronted with the same problem in the fourth act, but the stakes are higher. Instead of two quarrelling lords there are at least six. The lords have been throwing down their gages to signal their willingness to fight over accusations involving the death of Thomas of Woodstock. Bolingbroke's response to the threat of violence is instantaneous. "Your differences," he tells the assembled lords, "shall all rest under gage till we assign you to your days of trial" (IV. i). Bolingbroke tells the lords that their dispute rests under his authority. He communicates to his subjects that their disputes are subject to his control, and that he will be the one to assign their trial and enforce their compliance. Bolingbroke establishes immediately that nothing will happen between the lords of his realm without his express permission. We never see how Bolingbroke finally resolves the disputes, but we can remain confident that, regardless of what happened, the situation "never left Bolingbroke's control" (Saccio "The Fall of the King").

A true king must be decisive in the administration of justice. Shakespeare illustrates this during the discussion between the two gardeners at the end of the third act⁵. The gardeners say that good gardening is like good government and that a good gardener must "bind up young dangling apricocks, which like unruly children make their sire stoop with oppression." Richard fails to bring rule to Bolingbroke and Norfolk. Instead of dealing with them sternly, like "unruly children," he attempts to cajole them into compliance. This approach fails. In contrast, Bolingbroke, perhaps prescient of the problems with wayward children that lie in his future, responds with force and clarity.

Armed Revolt—the Second Challenge

Richard and Bolingbroke also deal differently with the threat of armed insurrection. When Richard learns that Bolingbroke has broken exile and returned in force, he is so indecisive that Carlisle is forced to remind him that “the means that heaven yields must be imbrac’d.” Richard ignores this advice, dismisses his army, and surrenders. Bolingbroke responds differently. When warned of the threat of the Oxford conspiracy Bolingbroke draws his sword and demands that someone “tell us how near is danger that we may arm us to encounter it” (V. iii). When we consider that the news reaches him in his private chambers, during a moment of relaxation, it becomes clear how constantly prepared Bolingbroke is for decisive action.

The conversation between the two gardeners also reveals how effective administration by the king serves as the model for each of his subjects. The gardener’s servant asks “why should we, in the compass of a pale, keep law and form and due proportion, showing, as in a model, our firm estate, when our...whole land, is full of weeds...unprun’d...ruin’d...disordered” (III. iv). When the king is perceived as slovenly in his office, the people live disorderly lives and the kingdom falls to pieces. Stephen Greenblatt characterized the battle that Bolingbroke is forced to fight over and over again through the *Henry IV*

plays: “Shakespeare’s plays,” Greenblatt writes “are centrally, repeatedly concerned with the production and containment of subversion and disorder” (40).

Mercy and the Administration of Justice—the Third Challenge

Richard and Bolingbroke also respond differently when forced to administer justice. Bolingbroke is faced with a dozen conspirators, including Aumerle, who have made plans to kill him at Oxford. York discovers the conspiracy and flees to the king to warn him of the treachery. Aumerle reaches the king first. The scene that follows pits York, who begs for justice, against Aumerle and the Duchess of York, who plead for mercy. Bolingbroke, York, and the Duchess become, in this scene, allegorical figures prominent in medieval morality plays. The scene is a play on the medieval allegory of four virtues, who debate the proper fate of the sinner. The most common manifestations of the story have Mercy and Peace arguing on behalf of the sinner while Justice and Truth argue against him (Traver).

Shakespeare represents all four allegorical figures in the scene. York argues that “mine honour lives when his dishonor dies, or my sham’d life in his dishonor lies...the traitor lives, the true man’s put to death” (V.iii). To let Aumerle live, York argues, is an affront to justice. Bolingbroke would be letting a traitor repent in fear rather than in love. Such forgiveness would undermine the loyalty of men who were honest in their affections. The Duchess, by contrast,

argues for mercy. “No word,” the Duchess says, “like ‘pardon’ for king’s mouths so meet.”

Bolingbroke brings Peace to the chaos. He tells Aumerle that if the offense he has committed has not yet been carried out, but only “intended...how heinous e’er it be, to win thy *after love* I pardon thee” (emphasis mine, V.iii). This “after love” stands for peace between the king and his subject.

In this scene Shakespeare begins to explore a topic he will return to in *The Merchant of Venice*. In the trial of Antonio before the Duke, Portia argues that:

The quality of mercy is not strained.
 It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
 Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:
 It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
 Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
 The throned monarch better than his crown.
 His scepter shows the force of temporal power,
 The attribute to awe and majesty,
 Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings.
 But mercy is above this sceptered sway;
 It is enthroned in the hearts of kings;
 It is an attribute of God himself;

And earthly power doth then show like God's
 When mercy seasons justice (IV.i).

The idea that “earthly power doth then show like God’s” is exemplified when Bolingbroke says “I pardon [Aumerle], as God shall pardon me.” He is acting, in a moment of intense personal pressure, in a way that marks him truly as “the deputy appointed by the Lord.”

Richard, by contrast, is far more invested in the crown and scepter that “shows the force of temporal power... wherein sit the dread and fear of kings.” When York overhears Northumberland refer to Richard without his title he says “the time had been, would you have been so brief with [King Richard], he would have been so brief with you to shorten you, for taking so the head, your whole head’s length” (III.ii). Deprive Richard of the majesty of his state and his response, far from mercy, is capital. Perhaps this statement by York is hyperbolic. It seems unlikely that execution, even for a king as flippant as Richard, would have been the literal response. Nevertheless, York’s comment aligns with the capricious administration of justice we to expect from Richard.

Conclusions

Comparing Richard and Bolingbroke reveals that Richard is, in some sense, a placeholder. As Portia says, in the fifth act of *Merchant*, “a substitute

shines brightly as a king, until a king be by, and then his state empties itself, as doth an inland brook into the main of waters..." (V.i). The image of a stream emptying into an estuary dovetails with the imagery Richard uses to describe his position relative to Bolingbroke. When he is confronted with the rebellion he compares himself to the sun, banishing creatures of the night (III.i). By the time he descends to the base court his language has totally inverted itself and now "Richard's night" gives way "to Bolingbroke's fair day" (III.ii).

The imagery of the night and morning is particularly striking in the case of the substitute and true king. In *Timon of Athens*, Shakespeare wrote, "the moon's an arrant thief, and her pale fire she snatches from the sun" (IV.iii). Richard's transition into the "fool king" (Kantorowicz 33) aligns with his increasing awareness that his glory was borrowed. This awareness culminates in the deposition when Richard says that he is "a mockery king of snow, standing before the sun of Bolingbroke, to melt myself away in water-drops" (IV.i). The image of the melting snowman is the culmination of the substitute/king polemic. Melting waters return to the sea, winter yields to spring, and Richard is replaced.

Realizing that Richard is a substitute places Kantorowicz's argument in its proper perspective. The brook of Richard's dual identity does not empty, as Kantorowicz argues, into nothingness. It flows into Bolingbroke, the true king, whose presence reveals Richard to be a "mockery king of snow."

Shakespeare wrote usurpers like Macbeth, the Richards of York and Gloucester, Claudius, Sebastian, and Antonio in many of his plays. But, Shakespeare gives each of his usurpers a speech where they explain their motives. Richard of Gloucester explains that he desires to be “round impal’d with a glorious crown,” because “Love foreswore [him] in [his] mother’s womb” and he can find no pleasure in a “lady’s lap.” Macbeth speaks of his “vaulting ambition.” Claudius, in the confessional, speaks of “mine own ambition, and my queen.”

By contrast, Shakespeare never gives Bolingbroke a chance to explain his motives. He is silent in the key moments of the transition of power (Saccio “The Fall of the King”). Richard goes so far as to call him a “silent king.” Because Bolingbroke’s only stated goal throughout the initial phases of his campaign is the restoration of his unlawfully stolen property the audience is left to fill in the gaps and decide for themselves. The breach by Richard is significant not only because it violates the preeminent law code of the medieval period (Scott), but also because, according to Dennis Klinck, it represents the tipping point in Richard’s character between Lord and Tenant. During the medieval period the conventional understanding was that the king, “as lord paramount,” was not subject to accusations of waste. Shakespeare, Klinck argues, makes Richard a “kind of ‘tenant’ ...occupying the ‘Dignity royal’,” and therefore is capable in acting in a way that is criminally liable to justice (4).

When Richard violates the law he ceases to exist as “lord paramount” and instead becomes a wasteful tenant who must be removed from his office. Richard himself seems aware of this. In his final soliloquy he realizes “I have wast’d time and now time doth waste me”. This process of waste results in Richard’s collapse. The crown is not taken from Richard, at each stage of the transfer of power he cooperates with the proceedings and only realizes that he has “undress’d the pompous body of a king” after the act is complete. He facilitates the “emptying” of himself, into the “main waters” of Bolingbroke’s crown.

The thematic similarities (substitute/king, mercy/justice) between Portia’s speech in *Merchant* and Bolingbroke are not accidental. Shakespeare wrote both plays between 1596 and 1597. The congruent questions of monarchical legitimacy bind the cited portions of the two plays together. If we accept the postulate that Bolingbroke is the true king, then Bolingbroke seems to fit into roles that Shakespeare explicitly referenced four years later in his composition of *Hamlet*’s closet scene, the roles of “scourge and minister,” more than he does into the role of the usurper.

Shakespeare explored the concept of scourges and ministers, though without direct reference to the terminology, as early as the composition of *Richard III* (Bowers 740-743). There are two essential differences, according to Bowers, between a scourge and a minister. A scourge is a tool of divine wrath that is already so wicked that further sins cannot add to his damnation. Richard III

falls into this category⁶. A minister is an instrument of justice, rather than of wrath, and so instead of merely punishing wrongdoing he also established a new order. Richmond, serving as God's minister, replaces the chaos that had overrun England during the Wars of the Roses with divinely sanctioned justice.

The position that Bolingbroke occupies is initially unclear. Gaunt and York state that England has, until the reign of Richard II, enjoyed a heroic past and that Richard is the vehicle of the misrule that is plaguing the land with no apparent antecedent (Saccio "The Fall of the King"). Since Richard bears some degree of guilt for the murder of Woodstock and has violated the law of inheritance some punishment is necessary. But who can punish the king? Gaunt raises this question himself in discussing Richard's guilt with the dowager Duchess of Gloucester, saying "correction lieth in those hands which made the fault we cannot correct" (I.ii). Gaunt goes on to suggest that when the time has come Heaven will revenge itself on Richard. Bolingbroke is the vehicle of that divine vengeance. However, it is unclear, at the moment of the deposition, whether he will act as a "scourge" or as a "minister". The major drama of the second half of the play focuses on unraveling this question.

The initial lack of clarity stems from the expectations of any audience that was both familiar with the events of the first English history tetralogy (Champion 1) and insightful enough to recognize Richard's culpability in his own deposition. Such an audience would assume that Bolingbroke acts as a scourge, since his

actions (ultimately) result in significant instability and are frequently cited throughout the *Henry VI* plays and *Richard III* as the cause of conflict between the Houses of York and Lancaster. But Shakespeare does not commit himself to this interpretation. Bolingbroke seems to embody the qualities of heavenly kingship in his dealings with Aumerle, and his superior energy and action seem to mark him as a fit occupant of the throne. These qualities would seem to indicate that he is a minister, rather than a scourge.

Further ambiguity is added when Richard dies in Bolingbroke's prison, in compliance with an indirect order from the king. Shakespeare composed *Richard II* at roughly the same time that he composed *King John*, and the similarities surrounding the death of Richard and John's order to slay his Arthur seem to indicate that this question, the legitimacy of royal murder to prevent challenges to the crown, was intricately tied to Shakespeare's dramatic sense in the mid-1590s.

That Bolingbroke is nearly crippled by guilt is evident from the closing passages of *Richard II* and the opening passage of *I Henry IV*, when he expresses his desires for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to cleanse himself of the guilt of Richard's death. Can a minister participate in murder? Can a scourge establish order? These are questions Shakespeare leaves largely unanswered. Perhaps Bolingbroke's ambiguous moral station served as a prototype for a Hamlet, six years later, who could say that "heaven hath pleas'd it so to punish me with this,

and this with me.” The attuned reader can imagine Bolingbroke, alone in his quarters after hearing of the death of Richard, uttering the same lines.

The Music Plays: Personal Renaissance in *Richard II*

The last chapter focused on broad ranging questions of monarchical legitimacy, and how that legitimacy was transferred, by the deposition of Richard II, from a medieval model of hereditary divine right kingship to a new model of legitimacy through action. This transition is effected through what Kantorowicz calls a “[cascade] from divine kingship to kingship’s “Name,” and from the name to the naked misery of man” (27). This cascade serves to disintegrate the “oneness of the double body” (31) in a series of scenes culminating in “the mirror scene” (39). Richard’s reflection in the looking glass is a metaphorical representation of the king’s divinely political aspect. When Richard breaks the mirror he is “breaking apart any possible duality” (40). From that moment on there is a division between the personal and the political. The duration of the tetralogy examines the personal and political as separately evolving concepts that are not reunited until *Henry V*.

This chapter will offer a close reading of the first such moment of personal renaissance. It is the frequently overlooked scene when Richard contemplates his own identity after he has been stripped of the lineaments of kingship. Two scenes before he was formally deposed imprisoned in Pomfret Castle. In our first glimpse of Richard the prisoner, he is trying to talk some sense of meaning into his confinement.

The search for meaning through language is characteristic of Richard. His life has been defined by a series of intersecting metaphors that Richard Altick describes as “symphonic” in their repetition and evolution. According to Altick, “certain words are played upon throughout the drama...they are woven deeply into the thought-web of the play” (340). Richard repeatedly demonstrates tremendous wit and facility with language. His entire identity is constructed out of images of himself that he speaks into being. Using this method of self-fashioning, Richard tries to define his new identity, Richard the prisoner, in the same way he defined his old identity. His first lines reveal a difficulty:

I have been studying how I may compare
 This prison where I live unto the world;
 And, for because the world is populous
 And here is not a creature but myself,
 I cannot do it. Yet I'll hammer it out. (V.v)

Because concept of an ordered universe “was the most forceful orthodox determinant of renaissance thought” (Heninger xii-xiii), Richard attempts to use language to “create literary microcosm” (xiii) so that he can assign meaning to his confinement. If he can create a microcosm of his prison then his predicament, like the universe, must have an underlying order that will impart meaning to his suffering. But, because he is totally alone, he finds himself incapable of drawing

the necessary parallels. “Yet,” he says, “I’ll hammer it out.” For the first time in the play Richard offers more than piecemeal resistance when confronted with an obstacle.

My brain I’ll prove the female to my soul,
My soul the father, and these two beget
A generation of still-breeding thoughts,
And these same thoughts people this little world,
In humors like the people of this world;
For no thought is contented.

This passage has led to stage interpretations that complicate Richard’s gender (Klett 175-177). The underlying argument is that Shakespeare’s histories form “a dialectic between the Self, which is always masculine, and the Other, which is always feminine” (Bamber 211). This argument ignores how individual moments of sexual synthesis drive progress throughout the tetralogy.

Because Richard has a soul and is still capable of reason he is capable of intellectually populating the emptiness. Essence and reason combine to create imagination and Richard employs that imagination in populating his “little world.”

Until this moment Richard’s imagination has been used to create roles for himself. A brief survey of the roles Richard plays after his return from Ireland

provides sufficient example. After Richard lands at Barkloughly castle and begins to plan his response to Bolingbroke's treason he casts himself as the tender of the soil of his realm (5-25), the sun (36), judge and magistrate (45-50), divinely appointed deputy (56), commander of a legion of angels (57-61), metaphysical corporation (85), Jesus Christ at the moment of Iscariot's betrayal (133), a dying man (148), a series of dead kings (156-159), a slave (210), and finally as the setting sun (218).

In the course of a scene that occupies two hundred and eighteen lines Richard moves through eleven characterizations of himself. Similar lists could be compiled for just about every major scene Richard appears in. Because Richard lacks a concrete sense of his own identity, he is constantly searching for the role that will allow him to fit into the world. But, alone in his cell there is no role to play but "Richard," and so he begins to make a critical assessment of himself.

Thoughts tending to ambition, they do plot
 Unlikely wonders: how these vain weak nails
 May tear a passage thorough the flinty ribs
 Of this hard world, my ragged prison walls;
 And for they cannot, die in their own pride.
 Thoughts tending to content flatter themselves
 That they are not the first of fortune's slaves
 Nor shall be the last—like silly beggars

Who, sitting in the stocks, refuge their shame,
That many have and others must sit there;
And in this thought they find a kind of ease...
Thus I in one person many people, and none contented.

Richard is able to gain perspective by externalizing the roles he has played. Recent post-modern criticism has shed light on this process of externalization. According to Bergeron, Richard's self-examination "suggests an understanding of his carnival predicament" (40). For the first time he sees the futility of his beliefs that the stones and grass would fight against Bolingbroke, that armies of angels would respond to his commands, or that the power of his name was capable of swamping an army of twenty-thousand through sheer moral force. The image of a man battling with the stone walls of his cell armed only with his fingernails turns these thoughts upon themselves, causing them to "die in their own pride."

Throughout his life Richard imagined himself as Christ betrayed, in the place of deposed kings, and abdicating to take up a monastic life. These images have led Karl F. Thompson to suggest that, at the outset of the play, Richard "affects...the pose of a true martyr" (162). But, Thompson argues, by the end of the play Richard has successfully attained martyrdom. Thompson's argument ignores that Richard, when he finally gains a measure of objectivity, finds the construction of himself as a martyr "silly." He rejects the notion that his suffering

is dignified. He is not a martyr, as Thompson suggests, but a man whose failure to know himself and his circumstances has resulted in his own fall. Hard reality has stripped away the appeal of affectation. Richard is forced to look elsewhere for meaning.

It is through this attempt to locate meaning outside of his traditional method of role-playing that Richard comes to his great existential conclusion that “whate’re I be, nor I, nor any man that but man is, with nothing shall be pleas’d, till he be eas’d with being nothing.” Richard could not be further, at this moment, from his previous joy in pomp and power for their own sake. His realization embodies the admonition of Paul to the Romans to be:

Transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.⁷

His realization is followed by a stage direction that “the music plays.” In the last chapter it was noted that *Richard II* was composed contemporaneously with *Merchant of Venice*. Once again *Merchant* offers the best inter-textual apparatus for understanding a portion of *Richard II*. In the fifth act of *Merchant*, Lorenzo and Jessica are in Belmont waiting for the return of the other pairs of

lovers. They are outside and are often staged as sitting on the grass looking up into the sky. Lorenzo says:

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
 Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
 Creep in our ears; soft stillness and the night
 Become the touches of sweet harmony.
 Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
 Is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold,
 There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
 But in his motion like an angel sings,
 Still quiring to the young-ey'd cherubins;
 Such harmony is in immortal souls,
 But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
 Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it...(V.i. 54-65)

This passage draws a series of connections between music, cosmic unity, love, and personal renaissance. These connections bear heavily on the remainder of Richard's life. Indeed, Richard actively responds to each of these connections. In order to understand his final moments these connections must be unpacked.

Music and Cosmic Unity

The image of the stars singing as they move through their courses is central to Lorenzo's speech. This image "was a commonplace in the Middle Ages...Nothing exists without music; for the universe itself is said to have been framed by a kind of harmony of sounds, and the heaven itself revolves under the tones of that harmony" (Tillyard 101)⁸. The idea of music corresponding to celestial harmony appears frequently throughout Shakespeare's plays. At the conclusion of *The Tempest* Prospero's final act of magic, before breaking his staff and drowning his book, is to call for "heavenly music" to signify the return to order. Ulysses's speech on degree (referenced in the previous chapter) describes the world of chaos in musical terms when he says "take but degree away, untune that string, and hark what discord follows" (I.iii. 109-110).

Each of these passages is derived from the cosmology of Pythagoras, who "had revealed a dependable relationship between the finite and the infinite, some manageable way of dealing with the infinite through knowledge of the finite" (Heninger 100). For Pythagoras "the celestial harmony permeates the universe...modulating the items of nature and binding them together" (101). This cosmic structure is hierarchal, divinely ordered out of chaos (Heninger 163), and relies on the understanding of the metaphorical correspondence between micro and macrocosm (Heninger 335). Because the cosmos are designed with this metaphorical correspondence between high and low things it is possible to establish an informational "exchange" between the supernatural and the natural by

means of salient metaphors (337). Among these metaphors (including the metaphor of kingship) the most salient is music.

As Richard listens to the music he begins to understand how discordant his behavior has been.

Keep time—how sour sweet music is
 When time is broke and no proportion kept!
 So is it in the music of men's lives.
 And here have I the daintiness of ear
 To check time broke in disordered string;
 But for the concord of my state and time,
 Had not an ear to hear my true time broke:
 I have wasted time, and now doth time waste me" (V.v 43-49)

Richard realizes that his penchant to succumb to flattery, his love of extravagance, and his perception of his own importance have all played against him. They have made it so that he did not notice when his "true time broke." This distracting background noise of life is what Lorenzo is referring to when he speaks of "the muddy vesture of decay" that "doth grossly close [the harmony of men's souls] in."

Plays like *Lear* and *Macbeth*, which might be called chaos plays even more fittingly than tragedies, build their dramatic effects around action that

disrupt the cosmic harmony. *Lear's* storm follows the king's offense against love, and the cannibal horses of *Macbeth* follow the murder of Duncan. Richard turns this interpretation of the individual's role in manipulating the cosmic structure on its head. His chaotic actions have not fundamentally altered the "concord of my state and time." Rather, they have obscured his ability to discern that harmony. The distinction is significant because it defines the parameters for individual men and women to exercise their freedom. The music, and the cosmic unity that it represents, set the boundaries that the characters in the play live within.

Cosmic order functions like a geographic feature. One would not say that the shoreline imposes on the freedom of a mariner, nor would one say that the cosmic order ordains Richard's mistakes and his fall. But, if a mariner deliberately, or by mistake, brings his vessel between the wind and the lee-shore his ship will be dashed on the rocks. If the cosmic unity that the music represents is the mechanism Richard's fall is executed, it is also the apparatus of his salvation.

Music and Love

The Pythagorean model understood the cosmos to be united through interpersonal relationships. Chaucer, in the *House of Fame*, describes the function of gravity in a way that bears a closer resemblance to friendship than it does to Newtonian mechanics.

Every kindly thing that is
 Hath a kindly stede ther he
 May best in hit conserved be;
 Unto which place every thing
 Through his kindly enclyning
 Moveth for to come to. (II. 730)

According to John Gower, in his *Confessio Amantis*⁹, this “kindly enclyning” functions because “desireth every worldes thing” (VII. 234) to draw towards the center, the earth. The expression of kindness and desire, purely relational forces, as principles of natural order, continued into Shakespeare’s day. Spenser’s *Hymne in Honour of Love*, composed in 1596 (about a year after Shakespeare wrote *Richard II*), describes the chaotic war between the primal elements that “threat’ning their own confusion and decay” (82) was only brought to an end when “Love relented their rebellious ire” (84). It is the Divine Love that fashioned an ordered cosmos out of the chaotic elemental strife. Because human beings represent a “nodal point...[which has] the unique function of binding together *all* creation, of bridging the greatest cosmic chasm, that between matter and spirit” (Tillyard 66). This Divine Love is echoed in interpersonal relationships between human beings.

Perhaps the most famous function of unifying love in all of Shakespeare comes in *Romeo and Juliet*. Their love begins during a dance accompanied by

music. Romeo and Juliet become, in a sense, the “orbs which in [their] motion[s] like angel[s] sing.” The transition in their mode of speech, which is accompanied by the music of the dance, from loose verse to joined sonnets epitomizes the order that their love represents. We may be surprised to recall that in the prologue that describes the “two hours’ traffic of [the] stage” Shakespeare gives the end of the feud between the houses of Montague and Capulet equal billing with the “star-cross’d lovers.”¹⁰

The music Richard hears in his cell serves a similar function. He views the music as “a sign of love; and love to Richard is a strange brooch in this all-hating world” (65-66). In the brief exchange with the groom that follows Richard is deferential, kind, and inquiring in a way he has not previously been. When the first assassin enters Richard seems to sense that his own end is near. In a gesture that certainly saves the life of his new friend Richard tells the groom, “if thou love me, ‘tis time thou wert away” (96). This recognition, and the care Richard takes for the well being of a “poor groom of [the] stable,” signals that something has begun to change in Richard. He resembles Lear, in the storm, realizing that he had “ta’en too little care of [poor naked wretches]” (III. iv. 32). Richard has begun to resemble, in the last moments of his life, the kind of king he long pretended to be.

Music and Personal Renaissance

The previous chapter argued that the cumulative effect of his deafness to the cosmic music was the deterioration from a functional king into a “hollow crown.” Alone in prison Richard clearly believes that he has reached his terminus point. He has discounted the possibility of escape from the prison, of any rescue by friendly forces, or of any other avenue that could possibly provide him with hope. With this hope evaporated Richard feels that the music will drive him mad. He asks that “it sound no more; for though it have help mad men to their wits, in me it seems it will make wise men mad.”

Brockbank argues that Richard’s final desire to escape from the music as proof that it is impossible to return to the harmony of the old order that has passed away (72). According to Brockbank, Richard’s regrets over the way he has lived and “wasted time” fill him with such intense regret that he is incapable of facing the music. Because Richard compares the effect of the music with an image of mad men restored to sanity, this is an understandable interpretation. However, this interpretation of Richard’s response is slightly inaccurate. I will argue that there is an interpretation that lies closer to the true meaning of the music, Richard’s response to it, and his final transformation from a man incapable of decisive action into the man who, unarmed, manages to slay three of the assassins who come to murder him.

One of the accepted properties of music within the Pythagorean system was that “music is capable of increasing or diminishing the passions of the human soul by affecting its harmony” (Heninger 103). It was said that “Pythagoras used

music to cure both bodies and souls, and to assuage anger and other aberrations of the mind” (103). I believe that rather than being a painful reminder of the life he has squandered, the music that Richard hears stirs him towards action. This explains why he feels that the music is inciting madness, because Richard has already discounted the possibility of escape as totally impossible. He can imagine no other action that his circumstances would permit. When he says that “in me [the music] will make wise men mad” he is asserting the rationality of this resignation. The music knows better.

The source of the music is never stated. Because of the circumstances (Richard is in prison, after all) it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that the source of the music is super-natural, the music of the heavens. The possibility of an individual hearing the music of the spheres is not without precedent. “Pythagoras, as Porphyry had declared, was the sole mortal who could hear the music of the spheres” (Heninger 100), and Lorenzo, in *Merchant*, points out that it is the “muddy vesture of decay” that prevents human beings from hearing the singing of the stars. It was understood that “the individual soul is concordant not only within itself, *musica humana*; but by repeating the world-soul at large it participates in the universal harmony, *musica mundana*” (Heninger 101). In prison Richard has done away with all the pomp that had stopped up his ears, and has created a world of thought within the boundaries of his cell. It is not impossible that he has, in the wake of his realization that human kind “with

nothing shall be pleas'd, till [they] be eas'd with being nothing," gained the ability to hear the cosmic music.

If this reading is accurate then the reasonable conclusion is that the music is acting on Richard to "cure body and soul." It prepares him by "increasing...the passions of [his] soul" to face his final moments. The best interpretation of the Richard's response is that he finds the music to be goading him on towards some significant action. Because he cannot imagine what that action would be he assumes that the music is the product of his thoughts "tending to ambition, [plotting] unlikely wonders." This interpretation best aligns with Richard's understanding the music as "a sign of love." If the music were making him feel sadness or remorse he would understand not it to be a product of love, but of cruelty. It therefore stands to reason that Richard's comments about madness refer to something other than a resignation to death precipitated by the mounting weight of regret, which Shakespeare had already depicted in *Richard III* with the execution of Duke of Clarence.

In the final scene of Richard II's life, his murderers rush into his cell. Three of them are struck down before Richard finally falls. The man who lived always within the confines of a series of adopted roles, lived for their symbolic value and not for their substance, finds, in the waning moments of his life the identity that had eluded him and the will to fight to defend that identity. The tragedy of Richard II is that he only became fully himself in the moment of his death.

A Different Kind of Renaissance

Richard II's renaissance moment is different from the renaissance moment of Richard of Gloucester in *3 Henry VI*. For Gloucester the act of rebirth was embodied in the newly discovered ability to mint identity through active participation in role playing. His was the model of renaissance "self-fashioner." Richard II has an entirely different experience. When his play begins he is capable of assuming many roles, but incapable of filling those roles with personal substance. He lacks some essential component of his humanity. A component he does not finally discover until the end of his life. It is tempting to read his final revelation, as Brockbank does, as an attempt to return to the medieval model, as a desire to resume his place in the Great Chain of Being. But this reading denies Richard the full force of his transfiguration. Rather than an attempt to return to the past, Richard's renaissance moment looks forward. His final scene sets the stage for the central paternal relationships that will define *1* and *2 Henry IV*.

Robert Hunter argues that in order to properly understand the relationships between Hal, his father, and Falstaff one must understand the cultural impact of another historical renaissance moment, the Protestant Reformation. Hunter believed that one of the intellectual off-shoots of the Reformation, Luther's conception of "the calling," played an essential role in understanding the anxieties that drove the relationships between the central characters.

The concept of the calling, whose root idea is that secular labor has moral value, came into being in the early stages of the Reformation. Originally it was sympathetic with the medieval conception of secular labor as a necessary, but morally neutral. But, “with the development of the conception of *sola fide* in all its consequences, and...the increasingly sharp emphasis against the Catholic *consilia evangelica* of the monks as dictates of the devil, the calling grew in importance” (Weber 40). The Reformation viewed the mission of the monasteries, with their emphasis on worldly renunciation, as “selfish, withdrawing from temporal obligations. In contrast, labour in a calling appears to [Luther] as the outward expression of brotherly love” (41). This renunciation of the monastic life, as well as its reasoning, also applies to the late reign of Richard II. Richard’s reign, with its emphasis on ceremonial displays and its lack of any substantial action, could also be described as a selfish renunciation of temporal duty. His famous speech of resignation in the third act highlights Richard’s identification with the monastic life,

I’ll give my jewels for a set of beads;
 My gorgeous palace for a hermitage;
 My gay apparel for an almsman’s gown;
 My figured goblets for a dish of wood;
 My sceptre for a palmer’s walking staff;
 My subjects for a pair of carved saints... (III. iii.147-152)

Richard's realization, in prison, that he has "wasted time" is built around his failure to take his responsibilities seriously.

A final comparison between the renaissance moments of Richard III and Richard II reveals how their alignment towards the super-natural shapes their transformation. For Richard III there is no sense of higher order. He is a man whose prowess in self-transformation is dedicated solely to the satisfaction of his lust for power. Consequently, he is transformed from an unusually bloody combatant in a civil war into a creature that Queen Margaret describes as:

A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death:
 That dog, that had his teeth before his eyes,
 To worry lambs, and lap their gentle blood;
 That excellent grand tyrant of the earth,
 That reigns in galled eyes of weeping souls;
 That foul defacer of God's handiwork
 ...let loose to chase us to our graves. (IV. Iv. 48-54)

His transformation so irrevocably damns him that on the eve of his last battle he reflects, "I shall despair. There is no creature loves me; and if I die, no soul will pity me—and wherefore should they, since that I myself find in myself no pity to myself?" Richard II discovers that self-definition is only valuable in so far as it aids in living a good life, in tune with the cosmic harmony. If Richard III

empties himself to gain the power to take on many forms, Richard II abandons empty forms. In doing so he realizes that the heart of the human condition lies in finding comfort in our existential limitations. This is a different kind of renaissance moment, and it is hinged less on the idea of self-fashioning than it is on the idea that outward form is essentially irrelevant because “every legitimate calling has exactly the same worth in the eyes of God” (Weber 41). This realization allows Richard II to experience love, extend friendship, take responsibility, and in his final moments achieve a kind of regal bearing that had eluded him throughout the first four acts of the play.

The Politics of Expediency: Consequences of Political Renaissance

Henry IV remains a mysterious figure to modern critics. One finds a great deal written about Prince Hal and Falstaff while very little is said about the king. The critic Anne Marie McNamara writes that “[his] dominance has been unaccountably neglected” (432). According to McNamara it was “the avowed nature, function, and theme of this history play” to “[teach] through historical examples the political lessons that the Tudors thought necessary and proper for all Englishmen to learn” (423). As a result, it was only natural to read the king as the protagonist. McNamara argues that *Henry IV* centers on the idea “of obedience to the ruler as God’s deputy” (433). This understanding of the play follows in the tradition of Tillyard, who argued that the history plays serve as models of political and cosmological stability. However, this model of kingship is replaced in *Richard II* with a new model of monarchical legitimacy, based largely upon the writings of William Thomas, a sixteenth century commentator on the works of Machiavelli (Weissberger 594).

The best argument for the king's role as protagonist throughout the two *Henry IV* plays stems from our understanding of Henry as the manifestation of the principle of legitimacy through political acumen. His actions set the plot of the plays in motion. Henry occupies a precarious position as the first truly political king in all of Shakespeare. That precarious position precipitates the events of *1 & 2 Henry IV*.

The deposition of Richard II breached the established political order of the divine right monarchy (Brockbank 73), and brought about a shift away from monarchical legitimacy by birth to a legitimacy determined by competence in fulfilling the work of the king. Among the consequences of this shift was the new possibility of objecting to the individual man who held the office of the king without challenging the office itself. It is easier for the Earl of Northumberland to rally support for the idea that Bolingbroke is a usurper and murderer, and therefore unfit to sit on the throne, than it is to rally comparable support for the idea that Northumberland's personal desire for the crown warrants an armed insurrection.

By the end of *Richard II*, Bolingbroke's moral status hangs somewhere between scourge and minister. Even the king does not seem to know what he is. This ambiguity drives the conflict that plagues his reign, and is derived from a conflict in the political source material related to the philosophy of Machiavelli.

In Elizabethan England there were two primary and contrasting narratives related to Machiavelli. Shakespeare incorporates the ideas of each at various points. The first was the dramatic representation of Machiavelli. Playwrights such as Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson as well as pamphleteers like Thomas Nashe based their depictions of Machiavelli on the English translation of Gentillet, a French Huguenot, who depicted Machiavelli “not as the Florentine statesman, but as [a] villainous murderer” (Weissberger 590). The second source was William Thomas’s commentary on Machiavelli’s *Discorsi*. Thomas, an English ex-patriot living in Italy, was unacquainted with the *Prince* (593), and does not incorporate any of Machiavelli’s arguments from that text into his political theory. Thomas’s milder account of Machiavelli played a role on Shakespeare’s creation of Henry IV.

According to Thomas an unrestrained multitude was every bit as dangerous as an unrestrained Prince and therefore neither tyranny nor excessive leniency was good government. “If the people...did not respect a superior power, if they were permitted liberty to talk of the ruler’s affairs and the reasons for his laws, they would soon show contempt, disobedience...and a desire to revolt” (595). Henry’s advice to Hal against excessive mingling is based on this precise balancing act between appropriate liberty and proper awe, as are Henry’s frequent attempts to shut down discussion that calls his judgment into question.

Henry's problem is one of perception. He is trying to act as the moderate, but political, Prince described by Thomas. But he is perceived by his opponents (Hotspur and the Bishop of York) as the Gentillet inspired Machiavel. This problem is magnified by the fact that Henry, a naturally reserved man, rules with a subtlety unparalleled in any of Shakespeare's other kings¹¹. The combination of natural reserve and political tactics makes it possible to view Henry IV as either a moderate king maintaining order or as a murdering usurper bent on maintaining his own power. Shakespeare uses Henry, and the uncertainty that swirls around him, to explore the consequences of Richard's deposition.

The House of Percy and the Political Problem

In first scene of *1 Henry IV* the king expresses his desire to fight against the "pagans in those holy fields" (I.i. 24) near Jerusalem. The proposed crusade is a carryover from the end of *Richard II*. Bolingbroke's final lines announce his intent to "make a voyage to the Holy Land, to wash [Richard's] blood off from my guilty hand" (V.vi. 49-50).

By the time *1 Henry IV* begins, about a year after the events of *Richard II*, the motives of this crusade have become tinged with political calculation. Henry's desire to find redemption as a soldier "under [the] blessed cross" now includes the need to provide a common enemy so that his subjects will "be no more oppos'd against acquaintance, kindred, and allies." Political tensions increase when the

Earl of Westmoreland tells the king that Hotspur has refused to turn over hostages taken in a battle against Scottish rebels led by the Earl of Douglas. The king concludes that “for this cause awhile we must neglect our holy purpose to Jerusalem.”

The deposition of Richard II, because it successfully divided the king as man from the king as metaphor, weakened the institutional authority of the office. In addition to ensuring a smooth transition between successive kings, which mitigated the impact of interregnum, hereditary divine right kingship allowed individual holders of the office to borrow against the successes of their predecessors (Scott 286). The destructive behavior of Richard II was tolerated because of the line of succession before him produced “royal kings, fear’d by the breed, and famous by their birth, renowned for their deeds...far from home” (*Richard II* II.i. 52-53). This long tradition of kings linked by hereditary bonds lent prestige to Richard.

Because Henry IV is unable to borrow against that lineage, his position is far more uncertain. He lacks the political space for personal growth. The mission to Jerusalem is a perfect example. What began as a quest for personal redemption is circumscribed by mounting political pressures and is finally scrapped altogether in the face of political expediency (Tillyard 294).

The theme of political expediency is expanded in the next scene, when Henry is forced to confront Hotspur’s refusal to surrender Scottish hostages until

the king has agreed to ransom Edmund Mortimer, the Earl of March, who has been captured by the Welsh rebel Glendower (I.iii. 75-82). The issue of hostages and the ransom of Mortimer form a nexus of two significant political concerns that Henry is forced to address. How he chooses to deal with them sets the stage for the remainder of his reign. The historical circumstances allow us some insight into his motivation.

In 1399 Henry Bolingbroke broke exile and a variety of noble personages flocked to his banner. Bolingbroke's principle grievance, the confiscation of Lancaster, had a bearing on the life of every nobleman who held land in the realm. Among the legal principles that governed England pursuant to Magna Carta "the strongest [were] forms of copyhold [which] carried the right of inheritance without limit" (Scott 277). Richard's confiscation of Bolingbroke's lawful inheritance set a dangerous precedent to other noble families whose lands and wealth were tied to the legal principles of dynastic succession. Consequently, a number of powerful political players joined Bolingbroke in his quest to regain Lancaster. Chief among these were the Earl of Northumberland and his son, Henry "Hotspur" Percy, who, as the wardens of the marches, were responsible for maintaining the border between England and Scotland, and therefore commanded a sizable military contingent. "If any besides Bolingbroke himself acted as kingmaker in the events of 1399, it was the house of Percy" (Saccio *Shakespeare's English Kings* 40).

The house of Percy believed that the vital assistance they had offered during the 1399 campaign would be repaid to them in the form of royal preference during Henry's reign. This belief was validated during the first four years of Henry's reign when the king "loaded them with honors and powers" (41). But by 1403 a rift was forming between the crown and the wardens of the marches. In their capacity as guardians of the Scottish border the Percies "were subject to heavy expenses...and the crown revenues assigned to them to meet these expenses were slow in coming" (41).

Then, in 1402, the Percies defeated a Scottish army led by the Earl of Douglas and captured a large number of Scottish noblemen. The custom of the day allowed Henry to claim the right to ransom high ranking prisoners. But Hotspur refused to remand Douglas on the grounds that Douglas's ransom was "due him in place of the crown revenues Henry had not paid him" (43). Matters between the king and the Percies were complicated by the capture of Edmund Mortimer "by rebels in central Wales" (43). The king's refusal to pay the ransom was perceived as political maneuvering because Mortimer, the heir of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, was theoretically (though through several generational removes, and assuming succession through the female line) Richard II's rightful heir.

Shakespeare conflates several individuals into his "Mortimer." Edmund Mortimer, fifth Earl of March, was six years old when Bolingbroke was crowned,

and remained in a state of semi-captivity in Windsor. It was actually his uncle (Sir Edmund, brother of Roger Mortimer the fourth earl of March, who never held the earldom) who was captured by Glendower's Welsh rebels (Saccio *Shakespeare's English Kings* 44). Regardless, the Mortimer's were linked to the Percies through Elianor, the wife of Hotspur (whom Shakespeare renames "Kate"), and the captivities of Sir Edmund in Wales and the young Earl of March in Windsor aggravated the already tense relationship between the king and his powerful vassal.

When the financial dispute between the king and the house of Percy came to a head over the issue of the Scottish hostages the existence of a possible alternative occupant of the throne proved a political liability. There is no historical evidence that Hotspur ever conditioned his surrender of his hostages on the king ransoming Mortimer. Through this invention Shakespeare links the financial problems that precipitated Hotspur's refusal to surrender Douglas to a potential dispute over the legitimacy of Henry's claim to the crown. Henry's response to the Percies passes through four stages. These four stages allow the audience to trace the development of the new political order from its starting point in traditional medieval political thought.

Stage One-Laying Claim to the Medieval Model

Henry's initial tactic for dealing with the Percies is retreat into the protection of the old political order. The first words he speaks to the Percies indicate this retreat. "My blood," Henry says, "hath been too cold and temperate, unapt to stir at these indignities" (I.iii. 1-2). In the first chapter I argued that blood is used as the distinguishing characteristic separating the monarch from his subjects. Henry's warning that "I will from henceforth rather be myself" relies on the same language of invocation that Richard used when he described the king's name being "twenty thousand names" (*Richard II* III.ii. 85).

David Berkeley and Donald Eidson have suggested that honor is the theme of *Henry IV* (27). Berkeley and Eidson's argument is useful in understanding Henry's attempt to solidify his position through the model of divine kingship. Within the medieval model the monarch's function as *fons honorum* made the concept of honor integral to the stability of his position. By defining virtue relative to the will and pleasure of the monarch, the stability of the model is enhanced.

Worcester's response reminds the king that the political landscape has changed. According to Worcester "[the house of Percy] little deserves the scourge of greatness to be us'd on it" (I.iii. 10-11). This comment casts Henry as a scourge that has grown indiscriminate about whom it chastises. Worcester drives the point home by pointing out that Henry enjoys "that same greatness... which our own hands have help to make so portly" (12-13). Henry attempts to cast his

position as derived through his blood, appealing to the implicit power of hereditary divine right. Worcester will have none of it because Henry was not born to the throne. He has been helped into his high position by the aid of powerful friends who now feel themselves unjustly chastised by the man they have elevated. Henry dismisses Worcester rudely, telling him “majesty might never yet endure the moody frontier of a servant brow” (17-18) and promptly turns his attention to the Earl of Northumberland who tries to write the entire dispute off as a misunderstanding.

This attempt may have been successful had not Hotspur interjected with a length account of the events following the battle with Douglas. In doing so he draws out a series of distinctions between himself, cast in the role of defender of the realm, and “a certain lord, neat and trimly dressed” who makes a series of ridiculous criticisms and demands on behalf of the absent king without ever having shed a single drop of sweat or blood. The implication of Hotspur’s speech, lost on everyone present except the king, is that Henry, like the vain courtier, is a playing a high class game of dress-up at the expense of better men than himself.

Later, in private, Hotspur claims that he will “lift the down-trod Mortimer as high in the air as this unthankful King, as this ingrate and canker’d Bolingbroke” (I.iii. 133-134). He then lays out the Percies argument that Mortimer is the rightful heir to Richard. This argument will be recycled by Worcester in the parley before Shrewsbury. In that exchange, Worcester claims

that Henry perjured himself at Doncaster when he “did nothing purpose ‘gainst the state, nor claim no further than your new-fall’n right, the seat of Gaunt, dukedom of Lancaster” (V.i. 43-45). This claim of ignorance, Saccio argues, is difficult to reconcile with a family “as capable and experienced as the Percies” and so one should suppose that the Percies must have had “some perception of what the outcome would be” (*Shakespeare’s English Kings* 41).

Stage Two-Might Makes Right

Eventually Henry abandons the attempt to fortify his political position by drawing upon the imagery of the medieval divine right king. Instead he transitions to a stance of legitimacy through force. At Shrewsbury he refuses Hal’s offer to fight a single combat with Hotspur. Instead he offers Worcester, who is acting as Hotspur’s emissary, a choice between an amicable truce and what he calls “rebuke and dread correction” (V. i. 111). Embracing a “might makes right” mentality allows Henry to externalize responsibility for his actions. The rationale he gives Hal for refusing the single combat bears this out. “And, Prince of Wales, so dare we venture thee,” the king says, “albeit, considerations infinite do make against it” (101-102). Henry is saying that if he thought Hal was capable of defeating Hotspur in single combat he would take the calculated risk.

The king doubts Hal’s ability, but he is confident in the totality of his forces. Hotspur and his allies lack the necessary manpower to overcome the

king's army. Within the king there is an intellectual conflict between pragmatic politics and chivalric politics. Pragmatism wins.

Stage Three-Resignation to Fate

After Shrewsbury the king does not appear again until the third act of 2 *Henry IV*. When he reappears the audience notices that this not the same man. His soliloquy on sleep relies heavily on imagery of a ship tossed in a tempestuous sea, and casts the king as a man who has become unmoored. A cabin boy, Henry says, in the rigging of ship in the middle of a storm can sleep soundly but a king provided with all the comforts imaginable must toss and turn even more fitfully than the ship (III.i. 19-30). "Uneasy," Henry concludes, "lies the head that wears a crown" (30).

This soliloquy gives us our first real insight into the interior character of the king. What we find is a man totally shaken and very much afraid. Warwick ensures the king that the momentary problems will pass and the rebellion led by Northumberland will be "cool'd" (44), but the king knows better. His next words are a continuation of the soliloquy, only now with an audience. Henry laments,

O God, that one might read the book of fate,
 And see the revolution of the times
 Make mountains level, and the continent,
 Weary of solid firmness, melt itself
 Into the sea, and other times to see
 The beachy girdle of the ocean
 Too wide for Neptune's hips; how chance's mocks
 And changes fill the cup of alteration
 With divers liquors! (III.i. 45-53)

David Bergeron suggests that the reference to the "book of fate" and the "revolution of the times" indicates that Shakespeare is engaged in historiography, the production of historical perspective ("Shakespeare Makes History" 235). However, this interpretation ignores how Henry's response to his own ignorance of the future results in a moment of resignation. The imagery of a violent ocean in this speech is a continuation of the king's soliloquy and serves as a reflection on his situation. The image is tied to "alteration" and "the revolution of the times" that serves to raise the lowly and fell the mighty. The king is realizing that the doctrine of legitimacy through force is problematic precisely because power retains a far greater degree of fluidity than the old medieval model of divine right. This point is driven home when the king recalls that less than a decade ago Northumberland was Richard's staunchest ally.

This concept of the “revolution of the times,” rather than indicating and entrance into “the province of history,” (Bergeron 235) recalls Boethius, whose *Consolation* was prominent in English translation, who viewed changes in Fortune as the revolution of a wheel. The worldview of Boethius predates the medieval model and seems to indicate that Henry’s historical perspective has regressed.

Divine right theory developed throughout the medieval and early modern periods as the logical consequence of the progressive application of Christian theology to the Pythagorean doctrine of the microcosm. By the time Shakespeare wrote the second tetralogy “it was commonplace that order in the state duplicates the order of the macrocosm¹²” (Tillyard 88). Within this understanding of political order, the mixed nature of the king, and his divinely appointed place in the structure of the state, served as the linchpin that held the structure together. The separation of the mixed aspect of Richard’s monarchical character served to unravel the metaphor of kingship, and reset the political dynamic to the Fortune oriented political cosmology of Boethius.

Henry’s conclusion that anyone who could read the “book of fate” would ultimately “shut the book and sit him down and die” is indicative of the despair Henry feels over the prospect of maintaining his power in the face of continued challenges.

Stage Four-Personal Politics

Fortunately, Shakespeare does not abandon Henry's political development to repetitious cycle of Fortune's wheel. Warwick immediately points out that it is men and their actions, and not some ambiguous fate, shape events. Here Bergeron's claim that Shakespeare is engaged in the process of historiography gains traction. Northumberland, Warwick argues, was false to Richard and therefore would likely prove false again. Order in the state is not divinely appointed. History is not determined by fortune. Order and history are the products of particular men acting in predictable ways. Change is possible when one is able to alter the character of men.

This understanding lies at the heart of Henry's deathbed rebuke of Hal "Thy life did manifest thou lov'dst me not," the king says, moments after accusing Hal of wishing for his death. The king charges Hal with having hidden "a thousand daggers in thy thoughts which thou hast whetted on thy stony heart, to stab at half an hour of my life" (IV.v. 106-108). Henry goes on to bemoan the state of his kingdom when "Harry the fifth is crown'd" (119).

Perhaps the most famous genre distinction of twentieth-century criticism comes from Lily B. Campbell, who argued that the distinction between history and tragedy is essentially the difference between private ethics and public politics. McNamara succinctly expresses Campbell's distinction when she says "in a word, history is not tragedy. *Henry IV* is not *King Lear*." It is ironic that the plays that McNamara sets at odds are *Henry IV* and *King Lear*, because Henry rebukes Hal

in terms that are the direct progenitor of *Lear* and bear a striking similarity to the tragic world that *Lear* realizes.

Henry's rebuke brings to the surface all of the fears and concerns that a very pragmatic king has observed in his kingdom during his tumultuous time upon the throne. "When that my care could not withhold thy riots," the king asks, "what wilt thou do when riot is thy care?" The question is no sooner asked than it is answered, "O, thou wilt be a wilderness again, peopled with wolves, thy old inhabitants!" The connection to *Lear* extends, in this image, beyond the miscommunication of parents and children. This last line raises the king's concerns to the level of cataclysm, to the barren and wasted landscape where Edgar, Kent, and Albany find themselves at the end of Shakespeare's most apocalyptic play. It does so by the reference to the "old inhabitants," the wolves. It was King Edgar, just come into his reign at the end of *Lear*, who was responsible for driving out the wolves that had overrun England prior to his reign. Michael Drayton, in his 1612 poem *Polyolbion*, writes "O Edgar...by whom was first destroy'd the multitude of wolves, that long this Land annoy'd" (Summers 181).

Tillyard suggests that this reference to the wolves foreshadows the events of the Wars of the Roses. But it seems more likely, given the unifying theme of paternal rejection, that he was already looking forward to the final moments of *Lear*. Hal's speech, in his defense, reveals how successful the king's rebuke has been:

Coming to look on you, thinking you dead,
 And dead almost, my liege, to think you were,
 I spake unto this crown as having sense,
 And thus upbraided it: 'The care of thee depending
 Hath fed upon the body of my father;
 Therefore thou best of gold art worst of gold.
 Other, less fine in carat, is more precious,
 Preserving life in med'cine potable;
 But thou, most fine, most honour'd, most renown'd
 Hast eat thy bearer up' (IV.v. 155-164).

Henry forgives Hal and offers him some last advice. Hal must, his father says, make friends with those who supported his Henry and "busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels, that action hence borne out may waste the memory of the former days" (213-215). This is good advice. It is wise, prudent, pragmatic, and timely. And yet, there is something about the total effect of the scene with its stinging rebuke and lavish forgiveness that suggests that there is still some power of personal manipulation left in this fading king. Has his final encounter with his son been a calculated ploy to break Hal, once and for all, of the wildness that has beset his youth? It says something about the man Henry has become that this question can neither be answered nor dismissed.

The full process of political alteration; that began with the failed attempt to lay claim to the medieval model, to deferring to a doctrine of force, to resigning oneself to Fortune, to finally viewing political choices through the lens of personal manipulation, has made Henry more inscrutable than ever. In his final moments there is doubt that he himself knows what is true and what is merely calculated. “God knows,” he says “by what by-paths and indirect crook’d ways I met this crown” (183-185). All he can say is that it *seems* as though he had “snatch’d [the crown] with boist’rous hand” (191). But there is no final observation or moment of clarity when he outlines his own thoughts or feelings on the matter. Henry has become, over the course of his reign, the incarnation of a model of politics that relies on manipulation and deception. It is, therefore, fitting that his personal thoughts should, even at the last, remain unspoken. Such thoughts are, he says, reserved for him and for God.

The Realized Ideal

None of Shakespeare's great plays, with the possible exception of *Merchant*, has been as routinely savaged by modern critics as has *Henry V*. George Bernard Shaw declared the play jingoistic, and condemned Henry as an idiot war-monger. A.C. Bradley was convinced that Shakespeare could not possibly "have intended such a disagreeable ending" (Hedrick 470). The king has been decried as an aspiring rapist (McEachern 33). Harold Bloom claims that the play is a dismal decline from the "Falstaffiad" and proclaimed that Shakespeare could not possibly have approved of the man who "murdered" Falstaff. Goddard, Hazlitt, and Rabkin argue that the play's flaws are so ham-handed that they can only be taken seriously if we assume Shakespeare intended to imbed ironies that would have escaped the common viewer of the play (Levin 134-135). This view has become so prominent that both Hedrick and McEachern state it as the "critical

commonplace” (Hedrick 470, McEachern 33) despite its historical inaccuracy (Smith 3).

None of these critics treat the play as part of a four play cycle. Rather, they seem to embrace Tillyard’s claim in *Shakespeare’s History Plays* that Shakespeare attempted “jettison[ed] the character [Prince Hal] he had created and substitute[ed] one which, though lacking all consistency, satisfied the requirements both of the chroniclers and the popular tradition” (306). According to Harold Bloom, one cannot recognize the person of the prince in the king (319-327). While Bloom fails to provide a discrete and well-researched rationale for his suggestion, it expresses what many readers of the second tetralogy have experienced.

Tillyard suggests that Henry V is a representation of an overarching political ideal, but that Shakespeare was forced to sacrifice Hal’s humanity to fit him into the mold of the ideal king (305). According to Tillyard the “character whom Shakespeare had created in Prince Hal had no connection at all with the inhuman copy-book hero of Polydore Vergil” (306). Grace Tiffany, following Tillyard’s example, tries to cast Hal as an Alcibiades figure who questions the validity of the state before his energy is co-opted (Tiffany 368).

If one views Hal and Henry V as separate characters living in separate narratives, then the denunciations of *Henry V* make a great deal of sense. But, “the reader must not stop with...phenomenalistic experience...he is to proceed to

a synthesis of the work as a whole” (Heninger xiii). With a cosmological approach to history in mind the question is whether it is possible to think of Prince Hal and King Henry V as one man, a unified self.

The best place to begin tracing the development from Hal to Henry is the soliloquy on ceremony after encounter with Williams in the camp on the eve of the battle of Agincourt. Tillyard asserts (309), and Harold Goddard agrees (243-244), that this soliloquy is “splendid poetry and yet somehow extrinsic to the play”. The rationale is that Henry “a great lover of battles mentions maintaining the peace” (Williamson 279). However, Marilyn Williamson suggests¹³ that this speech can “yield insight into characteristics of Henry which Shakespeare develops over virtually the whole tetralogy” (275). The meaning of the speech is revealed when is compared to the career path that Henry initiates at the outset of *Henry IV*. The soliloquy begins:

Upon the King! ‘Let us our lives, our souls,
Our debts, our careful wives,
Our children and our sins lay on the King!’
We must bear all. (IV.i. 226-229)

This opening echoes the encounter with Williams, who maintains that Henry is responsible for the soul of any man who might die in the next day’s battle. Henry argues that the king cannot be held responsible for the souls of the

men who die in his service. But, once he is alone, he seems to forget his nuanced rationalizations, and begins to contemplate the weight of Williams's argument. Williamson believes that these opening lines reveal "how shaken Henry is by the encounter and how sorry for himself he feels about it" (278). I disagree. Henry's statement that "[he] must bear all" is not a statement of self-pity. It is a statement of surprise.

Henry's expectations are based on past interactions with common men who "tell [him] flatly [he] is no proud Jack, like Falstaff, but a Corinthian, a lad of mettle...and when [he] is king of England, [he] shall command all the good lads in Eastcheap" (II.iv. 11-14). Henry believes that he has "sounded the very basestring of humility" and is therefore prepared to deal with common men.

Nothing during his reign has upset this expectation. But Williams's comment catches the king off guard. Henry's response that the king does not "purpose not [soldier's] death when [he] purpose[s] their services" (IV.i.155-156) does not answer the Williams's main point; that death in battle is painful, and each man's death leaves brokenness in its wake.

Henry tacitly admits, by avoiding the issue, that he is responsible for "their wives left poor behind them" and for "children rawly left" (137-139). The opening lines of the soliloquy, with their reflection upon debts, wives, children, and souls (that are no longer present to care for earthly concerns), show the king in a moment of clarity about the nature of kingship. This is the final step in a process of evolution that began in *I Henry IV*. This evolution is facilitated by Sir

John Falstaff. Understanding how Henry implements the lessons he took from Falstaff is essential to understanding Henry as king.

Our introduction to Henry comes in the second scene of *1 Henry IV*.

Falstaff opens the scene by asking the time of day and Hal¹⁴ replies:

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-coloured taffeta, I see no reason why thou shouldst be so superfluous to demand the time of day. (I.ii. 6-12)

The themes of time and waste are intricately connected throughout Henry's life. One cannot spend as much time in the company of Falstaff as Hal does and not have the issue of wastefulness be prominent in one's life. Falstaff "mocks the very idea of a social totality by conflating his own pleasure-seeking body with the body politic" (Bertram 297). For Hal, as the heir apparent, to the realm this trend of wastefulness takes on significant connotations¹⁵. This wastefulness in Hal's behavior was first established in *Richard II*, when his father refers to him as "my unthrifty son" (V.iii.1), and seems to have become part of the young prince's signature style almost immediately upon his father's assumption of the crown. Such wastefulness was a cause for concern for Henry IV, whose

deposition of Richard II was grounded on a series of offenses that stemmed from Richard's failure to act as a responsible steward of the realm.

But Hal's wasteful behavior is part of a calculated maneuver. His first soliloquy, at the end of the second act of *1 Henry IV*, echoes Richard of Gloucester's speech on his willingness to assume a variety of roles to catch the English crown. He says:

I know you all, and will awhile uphold
The unyoked humour 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 wonder'd at,
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapours that did seem to strangle him...
And like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My reformation, glittering 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 offence a skill;
Redeeming time when men think least I will. (I.ii. 190-212)

Unlike Richard III, who uses roleplay to “smile, and murder whiles I smile” (*Henry VI* III.ii), Hal uses offense to mask his truly regal nature. Shakespeare assures the audience that his transformation will do far more than simply reveal his true nature. The concept of “redeeming time” plays an important role in understanding Hal’s wasteful years. This preparation will not just excuse the wantonness of his early years. It will reveal how much he actively profited from them¹⁶. The concept of the redemption of time reappears in *Henry V* when Henry warns the French ambassador that the Dauphin “comes o’er us with our wilder days, not measuring what use we made of them” (I.ii. 268). Henry takes three primary lessons from the *Henry IV* plays into his soliloquy on ceremony: the lesson of appetitive time, the lesson of roleplay, and the lesson of responsibility.

The Lesson of Appetitive Time

Falstaff “copes with the fact of time’s linearity by stoutly denying it, by doing his best to live his life within the circular time of appetite” (Hunter 2). He adopts this perspective to free himself from the fear of rectilinear time and the inevitability of death. Living from one appetite to the next can, for a time, hold at bay the realization that life is bound towards a definite ending. This circular time of appetite is emblematic of waste. It is built around repeatable pleasures: capons, sack, and lusty indulgences. One moment does not build towards the next.

But Hal is not Falstaff. The final scene that Hal and Falstaff share (not counting the rejection scene) ends with the arrival of grave news for Hal from his father at Westminster. Hal's response to this news reveals that he has never fully embraced Falstaff's philosophy of time. "By heaven, Poins," the prince says, "I feel me much to blame, so idly to profane the precious time, when tempest of commotion, like the south borne with black vapour, doth begin to melt and drop upon our bare unarmed heads" (*2 Henry IV* II. iv.361-365).

While "Falstaff embodies the unproductive sensual pleasures" (Bertram 297), Henry desires progress. In the soliloquy on ceremony he returns to this conception of circular time on different terms. The slave, Henry says,

Can sleep so soundly...
 With a body filled and vacant mind
 Gets him to rest, crammed with distressful bread;
 Never sees the horrid night, the child of hell,
 But like a lackey from the rise to set
 Sweats in the eye of Pheobus, and all night
 Sleeps in Elysium; next day after dawn
 Doth rise and help Hyperion to his horse,
 And so follows the ever-running year
 With profitable labor to his grave. (265-273)

Henry has learned that the repetition of life presents particular advantages. In the same way that Falstaff is able to use his appetites as a momentary shield against the fear of death, so the common man is able to use the repeatable process of labor, food, and sleep to pass through “horrid night, the child of hell” and continue to work to steadily improve his moral condition through profitable labor. This doctrine of “Elizabethan Calvinism is intrinsic to the characterization of Falstaff and his relationship with Hal” (Davies 351).

The Lesson of (Role) Play

When Falstaff’s strategy of living by appetite fails, “he moves to his second strategy. He answers the reproaches of his superego with the exhilarating language of play...Falstaff has the ability to make anything appear ridiculous by pretending to be it” (Hunter 3). But Falstaff’s role playing is not all pointed parody. To argue that Falstaff’s play is always reducible to mockery ignores moments when Falstaff uses role playing to express his anxieties and fears (his plea that Hal not “banish plump Jack” can hardly be called mockery).

Even in *1 Henry IV* Falstaff must know he is dying. He must also know that his death, unless he is unlucky enough to die in battle, will be the result of his numerous vices. His strategy of avoiding thoughts of death through hedonistic wallowing carries with it (even in Falstaff’s day) the potential for disastrous

physical consequences. In response to these mounting physical challenges (gout, pox, bulk, etc) Falstaff assumes perhaps the two most effective of his various identities (one parody, one not). The first Poins names, “Monsieur Remorse” (I.ii.220), and the second Falstaff calls, “youth.”

Monsieur Remorse is an ape of the “Puritan gentleman” (Hunter 3). When Hal berates Falstaff for his mounting debts, his laziness, and his shirking, Falstaff falls into the role of the meek penitent. Through parody of contrition Falstaff cathects his sense of shame. “Hal, I prithee trouble me no more with vanity... thou hast done much harm upon me, Hal, God forgive thee for it: before I knew thee, Hal, I knew nothing, and now I am, if a man should speak truly, little better than one of the wicked” (*I Henry IV* I.ii. 80-95). This pretense of innocence mocks the very idea of innocence, and allows Falstaff to continue ignoring the consequences of his choice in lifestyle.

Youth is perhaps Falstaff’s greatest assumed identity. Throughout the course of *I Henry IV* one can almost be fooled into thinking that Falstaff is as young and vital as he pretends to be. Mental nimbleness belies physical reality. When the BBC produced all four plays of the second history tetralogy as part of their effort to preserve live performances of each of Shakespeare’s plays they created a company to act both parts of *Henry IV* and *Henry V*. Though Nym, Bardolph, and the rest of the tavern company who appear on stage in *Henry V* are played by the same actors (with no additional make up or prosthesis to make them appear as if they have aged) the characters appear markedly older in Falstaff’s

absence. His linguistic and mental gymnastics created an illusion that encompasses the characters surrounding him. When Falstaff dies they are revealed for what they really are; old, brow beaten, poor, drunk, and somewhat nasty. But, while he is alive, Falstaff's friends are sheltered in the capaciousness of his intellectual vitality (he is after all "witty in himself and the cause of wit in other men"). When Falstaff says of the those he is *robbing* "they hate us youth" (*Henry IV* II.ii. 84), we are inclined, for a moment, to believe that his victims really do object to him on those grounds.

While there is comedy in Falstaff's attempt to portray himself as youthful there is also sadness. As with his philosophy of appetitive time, the power of play can only hold out for so long against the inevitable realization that he is an old man (*2 Henry IV* II.iv. 271). The exchange between Falstaff and Doll Tearsheet, observed by Hal and Poins, is a moment when Falstaff appears to reveal himself genuinely. "I am old, I am old" he says, "thou't forget me when I'm gone" (271-276).

Falstaff's acumen with role playing also translates into the speech on ceremony. On the eve of Agincourt Henry goes out into the camp and speaks to his soldiers, "calls them brothers, friends, countrymen. Upon his royal face there is no note how dread an army hath enrouned him...but freshly looks and overbears attaint with cheerful semblance and sweet majesty" (34-40). Henry is playing the fearless king. But, in the encounter with Williams, he admits that he

believes the king to be as frightened as anyone else. The soldiers' response to this suggestion is full of fear and the sense of impending catastrophe.

Williamson points out that some critics have argued that the episode with Williams is ironic commentary upon the message of the chorus, as if the two passages were descriptions of the same event (276). However, as Williamson points out, the two passages are clearly meant to describe two different events. One details Henry's affect on the troops, the other the troops' affect on Henry. The vehicle of role-playing allows Henry to take both perspectives. While Henry recognizes the utility of role playing, he also recognizes that the role is not the full reality. In the ceremony soliloquy Henry says of ceremony;

I am a king that find thee, and I know
 'Tis not the balm, the sceptre and the ball,
 The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
 The intertissued robe of gold and pearl,
 The farced title running 'fore the king,
 The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp
 That beats upon the high shore of the world. (255-261)

This catalog of the theatrical props of kingship calls to mind Richard II's similar catalog as he contemplates trading in his "jewels for a set of beads; my gorgeous palace for a hermitage; my gay apparel for an almsman's gown; my

figur'd goblets for a dish of wood; my scepter for a palmers walking staff"
(Richard II III.iii. 147-151). For Richard, the cosmetic trappings of the monarchy were the kingship. The role was the substance. But Henry has spent too long in the company of Falstaff to make this mistake. A cushion can be a crown, a bar chair can be a throne, and a fat old man can mime the king. As a result Henry is forced to look past the apparel of the monarchy to find the deeper meaning of the crown, and he owes much of his success in that endeavor to his time with Falstaff.

A thought experiment is potentially illuminating. What kind of a king would a man with Hal's natural intellect, talent, and energy have become if he had come to intellectual maturity under the sole tutelage of his father? If I am correct in suggesting that the political development of Henry IV's life culminated in the rise of personal politics, of manipulation, and deception (even to the point of potential self-deception) the consequences are not hard to imagine. Hal would in all ways have surpassed his father and without the counterweight of Falstaff to guide him it seems likely that Hal's superior talents would have manifested themselves in a reign not unlike that of Richard III.

The Lesson of Responsibility

Henry would not be surprised by Williams's argument if he had been present for Falstaff's musing on honor. In the moments before the battle against Hotspur at Shrewsbury, Hal parts company from Falstaff by saying, "thou owest God a death" (*1 Henry IV V.i. 126*). This line foreshadows when Henry says to

Williams that “if [the soldiers] die unprovided, no more is the King guilty of their damnation than he was before guilty of those impieties for which they are now visited” (IV.i. 172-174). Henry goes on to argue that death in battle is no different than death in bed, and the individual should prepare for each the same way. But this is not true, and Henry should know better. Kings order battles; no one orders illness. There is a question of timeliness in the death that comes in battle that Falstaff points out in his catechism on honor:

[The death one owes to God is] not due yet, I would be loath to pay him before his day— what need I be so forward with him that calls not on me? Well, ‘tis no matter, honour pricks me on. Yea, but how if honour prick me off when I come on, how then? 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...therefore I’ll none of it. (*1 Henry IV V.i.127-133*)

Falstaff rightly, if incompletely, understands the nature of war. Battle is capable of doing irreparable harm to individuals, and (as Williams points out) to their family and friends. Had Hal been present for Falstaff’s “catechism” he would have been mindful of the potential outcome of his encounter with Williams in advance, and hopefully would have been better prepared to address the issue. Henry’s inability to anticipate Williams is the natural outgrowth of Hal’s

assumption that Falstaff, who he rightly perceives as a shirker, has no valuable insights on the nature and consequences of warfare. This reveals the inaccuracy of Hal's belief that he has "sounded the basestring of humility" (*1 Henry IV V.i.*).

Henry learns that wars must be carefully chosen because their consequences are far reaching and irreparable. The lesson that Hal failed to take from Falstaff he is forced to learn for himself first hand in the encounter with Williams. Henry's soliloquy is a repetition of Falstaff's catechism on honor and reveals how much the king's thought processes have been shaped by Falstaff.

O be sick, great greatness,
 And bid thy ceremony give thee cure!
 Think'st thou the fiery fever will go out
 With titles blown from adulation?
 Will it give place to flexure and low bending?
 Canst thou, when thou command'st the beggar's knee
 Command the health of it? (*Henry V IV.i.247-253*)

Ceremony, like honor, has no skill in surgery. As a result the king must be especially careful when committing his subjects to enterprises that carry the risk of injury. Henry is forced to work out the lesson for himself. Unlike Richard, who exercised his authority capriciously, Henry learns "that others have a claim on the King, and that the King has obligations to others (Tebbetts 9).

By looking at the soliloquy in its constituent parts one sees Falstaff's influence on how Henry thinks, and his response to Williams. This visible Falstaffian influence suggests that, when *Henry V* is viewed as one part of a cycle of four plays, the speech on ceremony is an integrated (and integral) part of the whole, and that the man who delivers the speech is the same man who spent time in the company of Falstaff. He has changed, but that change has not undone his essential character. Henry's speech is a reflection on the "infinite heart's ease [which kings must] neglect that private men enjoy!" This distinction between king and private man lies at the center of the perceived discrepancy between Hal and Henry.

Hal is "prince in reality whose appearance obscures the truth" (Tillyard 234). His regal ambitions and goals are masked by his actions in his capacity as a private man. Once he becomes king Hal's character is inverted. To borrow a metaphor from geology it is as if the two aspects of Henry's personality, his "twin born greatness," are tectonic plates. Prior to his ascension his regal self exists in a state of subduction, with the witty, challenging, and brash personality overlaying it. His last words with his father, his father's subsequent death, and his own ascension to the crown are seismic events that rise up the regal self, and subduct the personal. The encounter with Williams is the psychological equivalent of an earthquake, opening a small fissure that allows us to see that Hal still exists inside the person of the king.

From this perspective it is easy to identify Tillyard's error. He concludes that the characters are not consistent merely because the characters do not seem to mesh on the surface. He ignores the fact that it would be entirely inappropriate for Henry to behave like Hal. This does not mean that Hal is extinguished, as psychological criticism has suggested (Tebbetts 8). In fact, Hal's personality is present throughout *Henry V*. There is no doubt that Hal is speaking to the French ambassador who brings the tun of tennis balls (despite Tillyard's objection that the "heavy irony and ortundity of the speech compare poorly with the Prince's light ironies...in *Henry IV*"), Hal tells the English soldiers that they "stand like greyhounds in the slips," and it is unquestionably Hal who delivers the famous St. Crispin's Day speech¹⁷. When Henry is alone, speaking his great soliloquy, it is Hal we hear, speaking from inside the king.

Through this interior voice Henry accomplishes what his father could not, the restoration of the legitimacy of the crown. The politics of expediency robbed Henry IV of any external reference he could use to orient his reign. The last days of his life showed a man progressively more concerned with the maintenance of power for its own sake (even to the extent of sanctioning the breach of trust that resulted in the surrender of the rebel forces to Prince John). Henry IV expresses concern for his kingdom, but it is almost impossible to differentiate his concern for his kingdom from his concerns over his own position. Henry IV cannot sleep because "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

There is none, or very little, of that kind of self-concern in Henry V. His soliloquy on ceremony exposes the emptiness of the “place, degree and form” of the monarchy. Flattery and titles will cure no sickness. Henry sees through the glitter of the “balm, the sceptre and the ball, the sword, the mace, the crown imperial, the intertissued robe of gold and pearl” and all the other trappings. For Henry the king’s function is work so that his people can live, work, and sleep soundly not knowing “what watch the King keeps to maintain the peace” (*Henry V* IV.i. 279).

This reference to the king as watchman anticipates a moment in *Lear*. Cordelia is brought into Lear’s presence as he sleeps. Horrified that the frail old man should be left to face the fury of the storm she calls him “poor *perdu*” (*King Lear* IV. Vii. 35). *Perdu*, French for “lost one,” is actually a military title. It refers to the sentry who stands closest to the enemy line. So close, in fact, that it is assumed that he will be lost if the enemy makes any aggressive movement. *Perdu* stands close on to the enemy territory, sees furthest into the darkness beyond the camp, and is the first line of defense against all foes.

For Henry this concept of the primary watchmen, of the *perdu*, lies at the heart of his conception of kingship. Part of the deontological function of the king is to maintain to appearance of ceremony. But ceremony is a tool, not a goal. It is a tool that is put to its best advantage when the goal is the wellness of the common men and women the king must protect.

This is seen in Henry's prayer, which makes no mention of victory in the ensuing battle. Instead Henry prays for two things. He asks God to help the men who have followed him to not be afraid. He also asks forgiveness for "the fault [his] father made in compassing the crown" (290), even though "all that I can do is nothing worth, since that my penitence comes after all, imploring pardon" (299-301). If punishment should fall upon Henry for his father's murder of Richard, Henry asks that it should not also fall upon the men whose welfare is entrusted to him. One cannot imagine such a prayer in the mouth of Henry IV, who asked that "God befriend us as our cause is just!" (*I Henry IV* V.i.120) before the battle of Shrewsbury, or Richard II, who maintained that his divine right to the crown meant that "for every man that Bolingbroke hath press'd...God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay a glorious angel" (*Richard II* III.ii. 58-61). This is the prayer of a man who recognizes the constitutional source of his legitimacy as a monarch (Evans 3) and who has accepted the responsibility of standing the night watch.

Consequences and Conclusion

Richard II separated the two characters of the king, and the cycle of plays cannot be complete until they have been reunited. In the first chapter I suggested Richard's failures were the result of the flattery and inducements of his advisors who steered him into the errors that eroded his legitimacy. Now it seems appropriate to turn attention to the main charge that Bolingbroke levels against

them, “[they] made a divorce betwixt [Richard’s] queen and him, broke the possession of a royal bed” (*Richard II* III.i.12-13).

This idea of divorce, of separation, between the king and queen is an important emblem of the separation of the king’s two bodies. Because of the primacy of laws of inheritance the act of procreation on the part of the king represents the point of conjunction between the king’s physical body (that begets a child) and the king’s political body (that simultaneously begets an heir). Modern productions of the play have read a homosexual implication into Bolingbroke’s charge against “the caterpillars” (Klett 175-177). If such an implication exists it is thematically secondary to the principle political problem.

After this moment there is no hint of eroticism, excepting the jocular lustiness of Falstaff (that, by its nature, is decidedly anti-political), in the tetralogy until the final scenes of *Henry V*. There have been many interpretations of the wooing scene between Henry and Katherine at the end of *Henry V*. Nearly all modern interpretation of this moment rest on the assumption that “the king’s persuasion of...Catherine...takes place under duress: the English have just defeated the French bloodily and overwhelmingly at the Battle of Agincourt, and Catherine has become what Henry terms his ‘capital demand’ (V.ii.96)” (Hedrick 470). This penchant for locating rapaciousness in Henry and his motives has been joined with a trend away from treating Henry as a hero. This interpretation is anachronistic in the extreme. Hall, the chronicler upon whose work the tetralogy

is based, wrote that “as Henry IV was the beginning of discord and division, so was godly matrimony the final end of all dissensions” (Tillyard 43).

Shakespeare goes one step further than Hall, whose comments on godly matrimony are actually directed at the union of Henry Tudor and Elizabeth (a marriage that takes place in *Richard III*), in his representation of Henry and Katherine. Prior to their encounter Katherine sets about to learn English. It has been suggested that this desire to learn English is presumably in preparation for a marriage to a conquering Henry. Admittedly, by act three (when the scene takes place) Henry has taken Harfleur, but there is not yet any indication that he will achieve a victory on the scale of Agincourt (and, given that France was the great military power of continental Europe, no reason to suppose that he will).

Hedrick points out that Shakespeare has altered history by making “this encounter their first, whereas in the play’s historical source they had met several times before” (478). In actuality there is no textual indication that this is the first meeting between Henry and Katherine. Shakespeare is a well known for eliding over events that he assumes the audience will be familiar with. I believe there is no reason to suppose that Henry will be successful in conquering France, in conjunction with the fact that the historical Henry and Katherine met several times before their marriage, actually provides an informative lens that allows us to properly read Katherine’s desire to learn English. If Henry and Katherine have met before then her desire to learn English (she is the one who initiates the lessons) suggests that there is something more than the rapacious desire for

conquest between them. Given the political implications of regal procreation, the fact that Katherine chooses to begin her English lessons with a catalog of body parts is significant in determining the tone of the scene.

During the wooing scene Henry employs the lessons in role-playing he took from Falstaff, and presents himself as a “plain king” (124). By asking that “Catherine teach *him* the terms by which to woo her” (Hedrick 478) Henry puts his prospective queen in the position of control as far as the situation will allow. There can be no doubt that a marriage would help him to consolidate his victory. But, it would be foolish to think that a failure to secure Katherine’s love will in any way diminish what he has won. The assumption should therefore be that his attempt to win her affection is made in good faith and is informed by the shift in our understanding of the nature of kingship throughout the second tetralogy.

One last comparison is illustrative of the shift in thinking about kingship that has taken place between *Richard II* and the wooing scene at the end of *Henry V*. In the second act of *Richard II* the king is contemplating his defeat. He turns to Aumerle and says,

Let us sit upon the ground
 And tell sad stories of the death of kings;
 How some have been deposed; some slain in war,
 Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed;
 Some poison’d by their wives; some sleeping kill’d;
 All murdered. (II. ii)

The poetic flow of this passage mirrors Williams's description of the horrible fates that await each of the king's subjects that die in battle. While Richard focuses not on the loss to the common soldiers, who were certainly also slain in the wars he mentions, but on the loss of a crown, Henry's response to Williams reveals a king who places a higher priority on the well being of his subjects than he does on his own ambitions. This is the great political transformation of the second history tetralogy. Not from the medieval model to the Machiavellian model, both concerned primarily with the maintenance of monarchical authority, but from the medieval model, through the Machiavellian model, to end, finally, in a theory of kingship that derives its legitimacy from the well-being (if not yet, strictly speaking, the consent) of those being governed. This political renaissance moment has a huge effect on our understanding of the scene between Henry and Katherine.

Henry desires that union be created between England and France. "By the union of marriage" Hall writes, "peace between realm and realm is exalted, and love between country and country is nourished" (Tillyard 45). The critic Constance Hunt argues that in his attempt to win Katherine "Henry's erotic aim here dramatically supplants his earlier martial success...He wants her to love him...He understands that love cannot ultimately be coerced [and] before they kiss, Henry invites her to enter the world as his equal" (4). Hunt goes on to point out that the way the scenes of love contrast to the battles throughout the play

drives home the importance of erotic love to the play. Henry has gone through a lengthy process of development (culminating in his meditation on what it means to be a king) to become the man who is capable of both winning a kingdom in battle and a woman in love. Katherine must freely return Henry's love because the shift in political consciousness that forms the intellectual thrust of the tetralogy has made Henry into the kind of king who will not force himself upon her. This love, born out of Henry's ability to place Katherine and her wishes ahead of his own, is finally responsible for the union of England and France, Henry and Kate, and, in the conception of an heir, the reunification of the king's two bodies.

Endnotes:

¹ Starn, Randolph. "Renaissance Redux" *The American Historical Review* Vol. 103, No. 1. p.124.

² C.S. Lewis in the introduction to *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* argues that speaking of "the Renaissance" serves to "impose a factitious unity on all the untidy and heterogeneous events which were going on in those centuries." Hereafter, I will not refer to the Renaissance as a proper noun, but as renaissance in the incidental sense.

³ That such a transition occurred at all is not an indisputable proposition. Proponents of the Continuity Thesis have argued that modern thought proceeded "by an uninterrupted series of scarcely perceptible improvements, from doctrines professed in the heart of the medieval schools" (Duhem, Pierre. *Le systeme du monde: histoire de doctrines cosmologiques de Platon a Copernic*. Vol. 1, part iv. Harvard University Press. 1905. p.38).

⁴ This argument is indebted to Dr. Katharine Maus of the University of Virginia, whose lecture "Prodigal Princes" proved invaluable to my formulation.

⁵ Contemporary GLBT criticism has suggested that the gardening metaphor is used to create an impression that Richard's personal sexual proclivities are

analogously related to his failure to function as a proper king. The play's frequent use of metaphor is related to the "need for propriety and, perhaps more important, [the] need to identify propriety" (Menon 656). However, when taken within its broader historical context this need for propriety is related less to Richard's sexual identity than to the set of improper monarchal actions that I have outlined.

⁶ Bowers argues that Richard III's reign is a punishment for the deposition of Richard II. I would argue that perhaps, at this moment in his playwriting career Shakespeare did not know that he would go back to revisit the subject of Richard II, a play which is far more nuanced on the distinction between a scourge and a minister.

⁷ Romans 12: 2-3 (all references to the Bible will be taken from the King James) I believe this passage was present in Shakespeare's mind as he composed the Richard's final scene. The very next verse is the Scriptural basis for the concept of the body-politic; "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office..."

⁸ For Greenblatt the idea of a universal understanding of a Pythagorean cosmos "assumed that the same beliefs were shared by the entire literate class or indeed the entire population...[and] conceals the role of orthodoxy in the processes of social repression" (Shuger 1). However insightful this objection may be in general, it has very little value when applied to the meaning of a specific play. Shakespeare clearly counted the metaphors of an ordered cosmos among the tools in his dramatic toolbox (Plummer 246) and did not hesitate to deploy them.

⁹ Composed between 1386 and 1390, the prologue of the *Confessio* states that it was commissioned by Richard II.

¹⁰ The prologue mentions the death of Romeo and Juliet twice and each time that death is immediately linked to the cessation of conflict between their families.

¹¹ Of the major characters in Shakespeare I would argue that only Iago exceeds Henry IV in terms of opacity of character. Even Henry's speech on sleep, which includes the famous line "uneasy lies the head that wears the crown" is centered around the horror of insufficient information.

¹² Whether or not this was universally believed, as Tillyard claims, is almost irrelevant. The book of homilies that the crown had printed for individual parishes makes clear that this was a familiar and official doctrine.

¹³ As far as I know she is the first critic to offer the suggestion and I believe that her short essay “The Episode with Williams in *Henry V*” is the finest piece of criticism available on the subject of character continuity.

¹⁴ When referring to the character as he appears in *Henry IV* I will call him “Hal” and when referring to him in *Henry V* I will call him “Henry.”

¹⁵ The first chapter explained how waste lay at the heart of the failed monarchy of Richard II.

¹⁶ This revelation is limited to the audience. The exchange between the two ecclesiastic at the outset of *Henry V* on the astonishing nature of Henry’s transformation reveals that at least some of his subjects have failed to connect the dots. While there is no way to prove it (and fairly good reason to doubt it) I believe it is quite possible that only Falstaff, of all Henry’s subjects, realizes Hal’s intention in advance.

¹⁷ This scene is one of the most frequently cited examples of the discrepancy between Hal and Henry. The consensus among the critics is that Hal would never be so bombastic, and that his claims to “covet honour” more than any man alive read more like Hotspur than they do like the prince. But compare this speech with Hal’s final words to Hotspur; “I am the Prince of Wales, and think not, Percy, to shake with me in glory any more: two stars keep not their motion in one sphere...I’ll make it greater ere I part from thee, and all the budding honours on thy crest I’ll crop to make a garland for my head.” Critics who say that Hal is a man only of light and insightful irony miss out on the true multifaceted nature of the Prince. He is a fuller man than any Shakespearean character other than Hamlet and his identity will not be confined. In fact, some critics view Hal’s obsessive hunt for honor as the central theme of the *Henry IV* plays (Berkeley and Eidson).

Works Cited

- Altick, Richard. "Symphonic Imagery in Richard II." *PMLA*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (Jun., 1947). 339-365.
- Bamber, Linda. *Comic Women, Tragic Men: A Study of Gender and Genre in Shakespeare*. Stanford. Stanford University Press. 1982.
- Bergeron, David M. "'Richard II' and Carnival Politics." *Shakespeare Quarterly* (42:1) (1991): 33-43.
- "Shakespeare Makes History: 2 Henry IV." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. Vol. 31, No. 2, (Spring 1991), 231-245.
- Berkeley, David and Eidson, Donald. "The Theme of Henry IV, Part 1" *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Winter 1968). 25-31.
- Berninghausen, Thomas F. "Banishing Cain: The Gardening Metaphor in *Richard II* and the Genesis Myth of the Origin of History." *Essays in Literature* 14, no. 1 (spring 1987): 3-14.
- Bertram, Benjamin. "Falstaff's Body, the Body Politic, and the Body of Trade." *Exemplaria* (21:3) (2009): 296-318.
- Bloom, Harold. *Shakespeare: the Invention of the Human*. Riverhead Trade. 1st edition. 1999.
- Bowers, Fredson. "Hamlet as Minister and Scourge." *PMLA*, Vol. 70, No. 4. (1955). 740-749.
- Brockbank, Philip. "Richard II and the Music of Men's Lives". *Leeds studies in English*. Vol. 14 (1983). 57-73.
- Burckhardt, Jacob. *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*. (1890). Part Two. Trans. S.G.C. Middlemore. Web. (04/15/2010).
<<http://www.boisestate.edu/courses/hy309/docs/burckhardt/2-1.html>>
- Champion, Larry S. "Henry VIII: A Celebration of History." *South Atlantic Bulletin*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Jan., 1979). 1-18.
- Davies, Michael. "Falstaff's Lateness: Calvinism and the Protestant Hero in Henry IV." *The Review of English Studies* (56:225) (2006): 351-378.

Draffan, Robert A. "'Without taking sides against poetry': Richard II." *English* (20:107) (1971): 39-44.

Evans, Meredith. "Rumor, the Breath of Kings, and the Body of Law in 2 Henry IV." *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (Summer 2009). 1-24.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Goddard, Harold. *The Meaning of Shakespeare* (vol.1). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.

Harris, Kathryn Montgomery. "Sun and Water Imagery in Richard II: Its Dramatic Function." *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Spring, 1970), 157-165.

Hedrick, Donald. *Advantage, Affect, History, "Henry V"*. *PMLA*, Vol. 118, No. 3 (May 2003). 470-487.

Heninger, S.K. *Touches of Sweet Harmony*. London: Huntington Library Press, 1974.

Hoffman, Christine. "Biting Off More Than "We" Can Chew: The Royal Appetite in Richard II and 1 and 2 Henry IV." *Papers on Language and Literature* (n.d.): 358-384.

Hunt, Constance. "The Origins of National Identity in Shakespeare's Henry V." *Perspectives on Political Science* (36:3) (2007): 133-140.

Hunter, Robert G. "Shakespeare's Comic Sense as It Strikes Us Today: Falstaff and the Protestant Ethic." (n.d.).

Kantorowicz, Ernst. *The King's Two Bodies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

Klett, Elizabeth. "Many Bodies, Many Voices: Performing Androgyny in Fiona Shaw and Deborah Warner's Richard II." *Theatre Journal* (58:2) (2006): 175-194.

Klinck, Dennis R. "Shakespeare's Richard II as Landlord and Wasting Tenant." *College Literature* (25:1) (1998).

Levin, Richard. "Hazlitt on Henry V, and the Appropriation of Shakespeare." *Shakespeare Quarterly* (35:2) (1984): 134-141.

Maus, Katharine. "Prodigal Princes." Lecture. Michigan State University. 9/14/12.

McEachern, Claire. "Henry V and the Paradox of the Body Politic." *Shakespeare Quarterly* (45:1) (1994): 33-56.

McNamara, Anne Marie. "Henry IV: The King as Protagonist." *Shakespeare Quarterly* (10:3) (1959): 423-431.

Menon, Madhavi. "Richard II and the Taint of Metonymy." *ELH*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (Fall, 2003). 653-675.

Plummer, Stanley R. "Shakespeare's Use of Music in the Final Comedies." Book Review. *Renaissance News*. Vol. 15, No. 3, (Autumn 1962). 246-247.

Rabkin, Norman. "Rabbits, Ducks, and Henry V." McDonald, Russ. *Shakespeare: an anthology of criticism, 1945-2000*. Blackwell, 2004. 245-268.

Saccio, Peter. *Shakespeare's English Kings*. London: Oxford University Press, 2000 (2nd ed.).

—. "The Fall of the King." Lecture. The Teaching Company.

Scott, William O. "Landholding, Leasing, and Inheritance in "Richard II"." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* (42:2) (2002): 275-292.

Shuger, Debora. *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance: Religion, Politics, and the Dominant*. Toronto. University of Toronto Press. 1997.

Smith, Gordon Ross. "Shakespeare's Henry V: Another Part of the Critical Forest." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Jan-Mar 1976). 3-26.

Starn, Randolph. "Renaissance Redux" *The American Historical Review* Vol. 103, No. 1.

Summers, Montague. *Werewolf*. Kissinger Publishing. 2003.

Tebbetts, Terrell L. "Shakespeare's Henry V: Politics and Family." *South Central Review*, Vol. 7, No. 1(Spring, 1990). 8-19.

Thompson, Karl F. "Richard II, Martyr." *Shakespeare Quarterly* (8:2) (1957): 159-166.

Tiffany, Grace. "Shakespeare's Dionysian Prince: Drama, Politics, and the "Athenian" History Play." *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (Summer 1999). 366-383.

Tillyard, E.M.W. *Shakespeare's History Plays*. London: Humanities Press, 1983.

—. *The Elizabethan World Picture*. London: Vintage, 1959.

Traub, Valerie. "Prince Hal's Falstaff: Positioning Psychoanalysis and the Female Reproductive Body." *Shakespeare Quarterly* (1989): 456-474.

Traver, Hope. *The Four Daughters of God: A Study of The Versions of this Allegory with Especial Reference to those in Latin, French, and English*. Philadelphia: John C Winston Co., 1907.

Ure, Peter. "Introduction to Richard II." *Arden Shakespeare*. 1999.

Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by Talcott Parsons. CreateSpace Press. 2003.

Weissberger, L. Arnold. "Machiavelli and Tudor England." *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (Dec., 1927). 589-607.

Williams, Pieter D. "Music, Time and Tears in Richard II." *The American Benedictine Review* (1971): 472-485.

Williamson, Marilyn L. "The Episode with Williams in Henry V." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* (9:2) (1969): 275-282.