WORD AND SACRAMENT IN SHAKESPEARE'S SECOND TETRALOGY

John Thomas Dever
Newport News, Virginia

B.A., Bellarmine College, 1968
M.A., University of Kentucky, 1974

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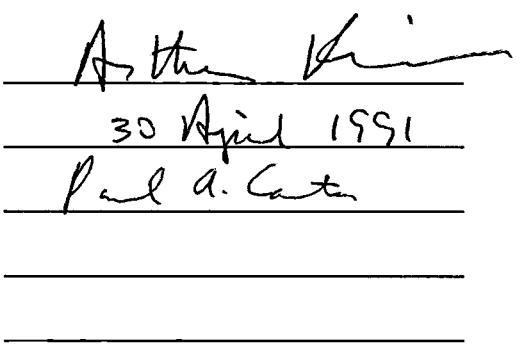

Abstract

Shakespeare's Second Tetralogy is deeply informed by contemporaneous theological and linguistic concerns. In portraying the collapse of an overextended sacrosanct conception of kingship in Richard II, the disorder and clarification resulting in 1 and 2 Henry IV, and the reconstitution of genuinely sacramental kingship in Henry V, Shakespeare draws from correspondent ideas of the English Reformation. While not dispensing with sacramental elements and the performance of ceremonies, Anglican teaching emphasizes that efficacy resides in the inner effect upon a properly disposed receiver within a larger comprehending and affirming community. Semantics undergoes a similar shift in emphasis, with the meaning of language not existing primarily in isolated reference but constituted by use within a community. The binding power of oaths, a use of language closely associated with sacraments, is likewise qualified by conditions of pledge and fulfillment. The tragedy of Richard II stems from his attempt to render kingship invulnerable by assuming inherent connection between its external forms and inner reality. The reign of the usurping Henry IV precipitates attempts by Hotspur and other rebels to restore an irreparably lost order; and ventures, both comic and crass, by Falstaff and associates to exploit the lack of correspondence between signum and

res, word and reference, oath and obligation. Assimilating values from antithetical perspectives, Prince Hal awaits the opportunity to perform genuine acts of valor. Despite doing so at the end of Part I, he is unable to claim due credit in a world lacking stable signification. In Part II, language and signs divorced from meaningful correspondence exert increasingly insufferable power until redeemed by Hal, who demonstrates his worthiness as heir in the encounter with his dying father. As Henry V, he constitutes a new order of kingship by forthrightly facing the emptiness of words and ceremonies in themselves; but in an action parallel to that of the Chorus with the play's audience, he invests them with meaning by creating communities aware of the discrepancy between signifiers and things signified, things seen and unseen, but using their powers of imagination and affirmation to bridge the difference.

To the memory of my mother

Mary Frances O'Sullivan Dever

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Contents

"Minding true things by what their mock'ries be"

Henry V

Introduction

This study of Shakespeare's Second Tetralogy seeks to demonstrate that the individual plays and their overall design are deeply informed by contemporaneous theological and linguistic concerns. It proceeds on the hypothesis that as Shakespeare shaped the historical material before him to depict in Richard II the collapse of one conception of kingship with its attendant world view and in the subsequent three plays its progressive reconstitution on new terms, he made use of correspondent ideas and issues from the English Reformation, particularly those concerned with sacramental theology and associated matters of language. Barber and Wheeler have postulated the profound effect that abolishing the Catholic mass and discarding belief in the Real Presence must have had upon Shakespeare as person and artist, particularly in the way he shaped the psychological configuration of the tragedies (20-38). Although this study disavows interest in Shakespeare's personal beliefs and refrains from extensive psychological interpretation, it does, like Barber and Wheeler, assume that the transition from Catholic to Protestant England to be critically important in understanding Shakespeare's artistic achievement. In the four plays under consideration, the Reform movement provided Shakespeare with immense resources of contested meanings and beliefs, not to mention anxieties,

to draw upon in depicting the effort to establish a new order after the deposition and murder of one considered to be "the figure of God's majesty, / His captain, steward, deputy elect, / Anointed, crowned, planted many years" (R2 4.1.125-27).[1]

In no way, however, do I propose or mean to suggest that Shakespeare is writing about the Reformation, using the events from the first quarter of the fifteenth century as a proleptic vehicle for a religious allegory of what was to occur over a century later. Clearly his subject, as in the previous tetralogy, is English kings and English history. But the abundant allusions in the plays to sacramental practices, biblical topics, and linguistic perplexities invite us to consider these as more than isolated, cosmetic references in an account otherwise devoted to domestic political turmoil assuaged by foreign expedition. They form a distinctive pattern showing that the problems of kingship and order are posed and worked out in terms frequently analogous to Reformation principles.

To speak of Reformation principles comes dangerously near to oversimplifying a subject where controversy abounded. But to a remarkable extent, there does emerge a

[1] All quotations from Richard II, 1 and 2 Henry IV, and Henry V are taken from the new Arden editions, edited respectively by Ure, Humphreys, and Walter. Quotations from other plays and poems are taken from The Riverside Shakespeare, edited by Evans et al.

consistency in Anglican thought, what George and George term "the Protestant mind of the English Reformation." Detailed background and relevant sources are provided at applicable points in the discussion of the individual plays; here I shall simply provide an overview suggesting the linkages between topics. At fundamental issue for Reformers is determining the appropriate balance between the claims of works, opus operatum, and sacramental signum, on the one hand; and faith, opus operantis, and res, on the other. The Protestant shift is towards the primacy of inner disposition as implied by the latter group of terms, as against the sufficiency of external action sanctioned by the former. But this changed emphasis does not preclude the usefulness or necessity of what is displaced: works confirm faith; ceremonies whose meaning is understood and affirmed have value; and substance remains largely inaccessible unless expressed in signum. Time and again, issues similar to these emerge at critical junctures in the plays.

In the related area of language, the fundamental issue is mediating between competing conceptions of meaning: in the traditional view, language conceived of as representational of and correspondent to realities beyond it; from a more revolutionary perspective, language regarded as relational and constitutive, its meaning discovered not in the things it supposedly refers to but in the dynamic of

its use within a community.[2] The shift towards meaning as constitutive occurs with the Reformed emphasis upon the affective dimension of language. As Waswo demonstrates, the hermeneutic principles of Erasmus and Luther in regard to scripture result in a rhetorical theory and practice akin to the formative aims of poetic discourse advanced by Sidney. In the spiritual realm, the goal according to Erasmus is "to inflame our souls with desire for heaven"; in the temporal, it is not only to delight and instruct, but also to move the audience to act in a noble fashion (207-49).

The locus classicus where dynamic linguistic and sacramental issues converge is the Anglican explanation of Christ's words of eucharistic institution, magisterially set forth by Hooker. The rejection of Catholic transubstantiation and Lutheran consubstantiation rests on an understanding of language as something more than simply

[2] Waswo provides a systematic discussion of this issue as a major concern of Renaissance literature, literary theory, and theology. One does not have to subscribe to his strong advocacy of relational semantics, which he sees struggling to free itself from the unsatisfactory Augustinian dualism of referential semantics, to profit from his learned exposition of language theory and practice sometimes working together, more often at odds with one another, starting a task in the fifteenth century to be completed only by Wittgenstein in the twentieth. Of particular relevance to this study is Part III, "Arguments about the Word" (207-83), which deals with Erasmus, Luther, and the "Augustinian reaction" characteristic of Anglican theology. Though Waswo does not carry the argument up through Jewel and Hooker, his remarks about Tyndale (250-53) indicate clearly the direction later Anglican thinking would take, stressing the transformational power of language without abandoning its claims of signification.

referential. "This is my body, this is my blood" means something other than what the words literally say. Yet the Anglican position avoids the opposite extreme of Zwinglian memorialism, which assigns no significance to the words and elements other than serving as a prompt to recall and be grateful for Christ's sacrifice in the historical past. Hooker insists on the genuine transforming power of words and elements to be "causes instrumentall upon the receipt whereof the participation of his boodie and bloode ensueth." Meaning resides then not in the words themselves or their literal reference to things, but in the effect they produce in the properly disposed believer or congregation: "The reall presence of Christes most blessed bodie and bloode is not therefore to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthie receiver of the sacrament" (2: 334).

Also of particular relevance to the Second Tetralogy are oaths, a further topic in which concerns about sacrament and language converge. As detailed in the discussion of 1 Henry IV, oaths not only are linked with sacraments by way of Latin etymology but also are classified with them as professions of God's glory and power, and as attestations of connection between human actions and divine oversight. Reformers address especially the excessive use and abuse of oaths. If the divine is invoked as guarantor on each side for nearly every dispute, then the binding power of oaths loses force with the swearer and credibility with the

hearer. Moreover, there is recognition that some oaths made with the best of intentions must be broken when the original act proves unlawful or ill considered or when more compelling circumstances assert themselves at the time of execution, a principal instance being clerical vows of celibacy. A subject of great controversy at the period of the plays' composition was enforcement of oaths ex officio. Just as Catholic ecclesiastics in the early fifteenth century had sought to suppress Lollards through self-incrimination under oath, so Anglican authorities in the late sixteenth century attempted to use similarly harsh measures against their Puritan adversaries. The upshot was diminished reliance upon the external sanctions of oaths as a means of compliance. As in the case of sacraments, the shift is towards interior disposition, the commitment and character of the individual assuming greater importance than formal attestation, though not eliminating the need and value of the latter. And as in the case of language, the meaning of an oath comes to be understood as something not simply fixed by immutable reference to a higher reality but further constituted by being carried out in the flux of time.

The tetralogy's movement from tragic fall in Richard II, through comic exuberance and satiric morass in the two parts of Henry IV, and on to heroic reconstitution in Henry V resonates with these sacramental analogues and linguistic

concerns. Richard, who believes that God "hath in heavenly pay / A glorious angel" (3.2.60-61) to counter every rebel soldier, acts as if kingship functions ex opere operato, effective no matter what his own disposition. In killing his kinsman Gloucester and presiding over rituals devoid of genuine signification, he proves himself an unworthy minister. In attempting to order his kingdom by univocal language--". . . such is the breath of kings" (1.3.215)--he overextends linguistic resources and precipitates the collapse of stable signification that ushers in the equivocation characterizing the reign of Bolingbroke. Similarly, oaths once considered inviolable crack under the strain of untenable demands that Richard places on them, resulting in a confusion of loyalties most evident in the York family.

In 1 Henry IV, signum is constantly exposed as no guarantor of corresponding res. The counterfeit king at the center is beset on all sides by comic and tragic pretenders to the throne, the claims of all appearing equally valid or invalid. Language loses its moorings with reality: Bolingbroke speaks of an imminent crusade in the face of protracted civil war; Hotspur devotes himself to an honor having no corresponding existence in the past or present; Falstaff thrives on fabrications. Oaths have lost all utility, being routinely broken by the king, rigidly appealed to by the rebels, and wittily evaded by one who

"was never yet a breaker of proverbs: he will give the devil his due" (1.2.115-16). Set off from the others is Hal, who awaits the opportunity to perform rather than makes the pretense of promise and who will prove a true heir based on worthiness, not simply on the questionable formality of lineal claim. When the occasion finally comes at Shrewsbury, however, his demonstration of valor in defeating his factor Hotspur earns him no credit. Acknowledging that genuine res can find no corresponding signum in a world where all meaning is suspect, Hal, in a wonderful act of mock sacrament, confers grace on the most undeserving of "the wicked," allowing Falstaff to exit bearing the badge of meritorious service.

The gilded lie at the close of Part I establishes the terms for working out to two quite different conclusions in Part II: the egregious deception used by John of Lancaster to defeat the rebels at Gaultree Forest, and the artful reconstruction of events employed by Hal to placate his dying father, who mistakenly ascribes the worst motives to his son for assuming the crown. The insouciant breach of faith by Lancaster, the prince now appropriately accompanied by Falstaff, is the culminating instance of verbal prestidigitation in a play where lack of necessary connection between signum and res has opened the way for unrestrained manipulation of appearances and words for sheer expedience. The explanation for his actions offered by Hal,

on the other hand, implicitly acknowledges the gap between signifiers and things signified, but builds upon the discrepancy rather than exploits it. Words and symbols (such as the crown) are both valued and discarded: they are needed to express and communicate what cannot be grasped without them, but they are not identical with or commensurate to what is sought.

Henry V self-consciously rests upon dualistic assumptions about representation. The Chorus repeatedly reminds the audience that signifiers--the presentation upon the stage--are different from what is signified--the events of Henry V's reign. Yet this theatrical self-awareness is far from disillusioning. It rather clarifies that the ultimate meaning of the play resides in the effect produced within the minds of the auditors and that they have a crucial role in constituting that meaning; for, as the Chorus declares in many different ways, it falls upon them to "[p]iece out our imperfections with your thoughts" (Prologue 23). This dynamic understanding of meaning being not only conveyed by signifiers in reference to things signified but also further constituted by reception is analogous to the oft-cited explanation of the sacramental process given by Augustine: "And whence has water so great an efficacy, as in touching the body to cleanse the soul, save by the operation of the word; and that not because it is uttered, but because it is believed?" (344). Likewise

with symbols and language within the play. Deeply conscious of the inherent barrenness of ceremonies and words, Henry also comes to know that the worthy king and speaker can invest them with intended significance that becomes full meaning when actively comprehended by subjects and audience. Such is his achievement with his soldiers at Agincourt, both in private exchange and public oration, and with Katherine and the larger community seeking reconciliation in the final act. Oaths are similarly understood as contingent, their ultimate obligation being defined not just by the original commitment but further constituted by the conditions of fulfillment.

It may at first seem strange to associate Henry V with Reformed teaching, for he does not fare particularly well in Protestant historiography. Tyndale often finds occasion to denounce the Lancastrian successor for his share in the taint of usurpation; for his supposed manipulation by the clergy, particularly in being persuaded to undertake the French expedition as a diversion from seizing the church's temporal holdings; and for his suppression of the Lollards (Answer 212; Doctrinal 337-38; Expositions 53, 224-25, 296-97, 302-03). Although Foxe makes mention in passing of his "great victories gotten in France" and "his worthy prowess" (319), the emphasis of the martyrologist, as would be expected, is on Henry as a tool of the prelates in their

persecution of the Lollards, particularly Sir John Oldcastle.

Shakespeare's original use of the name Oldcastle for the character that came to be known as Falstaff is, of course, the most suggestive evidence linking the plays with the Reformation. As Aston has shown, many English Protestants of the sixteenth century were deeply aware of their ties to Lollard predecessors; it was John Bale's ambition, in fact, to see Oldcastle replace Thomas Becket in the primacy of English martyrdom (166). That Shakespeare's rendering of his fat knight struck religious sensibilities is evident not only from the offense taken by Lord Cobham, Oldcastle's descendent, but also from the subsequent Drayton-Munday-Hathaway-Wilson collaboration that sought to honor the historical martyr properly. Yet the exact nature of the relation between Oldcastle and Falstaff has always been problematic. To press any aspect of identity between the two figures is to leave too much out, to diminish and distort Shakespeare's immense character. Taylor, who has recently sifted through the evidence, concludes that Shakespeare, whom he opines to be of papist sympathies, most likely uses Sir John to lampoon Oldcastle as Protestant martyr ("Fortunes" 99-100). Such a determination, I believe, at once overestimates the historical identity and underestimates the religious significance of the character. When Shakespeare at the end of Part II tells us that ". . .

Oldcastle died martyr, and this is not the man" (Epilogue 31-32), I am inclined to take him at his word.

What I would suggest is that Shakespeare is far less interested in portraying Oldcastle as an historical figure than he is taken with certain aspects of his character and beliefs, particularly as given in Foxe, which he in turns incorporates into his new creation of Falstaff. First of all, there is the hint of intimacy between knight and king, the latter being so solicitous of the former's welfare that he calls him in for a private conference when he runs afoul of the ecclesiastical authorities: "Anon after, the king sent for the said Lord Cobham, and as soon as he was come, he called him secretly, admonishing him betwixt him and him, to submit himself to his mother the holy church . . ." (Foxe 322). More important are the heresies Oldcastle was accused of, chief of which concerned the sacrament of the altar. Although he granted the virtual presence of Christ in the sacrament, Oldcastle rejected the premises of transubstantiation, that is, the substance of bread and wine no longer being present, only their appearances. Instead, his explanation was stated in terms of the Augustinian "realist-symbolist" teaching that Dugmore (12-22, 229-30, 246-47) sees at the heart of the Anglican position: "The bread is the thing that we see with our eyes, the body of Christ, which is his flesh and his blood, is thereunder hid, and not seen but in faith" (Foxe 331). Once this breach of

dogma is made, the whole edifice of orthodoxy comes tumbling down. From the partisan perspective of Foxe, transubstantiation is

> the master lie, I mean, of all lies, where the pope leaving not one crumb of bread, nor drop of wine in the reverend communion, untruly and idolatrously taketh away all substance of bread from it, turning the whole substance of bread into the substance of Christ's own body. . . . upon this one, an infinite number of other lies and errors in the pope's church, as handmaids, do wait and depend. (394)

With the rejection of transubstantiation also goes the type of "Royal Christology" characteristic of medieval political theory (Kantorowicz 15-16). If a king is no longer hedged with divinity--and such clearly follows in the wake of Richard's fall--then any attempt to reconstitute kingship, which is really a metaphor for investing the world with a sacred order, must confront that reality. As is argued in the chapter on 1 Henry IV, Falstaff provides the crucial service for Hal of exposing the absence of necessary reference behind all abstractions (time, honor), the lack of requisite substance to which signum (hacked swords, bloody noses) points. If Hal is to succeed under the conditions brought about by his father's usurpation, then he first must assimilate the perspective of Falstaff before he can move beyond it.[3] In Foxe's account of Oldcastle's being interrogated about worshipping images, there is even a gleam

[3] See Empson's illuminating comments on Falstaff as tutor ("Falstaff" 245-46).

of Falstaff's scoffing irreverence: "Another clerk yet asked him, 'Will ye then do no honour to the holy cross?'--He answered him: 'Yes, if he were mine own, I would lay him up honestly, and see unto him that he should take no more scathe abroad, not be robbed of his goods, as he is now adays'" (335). Objects in and of themselves are void of signification. As Henry V faces the perils of his position before Agincourt, his reflection on the emptiness of ceremonies indicates clearly that he has learned well the lessons that Falstaff and his heretical forbearer had to teach.

Henry's meditation on kingship concludes with his prayer that the sins of his usurping father not be visited on his army in the upcoming battle. That he has one foot in the Middle Ages is evident from the warrant of works that he offers for justification: reinterring Richard's body, paying for massive prayers to be said in expiation, building two chantries where masses can be said for Richard's soul.[4] That his other foot is stepping over into the Reformation becomes clear, however, in the remarkable volte-face with which he ends:

> More will I do;
> Though all that I can do is nothing worth,
> Since that my penitence comes after all,
> Imploring pardon. (4.1.308-11)

[4] Tyndale is scathing in his comments on this "lip-labour" sponsored by the historical Henry V (Expositions 81).

Whether one settles for the ambiguous reference of "all" in line 310 or adopts the precise emendation to "ill" advanced by Taylor (Henry 295-301), it is unmistakable that Henry recognizes the ultimate futility of works as justification, another lesson taught by his tutor in both word and example: "O, if men were to be saved by merit, what hole in hell were hot enough for him?" (1H4 1.2.104-05). Yet where Falstaff presumed on grace to his own undoing, Henry still understands that its efficacy remains contingent upon the disposition of the receiver. In the aftermath of battle, Henry's emphatic ascription of victory to God, ringing with the cadence and images of Psalm 44 (Noble 187; Shaheen 191), derives not from any smug sense of being assured of divine favor, but from simple and profound gratitude that the outcome was favorable:

> O God, thy arm was here;
> And not to us, but to thy arm alone,
> Ascribe we all! When, without stratagem,
> But in plain shock and even play of battle,
> Was ever known so great and little loss
> On one part and on th' other? Take it, God,
> For it is none but thine! (4.8.108-14)

A number of other studies have examined the Second Tetralogy from a theological perspective; reviewing several of them should assist in clarifying the distinctive premises of my approach. Gordon Zeeveld sees Shakespeare caught up in the controversy in the 1590s of the Puritan challenge to ceremony. Surveying relevant sixteenth century texts from More up through Hooker (15-39), Zeeveld maintains that

Shakespeare and the great Anglican apologist are at one "in their insistence on the values inherent in customary observances of tradition whether ecclesiastical or political" (38). In recognizing affinities between contemporaneous religious issues and those raised in the plays, Zeeveld provides valuable insights. But since he sees the plays more as vehicles for ideas rather than ideas as resources to draw upon in developing plays, his specific interpretations are less useful. For him, Hal is a static character whose main achievement is to restore--not reconstitute--what was lost by Richard II. Not able to reconcile his admiration for the supposedly pacifist-leaning Hal (8-9, 58) with the warrior hero of Henry V, he concludes, like Tillyard before him, that Shakespeare discarded consistency in character between prince and king.

Rather than focus on a specific concern such as ceremony, Robert Bennett considers the overall design of the tetralogy and finds a cyclical pattern closely aligned with recurrent scriptural accounts of "the degeneration of civilization concluded by a striking intervention of divinity" (66), here manifested in the miraculous victory of the outnumbered English army at Agincourt. This gives the tetralogy what Bennett terms "a sacramental design, a complex and dynamic interactive pattern of human virtue and divine grace" (61). Such an approach posits a Providential element, a direct connection between God and history, not

claimed in this study. Without being cynical, let me point out that the plays give no indication as to whether God accepts the credit that Henry ascribes to him. There is no theophany as occurs for the reposing Posthumus before the climactic battle between Britons and Romans in the semi-mythical world of Cymbeline (5.4). There are no ghosts prophesying retribution and reassurance respectively to the sleeping Richard and Richmond on the eve of Bosworth Field (R3 5.3). The "little touch of Harry in the night" (4.0.47) before Agincourt gives us a distinctly vigilant figure, engaged with those things that are immediately in front of him. In a world where "miracles are ceas'd" (H5 1.1.67), God "hath in heavenly pay" no "glorious angel[s]" (R2 3.2.60-61) to fight on the king's side. But the absence of the miraculous, in fact, enhances the religious; for now one must proceed on faith, belief in things unseen. That is precisely what Henry does.

In contradistinction to Bennett[5] and others advancing a grand design, I would argue that the pattern of the tetralogy is worked out from within the plays, not imposed template-like from without. In saying that the plays are informed, as opposed to shaped, by theological and linguistic concerns, I use the verb in its New Critical

[5] Let me note in passing that Bennett and I are close on some individual points of interpretation, most notably in our view of the death of Aumerle-York at Agincourt as an efficacious sacrificial act (81).

sense. What gives design to the tetralogy is primarily the quest by Hal-Henry for meaningful order after its collapse. Shakespeare, it seems to me, is far less interested in Henry V as historical figure than he is in him as a man and ruler posed with a problem of meaning, the particular circumstances of which suggested various analogies with issues of his own day.

H. R. Coursen is another critic whose interest in religious issues makes him alert to many of the same passages considered here, although he reaches radically different conclusions. A major reason for the difference is that his understanding of sacrament is not precise, in my judgment, nor is it well grounded in the theological literature. For him, sacrament is characterized by "fusion," a favorite term he uses to connote a kind of prelapsarian harmony, in comparison to which everything else is a falling away. For example, "As with the elements [of Communion], the sacramental fusion must occur within the king" (Christian 52). Or, "It is not so much that Richard confuses mortality and divinity, history and ceremony, body natural and body politic . . . but that he destroys their fusion. . . . If the state is sacred, a fusion of secular with spiritual, Richard is the keeper of the holy metaphor" (Christian 56). Hal is invariably found wanting, for he only "re-creates it [fusion] through a diminished political mimesis" (Christian 58) and "simulate[s] sacrament through

effective ceremonial" (Leasing 8). Such remarks misrepresent the dualist premises of sacramental thinking, which grant from the beginning that signum and res, material element and spiritual significance, are related by analogy, not identity. Jewel, who devotes a major section of his Reply to the figurative basis of sacraments (2: 590-624), quotes Chrysostom on this fundamental point: " 'The figure may not be far off from the truth; otherwise it were no figure: neither may it be even, and one with the truth; otherwise it would be the truth itself,' and so no figure" (2: 594). Richard's problem is not destroying fusion; it is attempting it. Hal's achievement rests on the solid, not simulated, sacramental foundation that simultaneously acknowledges the divide separating sacred from profane and the possibility of bridging it by similitude. For Coursen, however, who in The Leasing Out of England combines his fusion-sacrament equivalency with what he considers to be the commercial exploitation of the kingdom by its rulers, the outcome of the tetralogy is terribly bleak.

A much more informed and subtle analysis of the figurative basis underlying not only the sacramental system but also all artistic endeavor is provided by James Siemon, who emphasizes that all images and symbols, whether religious or those of dramatic art itself, were increasingly regarded with suspicion and hostility rather than reverence. The Reformed antagonism to icons stems from a resistance to

binding the spiritually expansive and transcendent to temporally confined physical representations. This, in turn, is rooted in reaction to a neo-Platonic understanding of the created world as containing an innate symbolism, making it a book of God waiting to be read (30-75). Although Siemon considers only Henry V from the tetralogy and that treatment is relatively brief (101-13), I would offer him as the best counter-reading to this study. Though he has examined much of the same background material that I have, his focus on iconoclasm leads him to approach the play with a different perspective. While I see the discrepancies in Henry V as forthright recognitions of a divide that must be crossed artistically by imagination and sacramentally by belief, Siemon sees them as iconoclastic impulses built into the play to keep us from too easily yielding approbation of "the mirror of all Christian kings" (2.0.6). My response, in turn, is that when Henry V is considered in relation to the two plays preceding it, Shakespeare has provided the protagonist with the intimate company of one who is probably the greatest iconoclastic figure of all literature, whose skeptical perspective becomes fully part of Henry's own psyche. Siemon further reminds us that to regard Henry too idealistically is to remove him from the flux of historical circumstances and falsely render him an impervious object of contemplation and admiration (104-05, 109-10).

When we extend the scope of historical influence from what is represented in the play to the composition, production, and reception of the play itself, we come face to face with the most prominent mode of criticism in the last decade, the new historicism. Not surprisingly, such studies have seized upon the drama of Lancastrian usurpation as a paradigm of strategies like "consolidation," "subversion," and "containment" (Dollimore 10-12), with religious concerns relegated to being one weapon in the arsenal of ideological propaganda. To clarify my differences with the new historicist approach, let me first recognize the common ground that I share with it, namely, that in this instance of plays about history some two hundred years removed, the depiction of characters and structuring of events are conditioned by pressures bearing at the time of composition. As one example of a new historicist study of the Second Tetralogy that proceeds along these lines with enlightening results, I would cite the essay "The Elizabethan Hal" by John Cox (104-27). He draws suggestive parallels between the portrayal of church-state relations under the Lancastrians and those actually operative in the Elizabethan settlement; he further argues that Hal's public theatricality and private "opaqueness" are modeled upon similar strategies employed by Elizabeth and Essex. Although I have reservations about some of Cox's conclusions, I cannot, as one who seeks to demonstrate the

influence of Reformation thought upon the depiction of pre-Reformation history, fault the procedure. What I do take issue with in the case of Cox and other new historicists is their premise that the drive for power and control is the pre-eminent, really the only, motive force behind history and the recording of it.

When Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield assert that we must "understand history and the human subject in terms of social and political process," few would object. But I do take exception to the supposedly self-evident corollary that follows: "Crucial for such an understanding is a materialist account of ideology. Ideology is composed of those beliefs, practices and institutions which work to legitimate the social order--especially by the process of representing sectional or class interests as universal ones" (210-11). Pechter has incisively demonstrated the bias or "privileging" involved in such a presumption (297-98) and shown that other assumptions about determining forces in history may as legitimately be made at the start of critical inquiry (301-02). This study posits such another assumption, that the quest for meaning in order can be quite as compelling a motive as the drive to maintain order.

Dollimore and Sinfield do recognize that in Henry V the idea of meaning, or at least the ideology of power, is presented as problematic:

> Henry V belongs to a period in which the ideological dimension of authority--that which

> helps effect the internalization rather than simply the coercion of obedience--is recognized as imperative and yet, by that self-same recognition, rendered vulnerable to demystification. (217)

The strategies they see Henry using to counter the potential destabilization that results from fathoming the lack of inherent legitimacy and authority, whether political or metaphysical, are various methods of containment to ensure obedience by the lower strata (or their marginalization) and compliance by the aristocrats (or their elimination). Stephen Greenblatt in his essay "Invisible Bullets," one of the most celebrated documents of the new historicism, offers a more subtle analysis, postulating that authority not only seeks to contain subversion but also paradoxically promotes it to authority's own ends (30). In the case of Henry V, he extends the analysis not only to strategies carried out within the play but to a larger design to elicit complicity from the play's audience:

> . . . the play's central figure seems to feed on the doubts he provokes. For the enhancement of royal power is not only a matter of the deferral of doubt: the very doubts that Shakespeare raises serve not to rob the king of his charisma but to heighten it, precisely as they heighten the theatrical interest of the play; the unequivocal, unambiguous celebrations of royal power with which the period abounds have no theatrical force and have long since fallen into oblivion. The charismatic authority of the king, like that of the stage, depends upon falsification.
>
> The audience's tension, then, enhances its attention; prodded by constant reminders of a gap between real and ideal, the spectators are induced to make up the difference, to invest in the illusion of magnificence, to be dazzled by their own imaginary identification with the conqueror. The ideal king must be in large part the invention

> of the audience, the product of a will to conquer that is revealed to be identical to a need to submit. Henry V is remarkably self-conscious about this dependence upon the audience's powers of invention. (63)

I offer this passage at length because in it Greenblatt has seized upon what I also consider to be critical for understanding Henry V, and in retrospect the previous plays of the tetralogy: the discrepancy between signifier and thing signified, out of which condition meaning emerges as it is constituted by a comprehending and assenting community. For Greenblatt, this is simply "falsification," playing into the crooked hand dealt by political or theatrical authority. What I believe that this study will show, however, is that this problem of meaning was one that the Reformers of the sixteenth century faced forthrightly in their examination and reformulation of word and sacrament. To the extent that their answers demystified religious beliefs and practices, to that extent they enhanced human understanding and responsibility for one's own spiritual condition. This is far from the Machiavellian hypothesis--"religion as a set of beliefs manipulated by the subtlety of priests to help instill obedience and respect for authority" (26)--that Greenblatt sees being tested by Harriot in the new found land of Virginia and, by a series of ingenious extrapolations, employed by Henry V with his subjects and by Shakespeare with his audience.

As a final note, let me observe that I do not propose or assume that Shakespeare in composing these plays was using specific texts of Tyndale, Jewel, Hooker, or other religious writers (just as Greenblatt does not claim direct authorial indebtedness to Harriot). Of course, we can feel confident about Shakespeare's familiarity with the Bible, Homilies, and The Book of Common Prayer; we also know that he drew from the Acts and Monuments for Henry VIII and that it was readily available (Aston 168-69). Although the extensive search by Roland Frye failed to turn up any instances where theological treatises are used as direct sources by Shakespeare (10), I do not think that his conclusion is warranted that Shakespeare essentially lacked interest in theological matters and excluded such concerns from the plays (6-7). True, if we look for those concerns to be depicted literally or allegorically, we will be disappointed; even in Henry VIII, a play directly dealing with the Reformation and devoting a major section to Cranmer, doctrinal issues are distinctly muted. But if we look at this material as only the partial documentation of a rich fund of ideas available from many oral and written sources in the culture, ideas about which countless people of the sixteenth century fought and died, wrote and argued extensively, anguished over in their consciences and found ultimate consolation in, then I believe it becomes clear that Shakespeare drew upon them in giving these four plays

their distinctively rich texture and sustaining substance.

1. Richard II: Swearing by the Sword

A major theme in the opening scenes of Richard II is the breakdown of correspondence between outward appearance and inward reality. Whether the audience already brings information from reading the chronicles or watching Woodstock, or whether it waits for the frank exchanges between John of Gaunt and the Duchess of Gloucester in scene 2, it soon becomes clear that the appeals process and trial by combat presided over by Richard are rites manqué. Chivalric codes and ceremonies, established in this instance to settle a dispute that seemingly is otherwise unresolvable, are being pressed into service under false pretenses; for the supposedly impartial arbiter, the king, is deeply implicated in the crime under question. And the crime, the killing of a kinsman, is particularly heinous, deserving of the "primal eldest curse." In denouncing his uncle Gloucester's murder, Bolingbroke refers explicitly to the Biblical antecedent: "Which blood, like sacrificing Abel's, cries / Even from the tongueless caverns of the earth" (1.1.104-05).

The epithet "sacrificing" suggests deeper implications, specifically sacramental ones, for the discrepancy between appearance and reality. Abel's sacrifice is considered an Old Testament type of New Testament sacraments, one which Reformers, citing Hebrews 11.4, used to emphasize the

primacy of faith over works. In The Babylonian Captivity Luther explains, ". . . it was obviously not Abel's sacrifice that justified him, but it was his faith by which he offered himself wholly to God, and this was symbolized by the outward sacrifice" (36: 66).[1] Abel's sacrifice was thus acceptable because his inner intentions were consonant with his outward actions. Richard consequently deserves to be associated with Cain, as insinuated by Bolingbroke in attacking Mowbray, not only because he has spilt a kinsman's blood but also because he is officiating over a ritual action devoid of faith and motivated by self-interest rather than the nominal goal of letting God's judgment be made known by the outcome of the combat.[2]

The sacrilegious nature of Richard's actions is brought home most forcefully in the memorable lines that Gloucester's widow speaks to Gaunt:

> Finds brotherhood in thee no sharper spur?
> Hath love in thy old blood no living fire?
> Edward's seven sons, whereof thyself art one,
> Were as seven vials of his sacred blood,
> Or seven fair branches springing from one root.
> Some of those seven are dried by nature's course,
> Some of those branches by the Destinies cut;
> But Thomas my dear lord, my life, my Gloucester,
> One vial full of Edward's sacred blood,
> One flourishing branch of his most royal root,

[1] See also the homily A Short Declaration of the True, Lively, and Christian Faith 33, where the same point is made.

[2] The Geneva gloss on Genesis 4.5 explains that God lacked regard for Cain's sacrifice "Because he was an hypocrite and offred onely for an outwarde shew without sinceritie of heart."

> Is crack'd, and all the precious liquor spilt,
> Is hack'd down, and his summer leaves all faded,
> By envy's hand, and murder's bloody axe.
> (1.2.9-21)

The first of the metaphors (or more properly similes) used by the Duchess--"seven vials of his sacred blood"--is self-evidently sacramental. The second metaphor of the "seven fair branches springing from one root" is linked, as is frequently noted, with iconographical depictions of the Tree of Jesse. In his note on the passage, Ure suggests a further connection with the imagery of John 15, "The consolation between Christ and his members, vnder the parable of the vine." The Johannine parable offers several fruitful ways of understanding the full implications of the Duchess's speech. The Gospel's imperative of husbandry--"Euerie branche that beareth not frute in me, he [the Father] taketh away: & euerie one that beareth frute, he purgeth it, that it may bring forthe more frute" (15.2)[3]--links this passage not only with the significant Garden scene later in the play but also with Burgundy's lament over the "uncorrected" garden of France at the conclusion of the tetralogy (H5 5.2.23-67). The injunction to brotherhood--"This is my commandement, that ye loue one another, as I haue loued you" (15.12)--is the explicit "spur" used by the Duchess to prompt Gaunt to action. Moreover, as the

[3] All Biblical quotations are taken from The Geneva Bible.

discussion of Henry V will show, the theme of brotherhood transcending the class lines of master and servant (15.13-15) is a major element in Shakespeare's presentation of the battle of Agincourt.

In specific reference to Richard, his destruction of the branch of Gloucester is a violation not just of the sacred bonds of his family, but of the body politic and the mystical body of Christ. As Kantorowicz observes, the political metaphor was modeled on its religious counterpart, and terms applied to one were often indiscriminately applied to the other (15-19). Furthermore, the metaphor of the vine and branches was central to the Anglican conception of the church (Davies 28) and was particularly associated with participation in the sacramental rites. For example, in the homily Worthy receiving and reverent esteeming of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, those coming to the table are exhorted:

> Wherefore let us prove and try ourselves unfeignedly, without flattering ourselves, whether we be plants of the fruitful olive, living branches of the true vine, members indeed of Christ's mystical body. . . .

The exhortation continues with a call for correspondence between inward, spiritual disposition and outward show, so basic to Anglican and, indeed, all reformed teaching on the sacraments:

> . . . whether God hath purified our hearts by faith, to the sincere acknowledging of his gospel, and embracing of his mercies in Christ Jesus, so that at this his table we receive not only the

> outward sacrament, but the spiritual thing also; not the figure, but the truth; not the shadow only, but the body; not to death, but to life; not to destruction, but to salvation. . . . (400)

Richard, whose call upon his dying uncle makes an open mockery of the Order for the Visitation of the Sick as well as violates all equity governing succession and inheritance, is rapidly and surely subverting the religious and legal sanctions that undergird his authority.

The desecration of chivalric action culminates in Richard's aborting the trial by combat at the last moment. Whatever political justification this act may have had,[4] its effect is always startling and somewhat disappointing to the audience or reader; after all, a considerable amount of time in two scenes has been devoted to elaborate ceremonial preparation for this high moment, what Mowbray describes as "This feast of battle with mine adversary" that "my dancing soul doth celebrate" (1.3.92, 91). One major effect of Richard's decision is to put himself characteristically at the center of action and to call attention to the fact.[5] It will be his command, substituting for the combatants' jousting within the lists, that determines the outcome. The king's word, not the ritual action requiring the participation of others, becomes the judicium dei. The

[4] See Schoenbaum 10-12 for discussion of various explanations. Note that Daniel devotes several stanzas (1.63-65) to Richard's motives (Bullough 3: 438).

[5] See Porter 31-32.

circumstances of this unfulfilled ritual have remarkable similarities to the historical deterioration in the understanding and practice of the Mass. Keith Thomas provides an useful summary of how communal participation gave way to centralized adoration, of how broader discourse and action yielded to preoccupation with words and things:

> By the later Middle Ages the general effect had been to shift the emphasis away from the communion of the faithful, and to place it upon the formal consecration of the elements by the priest. The ceremony thus acquired in the popular mind a mechanical efficacy in which the operative factor was not the participation of the congregation, who had become virtual spectators, but the special power of the priest. . . . What stood out was the magical notion that the mere pronunciation of words in a ritual manner could effect a change in the character of material objects. (33)[6]

It is precisely this concern with the use and abuse of language that becomes a major issue during the disposition that follows the cancelled combat. The permanently exiled Mowbray straightforwardly bemoans the loss of "native English" with which to express himself. The partially reprieved Bolingbroke, however, wonders at the power of mere language to effect such change in the course of things:

> How long a time lies in one little word!
> Four lagging winters and four wanton springs
> End in a word: such is the breath of kings.
> (1.3.213-15)

That words have such virtue is belied, of course, by subsequent events in the play. And Gaunt quickly rebuffs

[6] Also see Dugmore 55-72.

Richard's overextension of royal authority: "Thy word is current with him [time] for my death, / But dead, thy kingdom cannot buy my breath" (1.3.231-32). The exchanges which ensue between Gaunt and Bolingbroke over pretending that the latter's exile is something desirable serve only to underline the degree to which language is becoming unhinged from its connection to reality.[7] The language of swearing is also being severed from connection with objects whose sacred status gives warrant to oaths. Seeking to prevent conspiracy between the exiled disputants, Richard calls upon them to "Lay on our royal sword your banish'd hands, / Swear by the duty that you owe to God . . ." (1.3.179-80). In a play where contradictory oaths in attestation to truth have already abounded, this culminating appeal to the cross formed by the blade, hilt, and guard of the sword strikingly suggests debility in the binding power of words and symbols.

Richard's willful attempt to extend the power of language over things reaches its extreme with his return to England from the Irish expedition in order to suppress the Bolingbroke rebellion. That the authority of the royal word has degenerated into the abuse of magical dabbling is shown in what he himself characterizes as a "senseless conjuration" of the English earth with its sorcerous invocation of the malefic aid of "spiders," "heavy-gaited

[7] See Gurr, Richard 34 and Mahood 73-88 as examples of this frequently noted point.

toads," "stinging nettles," and "a lurking adder" (3.2.12-23).[8] Not only does Richard imagine himself capable of animating the natural world to come his defense, but in ringing lines he asserts a claim upon supernatural forces ready to assist him at his bidding:

> Not all the water in the rough rude sea
> Can wash the balm off from an anointed king;
> The breath of worldly men cannot depose
> The deputy elected by the Lord;
> For every man that Bolingbroke hath press'd
> To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown,
> God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay
> A glorious angel: then, if angels fight,
> Weak men must fall, for heaven still guards the right. (3.2.54-62)

Richard's idea of kingship as proclaimed here, with its emphasis upon indelible anointing and divine election, is sometimes referred to as "sacramental";[9] but it would be better thought of as an attempt to render kingship sacrosanct, immune from external assaults and independent of the inner worthiness of the occupant. The royal word is to be efficacious without qualification. In effect, Richard

[8] Barber observes: "At the heart of these plays there is, I think, a fascination with the individualistic use or abuse of ritual--with magic. There is an intoxication with the possibility of an omnipotence of mind by which words might become things, by which a man might 'gain a deity,' might achieve, by making his own ritual, an unlimited power to incarnate meaning" (Festive 193-94). Barber is speaking specifically here of 1 and 2 Henry IV, but his discussion frequently hearkens back to Richard II and the way in which the latter sets the context for the issues discussed in the two succeeding plays.

[9] See, for example, La Guardia 72 and Calderwood 5. Both of these critics use "magical" as synonymous with "sacramental" in the passages cited.

acts as if kingship had the status of opus operatum, effective in and of itself without reference to the holder of the office or the circumstances under which its authority is exercised. The concern over abuse of opus operatum was a major force propelling the Reformation. As Luther states in The Babylonian Captivity, continuing from the previously cited argument about Abel's sacrifice, "The sacraments . . . are not fulfilled when they are taking place, but when they are being believed" (36: 66).[10] Although the Protestant position did not in the main preclude the validity of the sacraments when administered by an unworthy priest (their effect might be enhanced, however, by a worthy one), it was insistent on the need for the receiver to have the proper disposition. The Reformation shift then is towards opus operantis, maintaining that while the worthiness of the receiver does not impair objectively the power of God in the sacraments, their effect for either salvation or condemnation does depend on the degree to which they are subjectively received with faith and love.[11] As

[10] Luther is here paraphrasing St. Augustine in Tractae 80 on the Gospel of St. John. This passage appears to be the patristic teaching on the sacraments most frequently cited by the Reformers. Interestingly, it is a commentary specifically on John 15, the parable of the vine and branches.

[11] For some of the most useful of the many discussions of opus operatum (or ex opere operato) and opus operantis (or ex opere operantis) see Luther 35: 62-65 with very useful notes by the editor, E. Theodore Bachmann; Payne 222; Jewel, Works, 2: 748-57; and Hooker 2: 281.

demonstrated in the grandiloquence to which he resorts when openly challenged by Bolingbroke and in his earlier unresponsiveness to the rebuke administered by the dying Gaunt, Richard acts as if his office in and of itself confers an inviolable status upon him and that his word possesses automatic efficacy.

Gaunt's deathbed prophecy and expostulation throw further light on how the debasement of language, here written in legal form, undermines the sacred status of kingship and by extension the "blessed plot" of England. The two crimes Gaunt dwells on, the violation of land and blood, significantly continue the same image pattern of branches and blood used by the Duchess. By leasing out the realm, Richard can no longer expect the allegiance given to a king; he can only demand the obligations due to a landlord. The oaths of loyalty made to a sovereign, and the social and political order made possible thereby, have been reduced to the mere legal constraints of "inky blots and rotten parchment bonds" (2.1.64), executed for short-term economic gains.[12] The majesty of law, commanding respect precisely because it is the king's law, has now become "bondslave to the law" (2.1.14), a thicket of statutes and

[12] Note the balance between voluntary fealty and bounden duty in the opening lines of the play, where Gaunt is questioned by Richard as to whether he has brought his son "according to thy oath and band" (1.1.2). Cf. 2.2.112-13.

precedents that invite evasion as much as compliance. The prophetic Gaunt indicates that the abdication to come will be simply a confirmation of what has already occurred, for Richard is "possess'd now to depose [him]self" (2.1.108). It needs no elaboration to note further that Richard's dissipation of the sacred land of England for financial advantage resembles closely the way in which the Roman church bartered its spiritual kingdom, thereby undermining its religious authority and unleashing forces, both destructive and constructive, that fundamentally changed religious beliefs and practices.

The second crime for which Gaunt chastises Richard, "spilling Edward's blood" (2.1.131), resonates throughout the play and into succeeding ones. Although revenge is demanded by Bolingbroke and the Duchess, the perpetrator, like Cain, is seemingly divinely marked as exempt from punishment. What ultimately must make satisfaction for the crime is sacrifice, an action whereby blood shed upon the land becomes not just a provocation for vengeance by a dissident faction, but a ritual for bringing a peccant community together to acknowledge the wrongs of the past and purge them so as to forge a renewed resolution and cohesiveness. In effect, a destructive action exciting horror and repugnance must be transformed into a sacramental one instilling awe and reverence. However attractive, the hope of simply ending bloodshed is futile. The

justification offered by Richard for halting the trial by combat--"For that our kingdom's earth should not be soil'd / With that dear blood which it hath fostered" (1.3.125-26)--suggests as much squeamishness (note "soil'd") as solicitude.[13] Bolingbroke's similar asseveration at the opening of 1 Henry IV--"No more the thirsty entrance of this soil / Shall daub her lips with her own children's blood" (1.1.5-6)--is biblically allusive, again to the story of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4.11), but is also rapidly belied by the events of the play:

Gaunt's words of rebuke to Richard imply the kind of transformation in the bloodletting that must be made: "That blood already, like the pelican, / Hast thou tapp'd out and drunkenly carous'd" (2.1.126-27). As Ure notes, the pelican is an ambivalent symbol that suggests both the ingratitude of the child and the self-sacrifice of the parent, the latter association making it a popular emblem for the sacrifice of Christ. It is the genius of Richard, as conceived by Shakespeare, to interpret the process of usurpation and deposition in terms of sacrificial rite, which gives the play the mass-like quality noted by John Dover Wilson (Richard xiii). If Richard was an unworthy minister unable to carry through the chivalric ceremony at Coventry, in Westminster he magisterially directs the ritual

[13] Also see 1.3.138.

enactment where he is both priest and victim. His assumption of a Christ-like role is unmistakable in his repeated portrayal of the rebels and supposed accomplishes as Judases (3.2.132; 4.1.169-71) and Pilates (4.1.239-42); the Bishop of Carlisle's reference to Golgotha (4.1.144) and Richard's own to his "sour cross" (4.1.241) further emphasize the association with the passion and crucifixion.

Betrayal and suffering in and of themselves, however, do not result in redemption. The bloodletting must be placed into a larger context, one that is suggested by covenantal relationships of the Bible. Richard alludes to such an understanding while parleying with Northumberland at Flint Castle: "He [Bolingbroke] is come to open / The purple testament of bleeding war" (3.3.93-94). Part of the tragedy of Richard II is that the king's sacrifice cannot be "the Newe testament in my blood" (1 Cor. 11.25); it is rather the old covenant confirmed with blood in Exodus 24.8, "Which blood," as the Geneva gloss observes, "signifieth that the couenant broken can not be satisfied with out blood sheding." Richard II, of course, is a play much about covenants being broken: "Revolt our subjects? that we cannot mend; / They break their faith to God as well as us" (3.2.100-101).[14] Moreover, those covenants that are made will prove none too firm, as that which Bolingbroke makes

[14] See also 4.1.214-15 and 4.1.232-36.

with the Percies: "My heart this covenant makes, my hand thus seals it" (2.3.50). When Richard is murdered, he cries out with words directly expressing the sacrificial motif of blood shed upon the land (5.5.109-10). But under the circumstances of clandestine assassination, this action is primarily salvific for the person of Richard--"Mount, mount, my soul! thy seat is up on high, / Whilst my gross flesh sinks downward, here to die" (5.5.111-12)--rather than redemptive for the kingdom. Moreover, the murder of Richard leaves Bolingbroke at play's end in the same position of Cain, despite the attempt to displace the role onto Exton (5.6.43-44), that he had imputed to Richard at the beginning. The new Abel's sacrifice is acceptable for himself, but concurrently a new Cain is marked to breed social discord. Fresh blood, that "Of fair King Richard, scrap'd from Pomfret stones" (2H4 1.1.205), cries out to be avenged.

Even in the midst of the assembly at Westminster Hall, Richard functions as the focal minister around which an uncomprehending congregation flocks: "God save the king! Will no man say amen? / Am I both priest and clerk? well then, amen" (4.1.172-73). For rituals to be efficacious, as Reformed teaching insisted, a conscious community must

affirm what the officiant does in its name.[15] In the course of the tetralogy, it is not until the betrothal scene at the conclusion of Henry V that such a community is present, participating in the covenant drawn up with full affirmations of "Amen." In turn, what makes such communion possible, as will be demonstrated, is Henry's conduct of the Battle of Agincourt, haunted as it is by the memory of Richard's murder (4.1.298-311), which there is finally expiated.

However celebrated the ritualistic features of the deposition scene may be,[16] it is another of the rites manqué in the play. Setting aside the question of whether it is theoretically possible to wash away the balm and the indelible appointment that it confers,[17] the ritual here does not secure the intended end. Richard may claim at one point that he has "no name, no title" (4.1.255), but at the moment of death he calls himself a king and is acknowledged as such by Exton (5.5.109-14). Bolingbroke may think that the crown has been resigned to him, but his prompt to Exton to rid him of Richard shows how fearful he remains of the latter's royal identity. During the deposition, it is

[15] See, for instance, the homily That Common Prayer and Sacraments ought to be ministered in a Tongue that is understood of the Hearers 318-25; and Jewel, Works, 1: 147; 263-337.

[16] See, for instance, Pater 198 and Ranald 170.

[17] See Cowan 66-67.

Richard who again throws his warder down, refuses to see the ceremony through, when he rejects Northumberland's demand to read aloud the articles drawn up against him, "That, by confessing them, the souls of men / May deem that you are worthily depos'd" (4.1.226-27). Since Shakespeare is departing from his sources at this point,[18] it suggests that he has a special effect in mind. It is possible to interpret the refusal in terms unfavorable to Richard, as does Maveety: "Though willing enough to play the role of crucified Christ, he flinches at acknowledging human fallibility" (193). But in view of the way that our sympathy begins to shift towards Richard,[19] I believe that a more favorable response is warranted. In sacramental terms, I would suggest that he is claiming the dignity that auricular "confessing," especially under compulsion, would take away from him: "Must I do so? and must I ravel out / My weav'd-up follies?" (4.1.228-29). The principle is a fundamental one in reformed teaching about penance, succinctly stated in An Homily of Repentance, and of true Reconciliation unto God: ". . . it is against the true Christian liberty, that any man should be bound to the

[18] See Ure's note. Holinshed makes no mention of Richard's refusal to read the articles against him, only that "for other causes more needfull as then to be preferred, the reading of those articles at that season was deferred" (Bullough 3: 407).

[19] For a recent exposition in audience-response terms of this frequently noted point, see Rackin.

numbering of his sins, as it hath been used heretofore in the time of blindness and ignorance" (481).[20]

What Richard is most concerned with here is not the unavailing enumeration of past faults but rather confrontation with transformed identity. The remarkable mirror sequence, climaxing the deposition scene, begins with an attempt by Richard to secure a sign capable of exhibiting what has transpired within: "I'll read enough / When I do see the very book indeed / Where all my sins are writ, and that's myself" (4.1.273-75). What then genuinely shocks him is the failure of his reflected image to evince the torture of his soul. In a moment of piercing irony, he who has insouciantly presided over rituals devoid of correspondence between appearance and reality now suffers when he discovers that the instrument he has chosen fails as signum adequate to express res. Then, in a stunning coup de theatre and a striking moment of epiphany, Richard dashes the mirror to the ground, the shivered "face" now truly expressing his inner anguish. The stolid Bolingbroke's deprecating comment serves only to elicit a full interpretation by Richard of the act's significance:

> Say that again.
> The shadow of my sorrow? ha! let's see--
> 'Tis very true, my grief lies all within,
> And these external manners of lament
> Are merely shadows to the unseen grief

[20] Also see Luther 35: 20-21 and 36: 358.

> That swells with silence in the tortur'd soul.
> There lies the substance. (4.1.293-99)

The relationship between "shadows" and "substance" set forth here by Richard acknowledges, on the one hand, the external sign's unimportance when set against the immanent reality and, on the other hand, the sign's worth as a vehicle for giving tangible expression of what "lies all within."

At the heart of Reformed thinking on the sacraments lies precisely such a concern with establishing the proper balance between the claims of signum and res. Especially in regard to the sacrament of the altar, the Anglican reformers sought to discredit the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation, which asserted that the elements of bread and wine were transformed into the physical body and blood of Christ. On the other hand, they sought to avoid the sacramentarianism of those like Zwingli who discounted the significance of the elements. Those staking out the middle ground, such as John Jewel in the Reply to M. Harding's Answer, had to address directly the issue of signs and figures, frequently looking to the church fathers for authoritative support. One passage devaluing signs, which is frequently quoted from Augustine, states, "That indeed is a miserable servitude of the soul, to take signs instead of the things that be signified" (1: 516; 2: 591). Yet, quoting Dionysius, Jewel argues for the necessity of signs in view of man's nature compounded of body and soul: "It is

not possible for our mind to lift up itself to the spiritual contemplation of heavenly things, unless it have the corporal leading of such natural things, as be about it" (2: 591). As a consequence, signs do possess value precisely because they are means of giving apprehension of substance through similitude. Jewel cites from the fathers again, this time Chrysostom: " 'The figure may not be far off from the truth; otherwise it were no figure: neither may it be even, and one with the truth; otherwise it would be the truth itself,' and so no figure" (2: 594).

In his refusal to submit to Northumberland's demand for counting out his sins, Richard claims a dignity for himself that moves beyond what has previously been primarily instances of self-dramatization. And in his employment of the mirror to express his inner wretchedness, he discovers a suitably proportionate relationship between signum and res, a sacramental understanding genuinely serviceable for him. The change in character and understanding is evident in the following scene in which he parts from his queen. She notices the transformation and at first takes it as a sign of weakness (5.1.26-27). What Richard possesses, however, is a mind serene yet responsive, coupled with a voice that is now notably authoritative. His prophecy of Northumberland's inevitable betrayal of Bolingbroke strikes us with the force of authenticity and, of course, does subsequently prove true. His indignation at Northumberland

for violating "A two-fold marriage--'twixt my crown and me, / And then betwixt me and my married wife" (5.1.72-73) reflects real gain in his comprehension of both his personal and political status. The bonds that tie him to his wife and crown, no matter how flawed the actuality of each relationship was, are sacred. That sacred status confers no guarantee against violation; indeed, it opens the way for profanation. Nevertheless, acts of desecration do not obliterate the reality of what was or what persists. The balm, the signum, may be washed from the head of an anointed king; yet the kingly dignity, the res, still abides. Even the quibbling that Richard now engages in--"Let me unkiss the oath 'twixt thee and me; / And yet not so, for with a kiss 'twas made" (5.1.74-75) becomes much more than wanton play with words; here it is an expression of deep understanding. To set the sacramental sign, here the kiss, against itself, as later likewise to set the word, results not in cancellation nor contradiction, but paradox. The attempt to undo may result in separation, but simultaneously it confirms the original doing.

In his cell at Pomfret Castle, Richard continues to use his wit to construct conceits that reflect his condition. Isolated and deprived of sensory stimulation, he at first self-generates musings that express primarily restlessness and irresolution, but also an underlying concern with salvation (5.5.11-17). With the introduction of music, his

meditation becomes more profitable as he seizes upon the image as a means of acknowledging his wrongdoing:

> And here have I the daintiness of ear
> To check time broke in a disordered string;
> But for the concord of my state and time,
> Had not an ear to hear my true time broke:
> I wasted time, and now doth time waste me.
> (5.5.45-49)

Richard's estimation of himself now concurs with that of the Gardener who moralized that had the king "so trimm'd and dress'd his land / As we this garden" then "himself had borne the crown, / Which waste of idle hours hath quite thrown down" (3.4.56-57, 65-66). Sincerely repentant, Richard on one level is mortified by shame at the thought of being Bolingbroke's "Jack of the clock," yet on another level capable of wishing blessing on him who extends him an act of kindness. The entrance of the stable groom signals a remarkable stage of advancement in Richard's moral growth.[21] The monetary quibble left aside, the greeting offered by the groom "Hail, royal prince!" and the affable reply "Thanks, noble peer" (5.5.67) succinctly affirm both the royalty and humanity of Richard while extending similar qualities to the groom. The metaphor of the vine and the branches is dramatically realized here, Richard united with his people through the representative figure of the groom; and the latter, in turn, ennobled by the union. The brief but true

[21] See Cowan 77 for useful observations on the role of the groom.

relationship achieved here serves as a type of what will later be more extensively enacted at Agincourt. In view of the transformation that has occurred in Richard's character, his valorous resistance against the assassins is not surprising, nor is his confidence in his personal salvation at the moment of death.

Richard's path to repentance and amendment is paralleled by that of one of his partisans, Aumerle, in the preceding two scenes of the play where he seeks pardon for his part in the conspiracy against Bolingbroke. Shakespeare explicitly links this affair with sacramental concerns by repeated references to taking the sacrament as the pledge of loyalty among the conspirators (4.1.326-30; 5.2.97-99).[22] The emphasis on the visual image of the seal, whose exposure from Aumerle's breast becomes the vehicle for York's discovery of the plot, further reinforces the sacramental associations (5.2.56-71). Both the matter and mode of the conspiracy suggest that invoking sacramental sanction is a misappropriation. Engineered by the Abbot of Westminster, whose few lines suggest a conniving figure in contrast to the magisterial Bishop of Carlisle, the plot rests on total clerical control and lay compliance:

> My lord,
> Before I freely speak my mind herein,
> You shall not only take the sacrament

[22] In passing let me note that "sacrament" is used more frequently (three times) in Richard II than in any other play (eight references total in the canon).

> To bury mine intents, but also to effect
> Whatever I shall happen to devise. (4.1.326-30)

Sacrament is being abused here not only in countenancing the murder of the king but also in obligating one to swear without full understanding of the scope of the oath. It is therefore significant that Aumerle must eventually break what would appear to be the most sacred of oaths to be true to a higher bond.

The manner of Aumerle's forgiveness indicates movement beyond penance bound up with reparations. When asked for pardon, Bolingbroke immediately gives his word to do so, conditioning his action only with the provision that the fault be intended rather than committed; here he acts as magnanimously as "a god on earth" can do, for the claims of justice on him as king might well demand a different response to a crime already committed. Although the intrusion of York and later the Duchess into the conference may cause momentary confusion, the former's calculated analysis--"If thou do pardon, whosoever pray, / More sins for this forgiveness prosper may" (5.3.81-82)--has no real chance of altering the decision Bolingbroke has already made. For his part, Aumerle must demonstrate the sincerity of his repentance in the face of damning evidence to the contrary. Acknowledging the discrepancy between appearance and reality, he must go on then to assert the primacy of intention: "I do repent me, read not my name there, / My

heart is not confederate with my hand" (5.3.50-51). During this interlude in a play in which language and oaths have been strained beyond endurance and so lost their authority, we have a glimpse of the real power of words, both those of king and subject, to be agents that effect and confirm transformation.

The entreating remark by the Duchess at the scene's conclusion--"Come, my old son, I pray God make thee new" (5.3.144)--suggests a change associated with the regeneration of Baptism (Ure). The words further establish a link between Aumerle and the transformed Hal at the beginning of Henry V (1.1.28-31). In a significant way, Aumerle may be regarded as a type or counterpart of Hal. A pointed association is made between the two by the placement of Bolingbroke's digression on his "unthrifty son" (5.3.1-22), which punctuates the two scenes involving the discovery and forgiveness of Aumerle's treachery. Like Hal, Aumerle is granted private conference with Bolingbroke and uses the occasion to clear up misunderstandings regarding his intentions.[23] In the amendment of their lives, deeds of valor follow as a consequence, not a condition, of their repentance. Although Aumerle does not appear in 1 and 2 Henry IV, Shakespeare pointedly unites him, now York, with Hal, now Henry V, at the Battle of Agincourt. It is his

[23] See further comments by Zitner 243.

death, along with that of his compatriot Suffolk, that suffices as the contribution of nobility required for English victory. If the stand-ins who die in the place of Henry IV at Shrewsbury are emphatically "counterfeits" and their deaths unavailing in resolving the civil conflict, in contrast Aumerle-York, who petitions to lead the vanguard at Agincourt, is the willing sacrificial victim who assumes the consequences that follow from Henry V's decision to risk all in "plain shock and even play of battle" (4.8.111). The "testament of noble-ending love" he seals with his blood in brotherly communion with Suffolk (4.6.26-27) serves to close, at least within the imaginative scope of the Second Tetralogy, the "purple testament of bleeding war" opened by Bolingbroke in Richard II (3.3.94).

One of the play's ironies is that Bolingbroke, able to function in a god-like role in forgiving Aumerle, remains unable to find any forgiveness for himself; indeed, he sinks further into crime by prompting the murder of Richard. It is appropriate that he concludes the play with a vow to undertake a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in order, as he says Pilate-like, "To wash this blood off from my guilty hand" (5.6.50) and that he is preoccupied with this failed venture at the opening of 1 Henry IV (1.1.18-30) as well as at the moment of his death in 2 Henry IV (4.5.235-40). To undertake a pilgrimage is, of course, a classically medieval way of making reparation for one's sins, trusting in works

rather than believing in redeeming grace. Luther's observation on those who doubt the adequacy of forgiveness could well serve as a commentary on the morose and soul-weary Henry IV who frets his way through the two plays bearing his name: "The result must necessarily be an ever greater uneasiness of conscience, a vain striving after impossible things, a quest for assurance and comfort that they never find" (35: 15).

A further irony is that it is Bolingbroke's adversary Norfolk who Shakespeare, picking up on a hint from sources other than Holinshed (Ure 4.1.92-100), has successfully engaging in crusades and dying in sanctified peace. The traditional religious practices remain accessible to Norfolk as a means of conducting his life and earning salvation. He had made proper use of them earlier when he had confessed his attempt to ambush John of Gaunt and then begged pardon "ere I last receiv'd the sacrament" (1.1.135-41). But in the "new world" proclaimed by Fitzwater (4.1.78) immediately before we learn of Norfolk's virtuous deeds and death, recourse to customary usages is effectively blocked, just as the formal throwing down of gages ends only in impasse. Efficient and capable Bolingbroke, eager to preside over the chivalric ritual to its conclusion, finds himself, as much as Richard, unable to see it through.

In Richard II an old ceremonial order has been abused and fallen into decay, no longer capable of providing

sustenance and shelter. That sense is hauntingly evoked in the Duchess of Gloucester's words about Plashy's "empty lodgings and unfurnish'd walls, / Unpeopled offices, untrodden stones" (1.2.68-69), which in turn recall the "Bare [ruin'd] choirs, where late the sweet birds sang" (sonnet 73).[24] In the succeeding three plays Shakespeare explores the ramifications ensuing from the demise of this decrepit but cherished world and the various strategies employed to respond to the changed circumstances: futile essays by Hotspur and the rebels to restore what has been irreparably lost; debilitating efforts by Bolingbroke to control the flux of the present or destabilizing attempts by his comic counterpart Falstaff to exploit the same flux; and the patient, but not painless, resolve of Hal to await the future so as to found a new order on the ruins of the old. It is Richard himself who, in his squandering of land and spilling of kindred blood, in his abuse of ritual and straining of language, is the agent chiefly responsible for undermining the order over which he presided. Though he discovers a means of finally gaining his own peace and asserting the true essence of his royal identity, its

[24] This sense of decay is further noted in Bolingbroke's descriptive comments about Flint Castle as he comes to take Richard prisoner: "the rude ribs of that ancient castle"; "his [the castle's] ruin'd ears"; "this castle's tottered battlements" (3.3.32, 34, 52). The counterpart in nature is set forth, of course, in the garden scene (3.4.40-47).

efficacy extends only to him, not his kingdom. It is Aumerle, Richard's accomplice in crime and fellow in penitence, who points towards a redemptive path that will be fully traveled only in the reign of Henry V.

2. 1 Henry IV: "ecce signum!"

In Richard II appearance and reality, word and referent, diverge from one another with tragic consequences. The play dramatizes the collapse of efforts to fuse the increasingly disparate elements of signum and res: in the case of Richard, to possess the name of king because one possesses the identity; or in the case of Bolingbroke, to possess the identity of king because one possesses the name. In 1 and 2 Henry IV, failed efforts to force correspondence give way to radical disjunction that progressively debilitates a successful but uneasy king, that spurs on rebels intent on exacting a price for every past wrong, and that begets occasion for comic, eventually crass, exploitation by the scapegraces. As Empson observes, the prince is party to all three camps (Pastoral 43). Profiting from his experience of each, he must move beyond all of them to forge a new relationship of proportion between outward show and inner worth.

The curious balance between success and uneasiness that characterizes the reign of Henry IV is evident in the opening scene where he proclaims the end of "civil butchery" (1.1.13) only to be informed by Westmoreland a few lines later that Mortimer has met defeat against Glendower with "[a] thousand of his people butchered" and shamefully mutilated (1.1.34-46). Likewise, Henry's confident

declaration of a crusade is swiftly undermined by the defeat in Wales as well as by the news of the Percies' recalcitrance in the wake of their victory at Holmedon. As a result, Henry often seems to stumble, as he did in the ceremonial world of Richard II where his attempt to ascend the throne was thwarted by the Bishop of Carlisle or here where his plans for a crusade seem to express genuine but muddled spiritual aspirations.[1] Yet Henry also shows himself a master of manipulating appearances to create the impression that he wants. As he explains to Hal, he "dress'd . . . in such humility" as to "pluck allegiance from men's hearts" while simultaneously making his "presence, like a robe pontifical / Ne'er seen but wonder'd at" (3.2.51-52, 56-57). In his confrontation with the Percies, he announces his conscious decision to substitute one pose for another:

> . . . I will from henceforth rather be myself,
> Mighty, and to be fear'd, than my condition,
> Which hath been smooth as oil, soft as young down,
> And therefore lost that title of respect
> Which the proud soul ne'er pays but to the proud.
> (1.3.5-9)

Henry is no doubt the "well-grac'd actor" as implied by York (R2 5.2.24), while Richard's histrionics always revealed more than they concealed.

[1] "The ideas of the Holy Land, of pilgrimage, crusading, and penitence, have been in Henry's imagination too long and too deeply for their presence to be accounted for solely in terms of Machiavellian policy" (Black 25).

Lack of consistency is the price that Bolingbroke must pay for his political success. The severity of the price results from his failure to develop a critical awareness of what he is doing. He modulates, unconsciously it seems, from vague yearnings for a distant crusade to expeditious planning to counter the immediate threat of rebellion. The issue most provocative for the rebels, the one they insist on again and again, is Henry's breaking of the oaths that he made to them (4.3.52-53, 60-63, 74-80, 101; 5.1.41-45, 58, 70-71; 5.2.36-37). Henry remains remarkably indifferent to the charges, not even making the effort of "forswearing that he is forsworn" that Worcester deceptively credits him with (5.2.38). Rather, he dismisses the accusations as merely facings for "the garment of rebellion" (5.1.74), projecting onto the rebels motives that make sense to him.

For Hotspur, on the other hand, fidelity must be maintained over time no matter how changed the situation may be. Early on, he upbraids his father and uncle for their breach of fealty in deposing Richard:

> Shall it for shame be spoken in these days,
> Or fill up chronicles in time to come,
> That men of your nobility and power
> Did gage them both in an unjust behalf
> (As both of you, God pardon it, have done)
> To put down Richard, that sweet lovely rose,
> And plant this thorn, this canker Bolingbroke?
> (1.3.168-74)

He continues:

> . . . yet time serves wherein you may redeem
> Your banish'd honours, and restore yourselves

> Into the good thoughts of the world again. . . .
> (1.3.178-80)

Childlike, Hotspur subscribes to the belief that all can be righted in time and that honor and its obverse of shame are all sufficient as motives. As a figure of shame-culture,[2] he puts a premium on appearance, for external glory de facto confirms inner worth. It is ironic then, but perhaps not totally unexpected, that Hotspur's naiveté and Henry's sophistication meet at this point. Just as royalty is essentially trappings for Henry, so is honor a garment for Hotspur: ". . . So he that doth redeem her [drowned honour] thence might wear / Without corrival all her dignities . . ." (1.3.204-205). Both are victims of their critically unexamined certainties: for Henry, that the constraints of oaths and loyalties are malleable according to the exigencies of the moment; for Hotspur, that they remain rigidly binding, untempered by the changing circumstances of time.

It is not surprising then that a basic impulse of Prince Hal is to elude the commitments of oaths and the turmoil and recriminations that have been attendant upon them for his father. He intends to "pay the debt I never promised" and thereby prove "[b]y how much better than my word I am" (1.2.204-05). In his plan to perform rather than

[2] See Nuttall 104-05, 140-42 for application of the concept of shame-culture to the Roman plays and to Othello.

promise, Hal lays out a strategy to redeem the future by disentangling himself from the past, as set against Hotspur's seeking to rectify the past by denying the future. One indication that Hal is much different from a cold calculator, which some would make him out to be on the basis of his soliloquy, is that in the course of the play he does make promises. Not only is there the ominous "I do, I will" at the conclusion of the play extempore (2.4.475), but following upon his father's unflattering comparison of him with Hotspur, there is his solemn vow to prove his virtue by defeating his rival: "This in the name of God I promise here . . ." (3.2.153).[3] A major irony, on which the ending of the play turns, is Hal's discovery that neither promises nor performance result totally in the intended outcome. But before considering that, we need to examine oaths and swearing, particularly as used by Falstaff. It is principally in regard to these that the play's sacramental themes are developed, and it is through the oath-laden

[3] There is a possibility of misinterpreting Hal's words to Douglas at Shrewsbury: "It is the Prince of Wales that threatens thee, / Who never promiseth but he means to pay" (5.4.41-42). The lines are not usually explicated, but Davison notes the resemblance to "And pay the debt I never promised" (1.2.204). It seems clear, though, that but is used here meaning except rather than as an adversative (Abbott 81-85). Hal's declaration then continues to show his new-found commitment rather than his original intention to avoid promises. Porter (50-51) observes that Hal's speech acts are typically what Austin terms "commissives," ones that commit him to a future course of action.

exchanges with Falstaff that Hal explores and comes to understand the power and limitations of the human word.

The specific connection between oaths and sacraments is first of all an etymological one, the Latin sacramentum originally meaning a sacred pledge or oath, particularly that taken by soldiers in loyalty to the emperor. The word evolved to become used for the rituals of the Christian church, especially those believed to have been instituted by Christ with a visible sign of grace (Bicknell 353-54). Theologically, the key element shared in common by sacraments and oaths, as stated by Aquinas, is that they are "external acts of religion in which man uses something divine" (39: 203 [2a2ae.89, 1]).[4] In the more exhortative voice of the homily, ". . . an oath . . . is a part of God's glory, which we are bound by his commandments to give unto him . . ." (64).[5] The importance of oaths for Elizabethans is evident in this homily devoted to them, Against Swearing and Perjury, the purpose of which is to uphold the necessity of taking solemn oaths for the maintenance of public order while discouraging vain swearing in everyday social and

[4] Although oaths do not fall under the category of signs, as do the sacraments proper, they are appropriately considered such by analogy: "Even an oath has a certain connection with sacred realities: to the extent, namely, that it is a certain kind of attestation made by means of some sacred thing. And it is in virtue of this that it is called a 'sacrament' " (56: 7 [3a.60, 1]).

[5] Also see Morice 3, 6.

commercial intercourse. The frequency, triviality, thoughtlessness, and blasphemy characteristic of the latter use tended to weaken the sanctions that made keeping one's word a religious act and perjuring oneself tantamount to damnation.

The issue of oaths is opened early in the play when Poins enters to join the conversation between Hal and Falstaff:

> Poins. Good morrow, sweet Hal. What says Monsieur Remorse? What says Sir John Sack--and Sugar? Jack! how agrees the devil and thee about thy soul, that thou soldest him on Good Friday last, for a cup of Madeira and a cold capon's leg?
> Prince. Sir John stands to his word, the devil shall have his bargain, for he was never yet a breaker of proverbs: he will give the devil his due.
> Poins. Then art thou damned for keeping thy word with the devil.
> Prince. Else he had been damned for cozening the devil. (1.2.109-19)

The homily, citing the examples of Herod with Salome and of Jephtha with his daughter, specifically addresses the matter of "them that make wicked promises by an oath" and, of course, admonishes that keeping such an oath is a "double offence" (67). This is one of many instances in the play demonstrating that the power of words to bind is significantly qualified by circumstances.

The principal opposition to the use of oaths came, as it did to sacramental rites in general, from Puritans and Anabaptists who cited Biblical injunctions as warrant for their reluctance to swear. Their substitution of milder

exclamations for conversational swearing is directly satirized in 1 Henry IV when Hotspur reproves Kate:

> Not yours, in good sooth! Heart, you swear like a comfit-maker's wife--"Not you, in good sooth!", and "As true as I live!", and "As God shall mend me!", and "As sure as day!"--
> And givest such sarcenet surety for thy oaths
> As if thou never walk'st further than Finsbury.
> (3.1.241-46)

More was at stake, however, than different tastes in speech habits. A critical issue separating Puritans and Anglican authorities was the matter of oaths ex officio, about which controversy was particularly acrimonious in the 1580s and 90s (Hill 403). The essence of such oaths was that ecclesiastical authorities acting in judicial capacity were allowed ex officio, by mere office of judge (no presentment or indictment required), to summon before them anyone who then must answer under oath all questions put to him, no matter whether doing so incriminated himself or others close to him (Maguire 206-07). The administration of and the resistance to the oath ex officio has a long and important history in England, as Maguire documents. And it is interesting for our purposes here that the oath's first prominent use occurred to suppress the Lollards during the reign of the historical Henry IV. The statute authorizing its use, 2 Hen. IV, c. 15, is particularly infamous in Protestant historiography. John Foxe reprinted it and repeatedly excoriated it as being "cruel" and "bloody" (239-41). It permitted inquisition of heretical suspects

"according to canonical sanctions," thus clearing the way for enforced oaths, and authorized their detention "until he or they so offending have canonically purged him or themselves." James Morice, a Puritan lawyer who in the 1590s took the lead in attacking the oath ex officio, termed the statute that "bloodie and broyling lawe" that committed the sword of secular power "into the handes of madde men, and the seelie lambes deliuered ouer to the greedie and deuouring woolues" (33-34).[6] The anguish aroused by the issue is evident in a Puritan petition to Parliament in 1586 that protested that the oath ex officio "to a conscience that feareth God is more violent than any rack to constrain him to utter that he knoweth, though it be against himself and to his most grievous punishment" (qtd. in Hill 384).[7]

In the first tavern scene of the play, Falstaff, his fabricated account of the Gadshill robbery unravelling under the interrogation by Hal and Poins, resorts as a temporary expedient to refusal to answer, averring, like his Puritan counterparts, that physical torture pales in comparison to enforcing the unwilling soul:

> What, upon compulsion? 'Zounds, and I were at the strappado, or all the racks in the world, I would

[6] The oath is also protested in the Marprelate tracts 119, 318-19, 409-11.

[7] "As a matter of fact the interrogatories framed by Whitgift were of the most minutely inquisitorial character; the whole confessed intention of this outrageous tyranny being identical in character to the use of torture--to compel a man to accuse himself" (Pierce 82-83).

> not tell you on compulsion. Give you a reason on compulsion? If reasons were as plentiful as blackberries, I would give no man a reason upon compulsion, I. (2.4.231-36)

Just as he frequently mimics the Puritan idiom, so here he parodies one of their positions on a burning issue of the day. The parody cuts several ways. As Bryant notes, Falstaff's religious cant makes fun of the doctrinaire Puritan while setting off his own indulgence as relatively harmless ("Shakespeare's Falstaff" 155). But insofar as his mockeries of the times also prove to be accurate mirrors of the time, Falstaff provides an exhibition of the challenge posed by the drive for absolute reform. The Puritan rejection of the privileged status of oaths was part of a larger repudiation of an oppressive and over-extended sacramental system (Hill 396-99). In response to the sham use of the accouterments of religion--whether images, pilgrimages, sacramental rites, or oaths--Lollardry and Puritanism proposed the radical step not merely of correcting abuses but of abolishing practices. Such an iconoclastic program, of course, had profound political as well as religious implications. Much of Falstaff's value for Hal lies in the way that he opens up as far as possible the discrepancies of the de-sacramentalized world of his father's reign. Sir John is a comic object lesson of how to get along, of how to thrive in this new world in which have dissolved the old certainties that words have undisputed

meanings, that signs can be readily interpreted, that the sanctions of oaths guarantee truthfulness and faithfulness. It is a world peculiarly congenial to both saints and scoundrels, and therefore doubly suited to Falstaff.

In a society where "oath on oath" has been broken (4.3.101), overreliance on the sanctions of oaths to ensure public order has rapidly eroded their effectiveness, just as Richard's overextension of royal immunity undercut the authority of kingship. Morice warns of the consequences to be had from too frequent recourse to such guaranties, "for dailie experience sheweth that the frequent vse of thinges reuerent (such is the corruption of our nature) causeth them to be of none accompt" (6). He goes on later to point out that the common law refrained from using oaths for the accused in recognition that pragmatic self-interest would likely override fears of ultimate spiritual penalties:

> For in wisedome it was foresene that the frailtie of man for the saftie of life, the preservation of libertie, credite, and estimation would not spare to prophane even that which is most holie, and by committing sinfull perjurie, cast both soule and bodie into eternall perdition. (30)

Falstaff is a self-proclaimed comic demonstration of Morice's point: "Thou knowest in the state of innocency Adam fell, and what should poor Jack Falstaff do in the days of villainy? Thou seest I have more flesh than another man, and therefore more frailty" (3.3. 164-68).

In his profligacy Falstaff bears some interesting resemblances to a Puritan rascal of the period, William Hacket, who along with two accomplishes sought to convince the citizens of London that he was the Messiah come again. His story is told in Conspiracie for Pretended Reformation by Richard Cosin, a legal advocate for the ecclesiastical authorities, who used Hacket to discredit the Puritan position in general and opposition to the oath ex officio in particular. According to Cosin, Hacket "was given to quaffing and drunkenness . . . and was addicted also to lascivious life with Women," as well as being "vehemently holden in suspicion for committing also of sundry Robberies" (9-10). More notable for the purpose here, however, was his method of swearing:

> Besides his former Vertues and good Qualities, this Hacket was also a very great Swearer and Blasphemer of the Name of God in his younger years; which course, when afterward, to retain the reputation of a Professor of the Gospel (whereof he made great pretence) he was forced to leave, he turned his single Oaths (in truth) into worse and more horrible, joined with most fearful Imprecations against himself, whensoever he would make any Asseverations, wherein he desired to be credited, as namely these: So God judge me, I renounce God, and God confound- and damn me, or do so, or so unto me, if this be not true; which was so usual, and by long custom so inveterate in him, even till the time of his apprehension, that in the midst of his counterfeit Holiness . . . he often burst forth into this kind of execration against himself, as an especial motive (amongst

> others) to have his words to be better believed by them. (8-9)[8]

During the inquisition over Gadshill, Falstaff's oaths are also characteristically turned against himself, although done of course with a humorous touch. The formula generally runs that if he is not telling the truth, then he is something that supposedly he is not: "then am I a shotten herring" (2.4.126-27); "I'll never wear hair on my face more" (135-36); "I am a rouge" (149, 162); "I am a Jew else: an Ebrew Jew" (177); "I am a bunch of radish" (183); "then am I no two-legg'd creature" (185); "spit in my face, call me horse" (190); "I am a villain else" (202).[9] In offering his own protean character as his warrant, Falstaff unmistakably dispels any claim to credibility that his assertions may have. Even before he begins to multiply giddily the number of his adversaries, he has exposed the patent unreliability of his word: "Give me a cup of sack: I am a rouge if I drunk today" (2.4.149-50). Hal's retort--"O villain! Thy lips are scarce wiped since thou drunk'st last" (151-52)--only reminds us of what we had seen shortly before, the point of drinking made explicit by stage direction (2.4.115-16). As if to tip everyone off to the

[8] Also see 107 for further reference to Hacket's self-imprecations and evasive tactics under examination.

[9] In his first appearance, Falstaff slips into this mode of swearing just as he starts mimicking the Puritan idiom (1.2.88-95).

preposterousness of the battle account from the beginning, Falstaff prefaces it with the same discredited oath: "I am a rouge if I were not at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours together" (2.4.162-63).

When Falstaff first goes beyond self-reference to swear by something outside himself--"by these hilts" (2.4.202)--the exception proves the rule. Although the hilt of a sword was traditionally a sacred object to swear upon by virtue of its resemblance to a cross,[10] its sacramental value has been clearly impaired by the hacking Falstaff did to it, a fraudulent action repeatedly brought up by Hal (2.4.257-59; 299-300). When, as evidence of his valor in a battle that never was, Falstaff produces his desecrated sword with the mass-like proclamation "ecce signum!" (2.4.167), it is a telling comment on the demise of a sacramental system that assumes similitude between sign and referent. The sword may as well be the Vice's "dagger of lath" that Falstaff has told Hal he will use to "beat thee out of thy kingdom . . . and drive all thy subjects afore thee like a flock of wild geese" (2.4.133-35). As a vehicle for pointing to truth beyond itself, this object has no more validity than do the counterfeit coats marching later at Shrewsbury have in signifying genuine royalty. The radical nominalism espoused in the soliloquy on honor is already implied here. Words

[10] See Humphreys' note, Shirley 104, H5 2.1.101, and Ham. 1.5.147.

are words, things are things to be used as one sees fit, not to be revered in themselves. A chair will do for a throne, a leaden dagger for a sceptre, and a cushion for a crown.

The devaluation of objects and words in themselves, as professed by Reformers, was both a devastating blow to practices long cherished (e.g., the feast of Corpus Christi, the veneration of images, pilgrimages) and an opportunity to construct new understandings more in keeping not only with scripture but also reason, and less subject to abuse. Cranmer, who as Dugmore shows was very much "in the Reformed Catholic, or Augustinian realist-symbolist tradition of eucharistic doctrine" (200), held that the bread and wine of the communion service are not capable in themselves of being sanctifying objects. Rather, they are "self-enclosed, impermeable objects of the Nominalist tradition" (Davies 115). Yet the lessening of emphasis on externals did not deny Christ's presence to communicants. The basic shift in Reformed teaching was from attention on the object received to consideration of the condition of the recipient. In the words of Cranmer, who set the course to be followed by Jewel and Hooker:

> And therefore in the book of the holy communion we do not pray that the creatures of bread and wine may be the body and blood of Christ; but that they may be unto us the body and blood of Christ; that is to say, that we may so eat them, and drink them, that we may be partakers of his body crucified, and of the blood shed for our redemption. (qtd. in Davies 120)

Or in the succinct formulation by Hooker: "The reall presence of Christes most blessed bodie and bloode is not therefore to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthie receiver of the sacrament" (2: 334). In the matter of oaths, the corresponding shift is away from the binding power of words themselves to the intention of the one swearing: ". . . I am not forsworn if my heart meant truly when I promised" (Tyndale, Expositions 57).

Hal's new understanding of the sacramental nature of kingship will rest on similar principles: qualifying, but not disregarding, the estimation given to royal accouterments while laying stress on inner worthiness. Much of the function of Falstaff is to suggest for Hal and us the elusiveness of any certainty that appearance is a guarantor of correspondent substance. Even when, under the mock guise of Henry IV, he praises himself with reference to the Biblical similitude between fruit and tree, the ironies concurrently undercut him:

> If that man should be lewdly given, he deceiveth me; for, Harry, I see virtue in his looks. If then the tree may be known by the fruit, as the fruit by the tree, then peremptorily I speak it, there is virtue in that Falstaff; him keep with, the rest banish. (2.4.420-25)

And, in the miracles of witty invention that balance the play's ironies of humorous disclosure, Falstaff also finds a way of suggesting that genuine substance will eventually be revealed for what it is, no matter what disguise it assumes:

"By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye. Why, hear you, my masters, was it for me to kill the heir-apparent? should I turn upon the true prince?" (2.4.263-65).

With the threat posed by the arrival of the sheriff and watch at Eastcheap, Falstaff argues for his own reprieve by directly addressing the issue of outward show set against actual value: "Never call a true piece of gold a counterfeit: thou art essentially made without seeming so" (2.4.485-87). Already under the sentence of banishment, Falstaff attempts here to link himself with Hal, claiming that they are both genuine articles despite any impressions to the contrary. In his retort--"And thou a natural coward without instinct" (2.4.488)--Hal hearkens back to Falstaff's pretence to lion-like qualities as excuse for his running away at Gadshill and so implies that paradoxical interpretation, here being "natural" "without instinct," can be turned against one as well as to one's advantage, can be used to confront as well as to evade.

Counterfeit gold becomes a literal issue in the play's second tavern scene. When Falstaff alleges that one of the items picked from his pocket is "a seal-ring of my grandfather's worth forty mark," the Hostess reminds him that Hal has long questioned the object's value: "O Jesu, I have heard the Prince tell him, I know not how oft, that that ring was copper" (3.3.79-82). The selection of a seal-ring and the way the dispute over it structures the exchange

between Hal and Falstaff suggest a complex of associations. As an instrument for confirming and authenticating an agreement, the seal has reference back to the scene at Bangor where seals, like taking the sacrament in Richard II, are prominent as the means of completing and securing the agreement among the rebels (3.1.77, 259).[11] The identification of the ring as an heirloom and its introduction after the scene in which Hal declares to his father his intention to prove himself a worthy heir ("And in the closing of some glorious day / Be bold to tell you that I am your son" [3.2.133-34]) further adds to the ring's significance. A seal-ring, in fact, was a sign of inheritance, a practice which occasioned St. Bernard's use of it as an example of sacramental res superceding signum in estimation. The passage is twice cited by Jewel:

> The fashion is to deliver a ring when seisin and possession of inheritance is given: the ring is a sign of the possession; so that he which hath taken it may say, The ring is nothing: I care not for it: it is the inheritance which I sought for. In like manner, when Christ our Lord drew nigh to his passion, he thought good to give seisin and possession of his grace to his disciples, and that they might receive his invisible grace by some visible sign. (2: 1102)[12]

[11] Also see the Archbishop of York's "sealed brief" sent by Sir Michael (4.4.1).

[12] From Bernard's sermon In Coena Domini. The Latin "anulus" means ring or signet, and is translated as "sealing-ring" in Jewel's other citation (1: 449). Hooker also uses a later portion of the same passage in discussing the sacraments (4: 119). The passage is given at length in Dugmore 40-41.

The idea developed here looks ahead to the Prince's contention with his father's crown in 2 Henry IV, "[t]he quarrel of a true inheritor" (4.5.168), where Hal seeks to assign proper value and price to the "golden rigol" (4.5.35), symbol of a majesty which both allures and dismays him.

The religious symbolism of the seal-ring is suggested earlier in the scene with Falstaff's comic likening of Bardolph's face to another kind of ring, one featuring a skull as a reminder of death:

> No, I'll be sworn, I make as good use of it as many a man doth of a death's-head, or a memento mori. I never see thy face but I think upon hell-fire, and Dives that lived in purple: for there he is in his robes, burning, burning. If thou wert any way given to virtue, I would swear by thy face: my oath should be "By this fire, that's God's angel!" (3.3.28-34)

It is instructive to notice how closely the sacramental burning bush is associated with taking an oath by Falstaff. It is almost as if the presence of a sacred object, albeit a mock one in this case, begets occasion for oaths. Even if Falstaff has nothing to swear to at the moment, he is on the outlook for something to swear by.

The issue of the seal-ring's material value, dismissed out of hand by Hal as "[a] trifle, some eightpenny matter" (3.3.102), shifts likewise to a question of oaths, of

keeping one's word.[13] Falstaff has rashly pledged to cudgel Hal if he persists in maintaining that the ring is copper. When Hal does so, Falstaff extricates himself from this latest quandary by another appeal to royal sanctity. In this instance, he comes up with a burlesque version of the king's two bodies: "Why, Hal, thou knowest as thou art but a man I dare, but as thou art prince, I fear thee as the roaring of the lion's whelp" (3.3.144-46). The distinction made comically here anticipates the one more soberly offered by Williams in Henry V when he learns that the person he has promised to strike is, in fact, the king (4.8.51-58). And in both instances, profound sacramental understanding, the conjunction of the sacred and profane in the same object, is intimately tied up with a corresponding understanding about language, that a pledge intended as absolute may ultimately be interpreted as conditional.

The major pledges made in the play are Hal's declaration to Falstaff that he will banish him and his vow to his father to redeem his name, to prove his worthiness as heir by defeating Hotspur. The two promises are very much connected, and both are significantly modified when the time

[13] Sacraments are regarded both as signs, reminders of God's word, and seals, assurances that his promises will be kept. The analogy between the divine and human practice is discussed, among others, by Jewel: "As princes' seals confirm and warrant their deeds and charters; so do the sacraments witness unto our conscience that God's promises are true, and shall continue for ever" (2: 1099). Also see Luther 36: 174.

comes for their fulfillment at Shrewsbury. While "I do, I will" (2.4.475) is stark in its simplicity and directness, the promise to the king is solemn in its appeal to divine sanction--"in the name of God" (3.2.153)--and seemingly absolute in its invocation of dire consequences should it not be kept: "And I will die a hundred thousand deaths / Ere break the smallest parcel of this vow" (3.2.158-59). Hal apparently conceives of the act in terms of the regeneration associated with Baptism, redemptive blood being the cleansing agent:[14]

> I will redeem all this on Percy's head,
> And in the closing of some glorious day
> Be bold to tell you that I am your son,
> When I will wear a garment all of blood,
> And stain my favours in a bloody mask,
> Which, wash'd away, shall scour my shame
> with it. . . . (3.2.132-37)

As with Baptism, Hal seeks the effects of being confirmed as son and heir (Book 272, 275; Bicknell 373).

As observed earlier, the solemn vow by Hal to his father runs contrary to his original intention to elude commitments to oaths, to "pay the debt I never promised" (1.2.204). Moreover, despite the defeat of Hotspur, the outcome deviates significantly from that envisioned in the father-son interview; for Hal takes no credit but rather defers to Falstaff's importunate and preposterous claim of

[14] Cf. Exod. 24.6-8, Heb. 9.7-23, 1 John 1.7, Rev. 7.14.

having killed the rebel leader. Much of our understanding of the play must rest on interpreting these discrepancies.

Part of the intensity with which Hal pledges himself stems, no doubt, from reaction to Henry's unflattering comparison of him with Hotspur and to the stinging rebuke of his son as "my nearest and dearest enemy," one who may conceivably betray his father by joining with the rebels "under Percy's pay" (3.2.123, 126). I think that it is important that Hal be shown here as thrown off balance, that he reply to his father with the stunned protestation of a child who feels wrongly accused: "Do not think so, you shall not find it so . . ." (3.2.129). The play must allow for the growth and development of Hal's character, which means that he is not always in control of events, that his perturbations are real, that he be allowed the privilege of any serious dramatic character to become entangled in his own inconsistencies and conflicting motives. Even with those pushed aside who paint Hal as little more than a calculating Machiavel, we find a critic like Gordon Zeeveld, who is favorably disposed to the prince, opining that it is as if everything has been laid out in final form in the "I know you all" soliloquy:

> While I should in no way disagree that responsibility of the prince is a fundamental concern in the plays . . . , the idea of growth is unsupported by the text. The fact is, there is nothing in the action to substantiate the

> frequently enunciated view that Shakespeare was depicting the education of a prince. (13)[15]

Hal's soliloquy does show that he shares his father's political acumen in recognizing that part of success is manipulation of appearances (1.2.192-98, 207-10). But the experience of the play will demonstrate that doing so is not so simple or dispassionate a matter as he originally conceives.

In the emotion-laden interview with his father, not only does Hal unanticipatedly commit himself by oath, but he also invests much of his personal identity in the outcome:

> For the time will come
> That I shall make this northern youth exchange
> His glorious deeds for my indignities.
> Percy is but my factor, good my lord,
> To engross up glorious deeds on my behalf,
> And I will call him to so strict account
> That he shall render every glory up,
> Yea, even the slightest worship of his time,
> Or I will tear the reckoning from his heart.
> (3.2.144-52)

To defeat one's rival means to become like one's rival. It is not, however, only a matter of transferring credit for glorious deeds from one account to another. It also means thinking and acting like one's opponent, subscribing to the same code of conduct that he does: "I better brook the loss of brittle life / Than those proud titles thou hast won of me . . ." (5.4.77-78). If with the impertinence of youth, Hotspur seeks "[t]o pluck bright honour from the pale-fac'd

[15] Also see Morris 258.

moon" (1.3.200), then Hal is as equally determined to "tear the reckoning from his heart" (3.2.152). Such is the intention that Hal fervently declares to his father. And it is a quest that he both fulfills and repudiates.

Even before consigning credit for Hotspur's defeat to Falstaff, Hal signals his changed resolve, his inclination to decline the glory that legitimately accrues to him. Having declared to Hotspur just before their combat that he would crop "all the budding honours on thy crest / . . . to make a garland for my head" (5.4.71-72), he instead actually reverses the intended gesture, covering his opponent's "mangled face" with his own favours (5.4.95).[16] The action undoubtedly demonstrates the magnanimity of the prince; but, furthermore, it suggests the way in which intentions can be qualified or even jettisoned in fulfillment.

One reason that Hal refuses to accept the repute of victor is that he is growing beyond the superannuated code of honor with which Hotspur is humourously obsessed. That code's debilitation has already been amply instanced in Richard II where throwing down gages and trial by combat have failed as effective means of resolving conflicts. Similarly anachronistic is the concept of honor as the accumulation of glories wrested from the defeat of an incumbent champion by a new challenger. Henry's high esteem

[16] See the helpful discussion by Hartman.

for his wished-for son is based largely on Hotspur's defeat of one already reputed for military prowess:

> What never-dying honour hath he got
> Against renowned Douglas! whose high deeds,
> Whose hot incursions and great name in arms,
> Holds from all soldiers chief majority
> And military title capital
> Through all the kingdoms that acknowledge Christ.
> (3.2.106-11)[17]

The shameful behavior of Douglas at Shrewsbury is a damning comment on the integrity of the chivalric code. That he fled from battle in fear is explicit in the account given by Hal (5.5.17-22) as well as that by Morton in 2 Henry IV (1.1.126-31). His flight has been comically anticipated in the first tavern scene where Falstaff and Hal engage in repartee about whether "that sprightly Scot of Scots, Douglas, that runs a-horseback up a hill perpendicular" has "good mettle in him" and will run in other circumstances (2.4.338-52). Douglas himself engages in a heated exchange about valor with Vernon, who counsels prudence on the rebels' part in view of the king's numerical superiority. When Douglas accuses Vernon of being feint-hearted, the latter retorts, "Let it be seen tomorrow in the battle / Which of us fears" (4.3.13-14). Bobadill-like, the Scotsman has earlier boasted of his own fearlessness

[17] Bevington notes that "whose" (107) refers to Hotspur, but I see no reason to lay aside the assumed reference by proximity to Douglas. For what it is worth, at the opening of the rebel council at Shrewsburg, Hotspur lavishes praise on his former adversary (4.1.1-9).

(4.1.135-36).

The point here is that Douglas's pusillanimity at Shrewsbury is not just a random detail from Holinshed with which Shakespeare happens to garnish the account of the battle. The dramatist has carefully laid the groundwork to allow us to savor fully the exposure of the braggart soldier. If his desertion reminds us of another running away earlier in the play, we are not amiss;[18] for in the midst of the climactic struggle between the two Harrys, Shakespeare inserts the burlesque battle between the two pretenders to prowess.[19] If one has been the boon companion to the scapegraces, the other has been the thrasonical buffoon tagging along with the rebels. This double pairing of opponents and alter egos visually undercuts the upshot of the combat just as Falstaff's subsequent reflections on truth and counterfeiting do so verbally. If Douglas, the self-proclaimed but ineffectual king-slayer, is further rendered impotent by his inability to bag even the rascal[20] Falstaff, then questions are raised about the outcome for

[18] Note also how Hal associates Douglas with Falstaff and cowardice by citing the "upon instinct" tag (2.4.351).

[19] For a different interpretation that views Douglas's actions as genuinely noble, see Connor. His article is the only extended treatment of Douglas that I have come across.

[20] Significantly, rascal is a term applied to Douglas by Falstaff and in turn to Falstaff by Hal (2.4.345-47). Later, it is again applied to Falstaff by Hal with the specific meaning of an immature or inferior deer (3.3.156).

Hal, who has banked all his success on winning glory from Hotspur, who has in turn won his estimation from Douglas. The lines of honorable credit are being cut short as the reserves of heroic capital are depleted. Counterfeiting is about as good as one can do. Henry IV is living proof, thanks to his son's solicitude, that cracked crowns can be passed for current.

This is not to deny the genuineness of the valor demonstrated by Hal in his defense of his father and his defeat of Hotspur. His inner worthiness is unquestionably confirmed by these acts. What is a problem, however, is assigning recognizable, external worth to that valor. Throughout the play, the validity of signum has been steadily chipped away at, whether in Falstaff's hacked sword, Glendower's "signs" which he claims "have mark'd me extraordinary" (3.1.38), or Henry's many coats marching at Shrewsbury. In such circumstances, there is little that Hal can lay claim to that can adequately express his achievement. It is not surprising, then, that the play concludes with the execution of Vernon, the one person who has unequivocally praised Hal in a memorable portrait comparing him to "feather'd Mercury" (4.1.104-10), and the unconditional release of Douglas, the rebel revealed as most

undeserving of sympathetic treatment.[21] No doubt, there is again magnanimity in Hal's treatment of the captured Scot (Pinciss 88):

> Go to the Douglas and deliver him
> Up to his pleasure, ransomless and free:
> His valours shown upon our crests today
> Have taught us how to cherish such high deeds,
> Even in the bosom of our adversaries. (5.5.27-31)

But in view of the foregoing analysis, the ironic import of these lines is equally clear: Douglas and "high deeds" have little in common.

Another, more profound reason that Hal shuns the honor rightfully his is Hotspur's interpretation of his own death. Acknowledging that his "proud titles" now devolve upon Hal, he goes on to reflect in famous lines that his wounded thoughts, as well as life and time itself, "[m]ust have a stop" (5.4.76-82). What may be words of consolation for the dying antagonist resound ominously for the protagonist, a verbal memento mori uttered by what is almost literally a death's head. In completing Hotspur's truncated sentence that pronounces himself dust and food for worms, Hal realizes in the moment of victory what Richard II had come to grasp only in defeat:

> Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs,
> Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes

[21] Worcester is at least shrewd. His doom at victorious Henry's hand is expected, but the addition of Vernon is presented as almost an afterthought by the king and therefore a point designed by the dramatist to catch our notice: "Bear Worcester to the death, and Vernon too : / Other offenders we will pause upon" (5.5.14-15).

> Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.
> Let's choose executors and talk of wills.
> And yet not so--for what can we bequeath
> Save our deposed bodies to the ground?
> Our lands, our lives, and all, are Bolingbroke's,
> And nothing can we call our own but death;
> And that small model of the barren earth
> Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.
> (3.2.145-54)

Falstaff's "catechism" about the dubious nature of honor (5.1.127-41), its futility in the face of certain mortality, receives its imprimatur in Hal's discovery through experience. Falstaff rises from the grave largely because the de-sacramentalized world he stands for is triumphant. Nothing is sacred, nothing is safe--not the hundred and fifty soldiers he leads to "where they are peppered" (5.3.36), not even the body of "noble Percy" (5.4.109). His mutilation of Hotspur's corpse is genuinely shocking.[22] But this action, along with his preposterous claim of actually killing the rebel leader, is only the culmination of what we have been witnessing all along: the inversion of signification and the slipperiness of oaths. "[T]hou art not what thou seem'st," declares a clearly surprised Hal upon encountering his companion alive and bearing Hotspur's body. "No, that's certain," replies the man for whom there is little distinction between imposture and normality, "I am not a double-man: but if I be not Jack

[22] Auden, who idealizes Falstaff, flinches at his action here, saying "a patently false note is struck. . . . there is no way in which an actor can play the scene convincingly" (184-85).

Falstaff, then am I a Jack . . ." (5.4.136-38). The characteristic warrant of denial uneasily overlaps with what we have seen affirmed: Falstaff's knavish actions make him a Jack in more than given name only. When he presses his demand for recognition as vanquisher by invoking what is normally a particularly solemn oath--"I'll take it upon my death, I gave him this wound in the thigh" (5.4.149-51)--his mock death is as fraudulent as the hilt of the tampered sword he offered earlier as sanction.[23]

Hal's complicity in Falstaff's bogus story amounts to a mock sacrament, a parodic version of the passage most frequently cited from Augustine in his commentary on John 15: "The word is added to the element, and there results the Sacrament, as if itself also a kind of visible word" (344).[24] The element is the emblematic "double-man," Falstaff with the spurious spoil of Hotspur's corpse hoisted on his back; the word, of course, is here a lie, the prince's acquiescence to the fabricated account; and the result, which by now should come as little surprise, is a kind of grace--"Come, bring your luggage nobly on your

[23] Of course, Falstaff did give Hotspur the thigh wound, but not under the implied circumstances as his slayer.

[24] For instances of its citation, see Aquinas 56: 15 (3a.60, 4); Luther, Selections 233, 235; Jewel, Works 1: 123; 2: 1100, 1125; Hooker 1: 273; Bilson 663-64.

back. / . . . For my part, if a lie may do thee grace, / I'll gild it with the happiest terms I have" (5.4.155-57).[25]

The scouring of shame, which Hal had so fervently sought for himself, he here displaces upon Falstaff, conferring on him a totally undeserved gentility.[26] The old reprobate has become the secular beneficiary of the most fundamental of Reformed axioms, one appropriately close to the heart of a man who has proclaimed himself more frail than others: "O, if men were to be saved by merit, what hole in hell were hot enough for him?" (1.2.104-05). The deserts justly due to Dives have given way, at least temporarily, to the forgiveness mercifully offered to the prodigal. Both Falstaff and his counterpart among the rebels are delivered "ransomless and free" (5.5.28).

[25] Humphreys, following Wilson (New Cambridge), inserts the stage direction Aside to Falstaff before 156 so as to keep the remark from Prince John's hearing. Bevington rejects the addition as do I, though for a different reason. Is it not appropriate that John, whose duplicity at Gaultree Forest amounts to an enormity, be exposed here to a consummate lie? In fact, John's treacherous assurance to the archbishop may be seen as a travesty of the Augustinian formula of word and element constituting sacrament: "I give it [princely word] you, and will maintain my word; / And thereupon I drink unto your Grace" (2H4 4.2.67-68). Note also that John is directed by Hal to free the captured Douglas at the end of Part I and that he is accompanied by Falstaff in Part II.

[26] Note Hal's exhortation to bear the body "nobly" (5.4.155) and Falstaff's resolve to "live cleanly as a nobleman should do" (5.4.163-64).

Augustine continues his commentary on John 15 with observations pertinent to the conclusion of the play and its relation to Part II:

> And whence has water so great an efficacy, as in touching the body to cleanse the soul, save by the operation of the word; and that not because it is uttered, but because it is believed? For even in the word itself the passing sound is one thing, the abiding efficacy another. (344)

From the remarks of the Lord Chief Justice and his servant in 2 Henry IV (1.2.61-62, 147-48), we know that the lie about Falstaff's conduct at Shrewsbury has been believed and that, as a consequence, he has gained a new respectability. Indeed, much of the sardonic tone and satiric theme of the sequel revolves around the way that anything seems to be believed, for a time at least. Words and signs, however removed from reality, momentarily usurp control of events. Passing sounds and sights are invested with an efficacy that far exceeds their capability; but, of course, that efficacy is not abiding. In his final words in Part I, Falstaff resolves to amend his life, his bodily cleansing a sign of his reformation: "If I do grow great, I'll grow less, for I'll purge, and leave sack, and live cleanly as a nobleman should do" (5.4.162-64). We may well have our doubts about any real prospects for change in Falstaff's spiritual condition; after all, "Monsieur Remorse" entered the play protesting too much that he "must give over this life" (1.2.109-10, 93). There will be a critical difference in

Part II, however. He, who in Johnson's words has been a source of "perpetual gaiety," will start to take himself seriously. Even Falstaff begins to believe Falstaff: "I'll follow, as they say, for reward. He that rewards me, God reward him!" (5.4.161-62). If Hal's "glorious day" of triumph is frustrated by lack of signum capable of representing his achievement, Falstaff's moment of grace is marred by his embracement of the signum of reward as his due. Upon the hinges of such ironies, the exuberant life of 1 Henry IV turns towards the coarser experiences of the succeeding play.

3. 2 Henry IV: Turning the Sword to Word

In 1 Henry IV the discrepancy that opens up between words and objects, on the one hand, and their signification, on the other, is a source primarily of comic play: "The virtue of this jest will be the incomprehensible lies that this same fat rouge will tell us . . ." (1.2.180-82). As Barber has definitively demonstrated, the anarchic tendencies of this holiday world are checked and transformed into a constructive social force by being placed within a larger pattern of ritualistic drama (3-15, 192-221). If wit and language are set free to concoct "incomprehensible lies," that liberty is balanced by the recognition that all is done in the spirit of carnival. Though the clowning verges upon the criminal and irreverent, the offenses are always remediable: "The money shall be paid back again with advantage" (2.4.540-41). In 2 Henry IV, the harsher tone results largely from the absence of checks and balances. Sacrilegious outrages occur in both the civil and ecclesiastical spheres. In the reported assault upon the Lord Chief Justice, the Prince has violated "[t]he majesty and power of law and justice" (5.2.78). In taking up arms against the King, the Archbishop has blasphemously turned the word of religion into the sword of insurrection (1.1.201, 4.2.10). Restitution is beyond capacity: "Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pound" (5.5.73).

The prevalent discord is aptly indicated in the Induction by the entrance of Rumour, whose multiple tongues suggest both the power and disorder associated with language in the play. The power inheres in the ability of words to induce, even compel, response from the listener. Language is not so much an agent of meaning as a quasi-physical force, vox, resulting from air being struck by the tongue (Donawerth 16-18).[1] It is capable of "[s]tuffing the ears of men with false reports" (Induction 8), and its rapacious inclinations are reciprocated by an auditor like Northumberland who willingly allows his "greedy ear" to be "stop[ped]" with news of the rebels' supposedly successful deeds (1.1.78). In a world where one can often get his way by striking a pose and making a fuss, an impartial arbiter such as the Lord Chief Justice must keep up his guard against being moved by force of bluster: "It is not a confident brow, nor the throng of words that come with such more than impudent sauciness from you, can thrust me from a level consideration" (2.1.109-12). A more pliable figure like the Hostess finds herself at the mercy of the pressure exerted by words: ". . . by my troth, I am the worse when

[1] In her chapter on King John, Donawerth extensively uses this conception of language primarily considered in its physical aspect of voice (165-88). Her analysis has been helpful to me in formulating my ideas about 2 Henry IV. Blanpied observes: "Since Part I, indeed, verbal self-consciousness has become a kind of Frankenstein's monster, obscurely potent. . . . the characters seem to regard their own language in a hardened corporeal form" (222).

one says 'swagger'. Feel, masters, how I shake, look you, I warrant you" (2.4.102-04). Language can restrain as well as agitate, as noted in Morton's discourse upon the paralyzing effect that the word "rebellion" produced upon the insurgent soldiers: ". . . it had froze them up, / As fish are in a pond" (1.1.199-200).

With its transient but compelling effect upon susceptible auditors, language becomes an agent of disorder; for without reference to any standard beyond the designs of the speaker, it continually redefines reality in accordance with the exigencies of the moment. The pattern of pervasive permutation is set early with the arrival at Northumberland's castle of contradictory, rumor-infested reports from Shrewsbury. In his effort to postpone his day of financial reckoning, Falstaff tells "incomprehensible lies" in earnest, not simply to raise a laugh.[2] However sentimentally Mistress Quickly may regard the man that she has known "these twenty-nine years, come peascod-time" (2.4.379-80), in cold light Falstaff's behavior appears no longer so much an artful dodge as calculated knavery. The crassness of the recruiting in Gloucestershire is anticipated by Falstaff's casual waste of his soldiers in Part I (5.3.36-38). In the battleless Part II, however, the

[2] Note that the subterfuge that he uses to disarm the perturbed Hostess is spoken out of the audience's hearing (2.1.131).

abuse characteristically takes a verbal form, here Falstaff's repetition of the coarsely contemptuous order to "prick" the various men brought before him (3.2.110, 133, 158, 171 plus further uses of "prick" and its inflections at 111, 114, 141, 143, 150, 152, 174). It is Falstaff's boast that he will replace the stability of written law with the whimsy of his own verbal commands (5.3.132-33) that unequivocally indicates the disruption and corruption he would bring to national life if he were to assume the position of favor that he feels is his due under the new king. The Lord Chief Justice had hit the mark earlier when he rebuked Falstaff for presuming to possess verbal license: "You speak as having power to do wrong . . ." (2.1.128).

Throughout the play there is an overwrought sensitiveness to language. Within the tavern scene, especially, offence is easily taken at words and associated images. Francis and the Second Drawer well know that "Sir John cannot endure an apple-john" (2.4.2-3) ever since the Prince's use of the withered fruit to make a scornful comparison with the knight. The catachrestical Hostess declares that she can tolerate a "cheater" within her doors as well as an "honest man," but the very mention of "swaggerers" is enough to send her into a paroxysm "and 'twere an aspen leaf" (2.4.71-107). The misappelation of "captain" to Pistol provokes Doll Tearsheet to hold forth on the sad state of affairs when titles exceed earned worth,

with a linguistic digression on the unhappy decline of "occupy" into the pejorative (2.4.136-47). With the entrance of the roaring Pistol, the portrayal of language's illusionary force moves into high burlesque: "Why then let grievous, ghastly, gaping wounds / Untwind the Sisters Three! Come, Atropos, I say!" (2.4.194-95).[3] Though Pistol may brandish his sword, the weapon's chimerical potency lies in its verbal construct: "Have we not Hiren here?" (2.4.156-57, 170-71). The phrasing momentarily arrests us with its straightforward metonymy and its literary allusiveness that evokes a sense of both romantic heroine (". . . sweetheart, lie thou there!" [2.4.179]) and harlot (Humphreys' note). But in the mock combat that ensues with Falstaff and Bardolph, it comes as little surprise that the physical instrument is of little avail to Pistol. As the Boy observes in Henry V: "For Pistol, he hath a killing tongue and a quiet sword; by the means whereof a' breaks words, and keeps whole weapons" (3.2.34-37).

In having little existence other than in verbal expression, Ancient Pistol might even be considered a farcical counterpart to the Archbishop, whom Prince John represents as "To us the speaker in his [God's] parliament / To us th'imagin'd voice of God himself" (4.2.18-19). Though

[3] Shakespeare manages to parody here what was already the excessive rant of Northumberland's cry for a cease to all natural and civil order (1.1.153-60).

Lancaster chides the cleric for becoming "an iron man" who has "turn[ed] the word to sword" (4.2.8, 10), the Archbishop, in his credulity before the "princely word" (4.2.66) without benefit of other surety, has really done much the opposite. Westmoreland's earlier upbraiding makes the point clear that the churchman, despite his assumed trappings of a warrior, has essentially but substituted one verbal guise for another:

> . . . Wherefore do you so ill translate yourself
> Out of the speech of peace that bears such grace
> Into the harsh and boist'rous tongue of war;
> Turning your books to graves, your ink to blood,
> Your pens to lances, and your tongue divine
> To a loud trumpet and a point of war?
> (4.1.47-52)[4]

The tongue imagery prominent here and prevalent throughout the play, beginning with the opening stage direction "Enter Rumour painted full of tongues," reinforces the notion of language reduced to a physical force, metonymically identified with the bodily organ that can be as generative yet also as wanton and vulgar as its genital counterpart. In a culminating instance of the play's language theme, Colevile of the Dale yields not to the sword, but to the name of "Sir John Falstaff" (4.3.16-17), prompting the vanquisher to boast of having "a whole school of tongues in this belly of mine, and not a tongue of them

[4] The essentially verbal quality of the rebels' action is further implied later in the scene when Westmoreland refers to it as "this lawless bloody book / Of forg'd rebellion" (4.1.91-92).

all speaks any other word but my name" (4.3.18-20). Falstaff, who had earlier delighted in his self-proclaimed potency of being "not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men" (1.2.8-9), goes on to invoke his most prominent appendage with terms suggestive of fertility: ". . . my womb, my womb, my womb undoes me" (4.3.22-23). But in keeping with the general tenor of the play, what purports to be prolific turns out to be merely prolix: ". . . pregnancy is made a tapster, and his quick wit wasted in giving reckonings . . ." (1.2.169-70). From Rumour's opening reference to "the big year, swoln with some other grief" (Induction 13) to Doll's concluding attempt to elude justice by stuffing a cushion under her skirts (5.4.8-16), pregnancy, whether figurative or literal, is only another device in the register of dissimulation.

Oaths are likewise tools of deception and evasion. As with other manifestations of language in the play, they are capable of producing immediate but short-lived effects. In contrast to the elaborate play with oaths in Part I, their employment here is strictly utilitarian. Instead of the ingenuity displayed to avoid being trapped by the consequences of one's word or the transformation of one's pledges under the pressure of deeply felt emotion, in Part II commitments, such as Falstaff's swearing "upon a parcel-gilt goblet" to marry the Hostess (2.1.83-101), are simply ignored. The witty inversions of Falstaff's warrants in the

earlier play--"And I have not forgotten what the inside of a church is made of, I am a peppercorn, a brewer's horse . . ." (3.3.7-9)--here give way to bald assertions of what his appearance makes him out supposedly to be: "as I am a true knight" (1.2.44) and "[a]s I am a gentleman!" (2.1.135, 137). It is a fine touch of irony that Master Dommelton, member of a mercantile group who were increasingly relying on the simple word as sufficient guaranty for business transactions (Hill 397-401), requires more security for "two and twenty yards of satin" than Falstaff's pledge by his knighthood (1.2.28-45). In a world where oaths have lost all power to bind compliance over time, the Puritan Dommelton proves a shrewder bargainer than does the Archbishop at Gaultree Forest, who credulously accepts Lancaster's "princely word for these redresses" (4.2.66).

To the extent that obligation to one's commitments is acknowledged, the failure to fulfill them is excused by invoking what becomes the "buzz word" of Lancastrian political discourse--necessity. King Henry himself sets the fashion by appealing to it in justification for his usurpation of the throne: ". . . God knows, I had no such intent / But that necessity so bow'd the state / That I and greatness were compell'd to kiss . . ." (3.1.72-74). The word literally becomes the rallying cry for Henry's efforts to suppress the rebels: "Are these things then necessities? / Then let us meet them like necessities; / <u>And that same</u>

word even now cries out on us" (3.1.92-94; emphasis added). Not surprisingly, the Archbishop uses the same argument from constraint to justify the rebels' actions: ". . . The time misorder'd doth, in common sense, / Crowd us and crush us to this monstrous form / To hold our safety up" (4.2.33-35).[5] Words and phrases such as "enforc'd," "the condition of these times," and "compell'd" frequently punctuate the negotiations between the rebels and the King's emissaries (4.1.71, 101, 104, 116, 147, 158).

What perhaps is most remarkable in these exchanges is the absence of appeal to the martyred King Richard and the sacrilege committed by Bolingbroke against the anointed one. Although Morton had reported in the play's first scene that the Archbishop "doth enlarge his rising with the blood / Of fair King Richard, scrap'd from Pomfret stones" (1.1.204-05), we hear none of that now. The only extended reference to Richard's reign is an exchange between Westmoreland and Mowbray over the fate suffered by the latter's father in the aborted trail by combat at Coventry (4.1.110-39). In fact, the rebels without protest allow Prince John to appropriate divine sanction for Lancastrian rule:

> You have ta'en up,
> Under the counterfeited zeal of God,
> The subjects of his substitute, my father,

[5] Also see the Archbishop's prolonged apology to Westmoreland (4.1.53-87) where metaphors of debilitating "disease" and the irresistible "stream of time" are used as justifications.

> And both against the peace of heaven and him
> Have here up-swarm'd them. (4.2.26-30)

The ever impetuous Hastings may clamor that ". . . heir from heir shall hold this quarrel up / Whiles England shall have generation" (4.2.48-49), but his prediction rings hollow in contrast to the Bishop of Carlisle's prophecy in Richard II (4.1.114-49). In this play, rebellion, like language, has taken on a life of its own, devoid of real connection to substance. Bluster appears to get its way until, abruptly, it is called to terms, and the issue hot at hand melts away as swiftly as does the rebel army at Gaultree Forest.

In a world where events are understood to work themselves out in compliance with predetermined patterns, relieved only by linguistic posturings that momentarily skew things to one's advantage, there appears to be little scope for human freedom and meaningful discourse. The recruiting interlude in Gloucestershire satirically reflects this condition. In the desultory conversation of Shallow and Silence, the inevitability of death becomes a platitude juxtaposed with the fluctuating price of bullocks. The fatuous disquisition on "accommodated" that ensues with Bardolph's arrival (3.2.65-80) is a further instance of language's effect residing more in sound or novelty than in substantive reference. In another of the play's "sword"/"word" quibbles, Bardolph declaims in a manner worthy of Pistol, "By this day, I know not the phrase, but I

will maintain the word with my sword to be a soldier-like word, and a word of exceeding good command, by heaven" (3.2.73-76). We have already observed how Falstaff's repeated quibbles with "prick" set a tone of crass exploitation, a situation well understood by Mouldy and Bullcalf who play by the rules of the game in offering bribes to evade service. If King Henry in the previous scene steels himself to meet necessities on their own terms, Falstaff likewise appeals to the natural order to countenance his rapacious inclinations: "If the young dace be a bait for the old pike, I see no reason in the law of nature but I may snap at him: let time shape, and there an end" (3.2.325-27).

The one voice in the scene offering a normative perspective is Francis Feeble's. Although patronizingly dismissed by Falstaff, Feeble's earnest declarations suggest an alternative way, other than embracing tooth and claw, for responding to a situation whose determination seems beyond one's control:

> By my troth I care not, a man can die but once, we owe God a death. I'll ne'er bear a base mind--and't be my destiny, so; and't be not, so. No man's too good to serve's prince, and let it go which way it will, he that dies this year is quit for the next. (3.2.229-33)

Humphreys notes that Feeble's remarks are "a volley of proverbs and tags," but the woman's tailor has made the material his own. Indeed, they constitute a low mimetic

formulation of Hamlet's resolve to "defy augury" (5.2.219-24). More than resignation is involved here; rather, it is an active acceptance, a willingness to endure one's fate conjoined with an assertion of freedom to control one's attitude. Furthermore, the individual situation is placed within a larger communal context of duty--"No man's too good to serve's prince. . . ."

Within the larger play, it is Hal, of course, who is primarily concerned with issues of free and responsible action and with finding a symbolic structure of words and elements that can adequately reflect such action. As demonstrated in his opening exchange with Poins, the constraints upon him are severe. Whatever he says or does is subject to misinterpretation. Fondness for small beer casts doubt upon his princely character. More seriously, to express in words or tears what is uppermost in his thoughts and feelings--sadness for his father, anxiety for himself--opens him up to charges of hypocrisy. Like everyone else in the play, he finds himself on the defensive, not fighting with worthy adversaries but fending off the hobgoblin of hypothetical public opinion. In reaction, he puts others in the uncomfortable position of responding to charges against them:

> Prince. But do you use me thus, Ned? Must I marry your sister.
> Poins. God send the wench no worse fortune! But I never said so. (2.2.130-33)

Tellingly, Hal's major dispute with Falstaff is not over actions, such as the running away of Part I, but over words: "I shall drive you then to confess the wilful abuse . . ." (2.4.308). Falstaff's sensitivity to the charge of defaming royalty[6] is indicated by his repeated denial of the term (ten times between lines 310 and 321). There is no recourse to the witty, mock miraculous explanations of Part I; the exhaustion of such possibilities is signaled by Hal's preemptive reference to it (2.4.303-05). Instead, in keeping with the venal atmosphere of Part II, Falstaff attempts to ward off one label by attaching another of "wicked" to his associates (2.4.315-43).

As in Part I, Falstaff's words and actions, his very being, challenge any notion of coherent connection between sign and meaning, and therefore any possibility of sacramental understanding. His disjunctive function is underscored in the opening exchange between the knight and his page:

> Fal. Sirrah, you giant, what says the doctor to my water?
> Page He said, sir, the water itself was a good healthy water; but, for the party that owed it, he might have moe diseases than he knew for. (1.2.1-4)

[6] See note by Melchiori. That serious reprisals are threatened is indicated by Hal's conclusion of the sentence--". . . and then I know how to handle you" (309)--as well as his earlier remarks: "Would not this nave of a wheel have his ears cut off?" (2.4.253-54), glossed by Humphreys and Melchiori as a penalty for defaming royalty; and "I come to draw you out by the ears" (2.4.286-87).

The example of healthy urine is one used by St. Thomas in a critical passage from the Summa Theologica to explain how what is said of creatures may also be said of God. Having rejected both univocal and equivocal predication, Thomas offers analogy or proportion as the proper way for linguistically bridging the gap between the divine and the created world:

> This can happen in two ways: either according as many things are proportioned to one (thus, for example healthy is predicated of medicine and urine in relation and in proportion to health of body, of which the latter is the sign and the former the cause), or according as one thing is proportioned to another (thus, healthy is said of medicine and an animal, since medicine is the cause of health in the animal body). And in this way some things are said of God and creatures analogically, and not in a purely equivocal nor in a purely univocal sense.
> (Introduction 108 [1a.13, 5])[7]

The sacramental order rests upon the premise that the earthly points the way to the eternal, that material objects, despite their crudeness and the abuse to which they may be subjected, are legitimately employed as instruments of spiritual understanding and participation. Thomas cites St. Paul in this regard just prior to the above passage: "The invisible things of God are clearly seen being

[7] I use the translation in the Pegis edition here because it is more literal than that for the same passage of the comprehensive Gilby edition where "sicut sanum dicitur de medicina et urina" is rendered "Thus we use the word 'healthy' of both a diet and a complexion" (3:64-65). In other volumes of the Gilby edition, the translation of similar phrasing is often more literal.

understood by the things that are made" (Rom. 1.20).[8] Falstaff drives a wedge between correspondence of this type. Like all those who intend to thrive in the new world ushered in by Bolingbroke, he need not concern himself with the niceties of truthful representation. Ritual actions and objects, whether gages thrown down as pledges of veracity (R2 4.1.19-90) or the knightly insignia of sword and buckler carried before Falstaff by his page (1.2.sd), are gestures and images used to produce immediate effects but will not bear deeper scrutiny.

As a corollary to this is the individual appropriation of God-like attributes of self-sufficiency and generation of one's own likeness. Falstaff proclaims himself the source of comic being: "I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men" (1.2.8-9). The mock blasphemy of this assertion can be appreciated by again turning to Thomas's discussion of how language used of creatures may also describe God:

> So when we say, God is good, the meaning is not, God is the cause of goodness, or, God is not evil; but the meaning is, Whatever good we attribute to creatures pre-exists in God, and in a higher way. Hence it does not follow that God is good because He causes goodness; but rather, on the contrary, He causes goodness in things because He is good. As Augustine says, Because He is good, we are. (Introduction 101 [1a.13, 2])

[8] In defining sacrament, Thomas uses the same example of "healthy" being analogously predicated of urine as well as cites this key verse from Romans (Summa 56: 5, 7 [3a.60, 1 and 2]).

What most threatens Falstaff's attempt to live beyond the bounds of normative signification and dependent existence is the pervasive presence of impending mortality. No doubt, we delight in the way in which he deflects the Lord Chief Justice's ascription of "old" to him by virtue of his possessing "all the characters of age" (1.2.177-93). But the artful dodge ultimately becomes wholesale evasion of self-knowledge and concomitant responsibilities: "Peace, good Doll, do not speak like a death's-head, do not bid me remember my end" (2.4.231-32). Hal's growth beyond the tutelage of Falstaff is marked most notably in his full engagement with the forces of mortality in the combat at Shrewsbury and in his encounter with his dying father.

The major task for which Hal has been preparing self-consciously from the beginning of Part I is "[r]edeeming time" (1.2.212). Specific allusion to the Pauline exhortation (Eph. 5.16) is confirmed by the page's reference to the Eastcheap crew as "Ephesians, my lord, of the old church" (2.2.142).[9] Leaving aside the epistle's condemnation of obvious forms of dissoluteness (drunkenness, fornication, covetousness, thievery), let us note how it further calls for a linguistic ordering that makes possible discourse of stable significance: ". . . That we hence

[9] See Bryant, Hippolyta'a View 52-67, and Palmer for background discussion on the relation between Ephesians and Henry IV.

forthe be no more children, wauering & caryed about with euerie winde of doctrine, by the deceit of me/˜/, and with craftines, whereby they laye in waite to deceiue" (4.14). In the world of the play, an end needs to be brought to autonomous language, which, although lacking a sustaining relationship beyond itself or the designs of the speaker, possesses a hallucinating power to sway its auditors. In its stead is needed a language whose power is genuine, grounded in its rational capacity to signify and its rhetorical ability to move its hearers to consent to concerted action.

Paul goes on to urge the practice of linguistic integrity and to proclaim the resulting benefit:

> But let vs followe the trueth in loue, and in all things growe vp into him, which is the head, that is Christ, By whome all the bodie being coupled and knit together by euerie ioynt, for the furniture thereof (according to the effectual power, which is in the measure of euerie parte) receiueth increase of y/e/ bodie, vnto the edifying of it self in loue. . . . Wherefore cast of lying, & speake euerie man trueth vnto his neighbour: for we are members one of another. . . . Let no corrupt communication procede out of your mouths: but that which is good, to the vse of edifying, that it may minister grace vnto the hearers. (4.15-16, 25, 29)

The metaphor of Christ's body incorporating all members is a major theme of the epistle (see also 4.11-13), culminating in the profound sacramental conception of the love between man and wife as correspondent to the relationship between Christ and the church (5.22-33). Sexuality, that physical

aspect of mankind most liable to corruption and defilement, is also, when properly employed, most noble, most capable of signifying spiritual truth. For the Prince as heir, the analogous need is reconstitution of the body politic with himself as its head, a body which has been dismembered, a vine whose branches have been hacked off since the days of Richard. Hal's chief resources, so misused and abused in the interval, are speech and ceremony.

In the deathbed encounter between father and son, king and heir, time is redeemed by the working out of a new sacramental order. The expressive power of this scene is attested to by Goethe:

> Strictly speaking, nothing is theatrical except what is immediately symbolical to the eye: an important action, that is, which signifies a still more important one. That Shakespeare knew how to attain this summit, that moment witnesses where the son and heir in Henry IV takes the crown from the side of the slumbering king, who lies sick unto death,--takes the crown and marches proudly away with it. (Qtd. in Shaaber 361)

Like Shrewsbury, Westminster is an occasion of testing for Hal in which he must directly confront human mortality, but this time he emerges claiming the signum of achievement.[10]

[10] The comments by Hawkins comparing the two scenes are perceptive: "Once more Harry encounters Harry in an agon not less intense and fatal for being psychological rather than physical. The father must die that his son may rule: 'Two stars keep not their motion in one sphere, / Nor can one England brook a double reign. . . .' As formerly Hal robbed Hotspur of his youth and plucked the budding honors from his crest, then knelt to replace them with favors from his own, so now he steals his father's crown and sets this 'garland' on his head, only to kneel and yield it up again. It is this willingness to give back Hotspur's glories and Henry's

The crown, although central to the scene both verbally and visually, serves primarily as a prompt for reflections upon matters associated with it. Hal's immediate awareness that the crown is as much of a burden to be borne as an honor to be sought indicates his maturity, his readiness to serve as king. That he has assimilated his father's experience is clearly demonstrated in his musings upon the sleep available to the humblest servant but denied the monarch (4.5.20-27), an echo of Henry's earlier lament (3.1.4-31). But while reflection upon such ironies occasions profound despondency in the old king, it stirs resolve in the prince, a determination to accept from the past and give to the future: "This from thee / Will I to mine leave, as 'tis left to me" (4.5.45-46). Whatever validity there may be to Henry's suspicions of his son's parricidal instincts (4.5.92), Hal's apostrophe to the crown manifests that his desire to succeed the father is balanced by a sense of obligation to prepare for the succession of his own heir. Hal redeems time because, in contrast to the deterministic sense of history that Henry succumbs to, he conceives of it as a continuity in which human worth and will play a part.

The stress by Prince Hal on generational interdependence[11] is one indicator of how he is

crown that finally proves the Prince's right to both" ("Structural Problem" 299).

[11] Again, another theme of Ephesians (6.1-4).

reformulating the concept of kingship that collapsed with Richard. As Burckhardt observes, the childless king attempts to deny succession: "As Richard understands kingship--the complete identity of title and name (or person)--there can be no successor; true kingship ends with him" (170).[12] Richard's exclusiveness in his claim upon kingship is likewise reflected in his possessive attitude towards the crown, his right to which he regards as divinely sanctioned without reference to his own effort or worthiness:

> . . . Yet know, my master, God omnipotent,
> Is mustering in his clouds, on our behalf,
> Armies of pestilence, and they shall strike
> Your children yet unborn, and unbegot,
> That lift your vassal hands against my head,
> And threat the glory of my precious crown.
> (3.3.85-90)

In the deposition, the other great crown scene of the tetralogy, Richard further shows his inability to relinquish what the hallowed object means to him: "The cares I give, I have, though given away, / They 'tend the crown, yet still with me they stay" (4.1.198-99). Richard suffers from a tragic (con)fusion of kingly role and personal identity.

That Hal can distinguish between role and identity is reflected in his assigning proportional value to the signum (crown) and res of kingship, at once connecting and

[12] It might be argued that Richard provides for an heir in Mortimer, but that is something we do not learn until 1 Henry IV.

differentiating them. Relevant to this distinction is the passage from St. Bernard, cited earlier in reference to 1 Henry IV, that explains by example of inheritance how the sacramental sign is paradoxically both necessary and worthless: "The sealing-ring is nothing worth: it is the inheritance that I sought for" (Jewel 1: 449). The transformation wrought in the beneficiary results not from the sign itself, but from the inner dynamic that concurs with the outer investiture. In this regard, Hooker cites a further portion of the passage from Bernard:

> God by Sacraments giveth grace (saith Bernard:) even as honors and dignities are given, an Abbote made by receiving a staffe, a Dr. by a booke, a Bishop by a ring, because he that giveth these preheminencies, declareth by such signes his meaning, nor doeth the receiver take the same, butt with effect, for which cause he is said, to have the one by the other, albeit that which is bestowed, proceede wholie from the will of the giver, and not from the efficacie of the signe. (4: 119)

For our purposes, it should be added from Hooker's discussion of the Eucharist that efficacy resides not only in the beneficent giver but also in "the worthie receiver of the sacrament" (2: 334). Recognizing the mutual obligations of giver and receiver, Hal evinces his worthiness by both consenting to his duty as inheritor and willingly accepting the bestowal:

> Thy due from me
> Is tears and heavy sorrows of the blood,
> Which nature, love, and filial tenderness
> Shall, O dear father, pay thee plenteously.
> My due from thee is this imperial crown,

> Which, as immediate from thy place and blood,
> Derives itself to me. (4.5.36-42)

Hal understands that kingship is greater than his own person, that although he undergoes personal transformation in assuming the role, it exists apart from him. Therefore, after discovering his mistake in assuming the crown too early, he unhesitatingly returns it to his father. Majesty, he later explains to this brothers, is a "new and gorgeous garment" that yet "[s]its not so easy on me" (5.2.44-45). Moreover, for punishment imposed on him in the past, he readily accepts the justification offered by the Lord Chief Justice, which rests on the premise that the image of kingly power may reside in another, his "workings in a second body" (5.2.90). For Henry V, the second body of kingship does not endow the monarch with an exclusive sanctity; rather, analogous to the body of Christ in Ephesians, it reaches out to include others in noble fellowship and purposeful endeavor: ". . . And let us choose such limbs of noble counsel / That the great body of our state may go / In equal rank with the best-govern'd nation . . ." (5.2.135-37).

Two aspects of the crown scene may give us pause: Hal's claim to divine protection, and the so-called discrepancy between what occurs while the king is sleeping and what Hal later reports as taking place. As for the former, suffice it to say here that I believe we must take Hal at his word, that at this moment he does conceive of the divine

intervening in the natural order in a way that we are likely to regard as distinctly partisan. What separates Hal's protestation from Richard's assertion of privileged status, however, is the prince's recognition that although God's favor is not contingent upon human merit, a successful outcome in the events of history is not independent of human resolve and effort:

> Lo where it sits,
> Which God shall guard; and put the world's whole strength
> Into one giant arm, it shall not force
> This lineal honour from me. This from thee
> Will I to mine leave, as 'tis left to me.
> (4.5.42-46)

Again, it is the fundamental Reformation issue of justification by faith and works. As the judicious Hooker resolved the matter, the primacy accorded to faith does not dispense with the need to confirm faith through works:

> To the imputation of Christs death for remission of sinnes, wee teach faith alone necessarie; wherein it is not our meaning, to separate thereby faith from any other qualitie or dutie, which God requireth to be matched therewith. . . . To be justified soe farre as remission of sinnes, it suffiseth if wee beleeve what another hath wrought for us, butt whosoever will see God face to face, lett him shew his faith by his workes, demonstrate his first justification by a second as Abraham did. For in this sense Abraham was justifyed (that is to saye his life was sanctifyed:) by workes. (4: 117-18)

And let us remember that deeply intertwined with the story of Hal's redemption in 2 Henry IV runs the counterplot of the dissipation of one who presumes on the grace bestowed upon him, one confident that intimacy, privilege, and

patronage are his independent of personal reformation: "Stand here by me, Master Robert Shallow, I will make the King do you grace. I will leer upon him as a comes by, and do but mark the countenance that he will give me" (5.5.5-8).

As for the variance between the occurrence of taking the crown (4.5.20-46) and its account (4.5.138-76), there is, in fact, little difference in substance. In both, Hal laments the personal ravages associated with gold as metonymy for crown and in turn for royalty, voices filial concern for the suffering of his father, emphasizes the chain of succession, and invokes divine sanction. While Burckhardt for his purposes stresses the change in metaphor between the two passages (163), the significant difference for our discussion is modes of expression. In the first instance, the mode is primarily lyrical and meditative, as befits what is essentially a soliloquy elegiac in tone: "O polish'd perturbation! golden care!" (4.5.22); the images are unceremonious: ". . . he whose brow with homely biggen bound / Snores out the watch of night" (4.5.26-27). In the latter instance, the mode is rhetorical, employing formal conceits and precisely patterned language:

> '. . . Therefore thou best of gold are 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'. (4.5.160-64)

What Hal does here, what will serve him so well in his role as king, is to employ the full resources of language suitable to a given occasion. In this instance he must win vindication for himself from a deeply offended and suspicious father, and he does so by recreating the event in ceremonial terms that highlight the boldness and loyalty appropriate to royalty. In turn, Henry acknowledges that he has been moved by both the substance and form of Hal's speech:

> O my son,
> God put it in thy mind to take it hence,
> That thou mightst win the more thy father's love,
> Pleading so wisely in excuse of it! (4.5.177-80)

To use language as Hal does here is to redeem it from the decadence into which it has fallen in the course of the play. Instead of being manipulated capriciously or deviously for short-term gain, it is now employed responsibly yet imaginatively for achieving major objectives. Verbal expression becomes correspondent with the reality it purports to represent, not necessarily in the univocal terms of literal description or transcription, but far advanced from the indulgence in equivocation that has characterized the reign of Henry IV.[13]

[13] In commenting upon the overestimation given by a highly literate culture to verbatim repetition, Ong notes that in oral-aural cultures, "The word as record depends for its meaning upon the continuous recurrence of the word as event" (32-33).

The final counsel offered by the dying king demonstrates, however, the difficulty of ever wholly extricating ambiguity from language when political considerations are involved. Henry admits the "by-paths and indirect crook'd ways" (4.5.184) by which he obtained the crown, and he concedes that one purpose of the crusade, the subject of continuing speculation during his reign, has been to divert the energies of potential rivals to the throne. A cynical reading would see these admissions as Lancastrian hypocrisy finally revealing itself for what it is, but the context of our discussion suggests a more generous interpretation. We should note that Henry does ask forgiveness for his sins, and he shows genuine solicitude, manifested heretofore only as anxiety, for the prosperity of his son's reign: "How I came by the crown, O God forgive, / And grant it may with thee in true peace live!" (4.5.218-19). The benediction bestowed by Henry is based on more than prayer, however; it also takes into account the changed political climate that will ensue after his death and work to his son's advantage (5.4.198-201). He further advises Hal to continue the pursuit of foreign expeditions as a means of minimizing domestic discontent and consolidating his position as legitimate successor (4.5.212-15).

As suggested in the discussion of Part I, much of Henry's characteristic uneasiness and inconsistency stems from his inability to reconcile his shrewd political

instincts with his nobler aspirations. The crusade is a matter both of expiation and expediency; but being unable to account for the two purposes concurrently, he of necessity falls into equivocation. His death in the Jerusalem chamber is a conspicuous instance. In a play where language has repeatedly thrust itself forward as a force of its own accord, it is ironically fitting that the eponymous character should take comfort in the coincidence of a name rather than in the reality of a city:

> It hath been prophesied to me, many years,
> I should not die but in Jerusalem,
> Which vainly I suppos'd the Holy Land.
> But bear me to that chamber; there I'll lie;
> In that Jerusalem shall Harry die. (4.5.236-40)

Yet, considered another way, the problem contains the seeds of its own solution. Frye has demonstrated that as history moves from a mythic to heroic age, language shifts from a metaphoric ("this is that") to a metonymic ("this is put for that") phase (Great 3-30). The metonymic phase is specifically sacramental in the way that it uses analogical language, "a verbal imitation of a reality beyond itself that can be conveyed most directly by words" (8). In the Second Tetralogy, John of Gaunt in his dying speech gives the climactic utterance to mythic history and metaphoric language: "This royal throne of kings, this scept'red isle, / This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars, / This other Eden, demi-paradise . . ." (R2 2.1.40-42). Gaunt's son, now on his deathbed, gives incipient voice to the metonymic

phase that will characterize the heroic age of his son. Henry has already expanded the significance of the city to the larger association of the Holy Land. But what Henry is really seeking and what he now feels assured of is what the Holy Land represents--salvation. If a city or land can be put by analogy for a spiritual reality, then by further extension of that analogy a room may also do. Like his cousin whom he has deposed and murdered, Henry ultimately finds his way to personal redemption, but neither can bring a saving order to the kingdom. For that larger task Hal has been consciously preparing, and he now stands ready to restore by analogy what has been lost in univocality and dissipated in equivocation.

While awaiting final word about the disposal of the rebellion, Henry characteristically had longed for the time in which to "draw no swords but what are sanctified" (4.4.4). What Hal has learned, though, what his association with Falstaff has impressed upon him indelibly, is that no sword, however sacred, is immune from profane use. Armed as he is with a comprehensive understanding of the world in which he lives, knowing that sacred and profane must both be given their due, he can effect genuine transformation between the sword and word, endowing the material object with higher meaning and creative energy. In the moral sphere he reinvests the Lord Chief Justice with the insignia of his authority to use power in imposing correction:

> . . . I do commit into your hand
> Th'unstained sword that you have us'd to bear,
> With this remembrance--that you use the same
> With the like bold, just, and impartial spirit
> As you have done 'gainst me. (5.2.113-17)[14]

In the realm of national life, as predicted by Lancaster in the concluding lines of the play, the new King will see that ". . . We bear our civil swords and native fire / As far as France" (5.5.106-07). There he will use oratorical language almost literally as a weapon of considerable force. He will transform this military expedition, undertaken for the most mixed of motives, into a successful pursuit of national identity and unity. Even more, it will become an anagogical quest for a new sacramental order. Having cast off the old man of his own and his country's corruption, Henry V stands ready to take upon him "the whole armour of God," the final piece of which is "the sworde of y/e/ Spirit, which is the worde of God" (Eph. 6.13, 17).

[14] See 5.2.87 and 103 for further references in the scene to the sword as emblematic of the power of justice. The investiture of the Lord Chief Justice signals the return of legitimacy just as the desecration of other insignia signaled the beginning of rebellion: ". . . the Earl of Worcester / Hath broken his staff, resign'd his stewardship . . ." (R2 2.2.58-59). The point of breaking the staff is made again at 2.3.26-28 and in 1H4 at 5.1.34.

4. Henry V: Swords, Oaths, Men's Faiths, and Wafer Cakes

The Chorus in Henry V is at pains to keep the audience reminded that the play is built upon a discrepancy between what it sees and what is represented. The attention directed to the discrepancy emphasizes, however, not only the limitations of the theatrical medium but even more so the possibilities inherent within it. For the essence of the play lies not in the admitted inadequacies of the business occurring on the "unworthy scaffold" (Prologue 10), but with the effects that the audience allows the representation to produce within its imagination. If the play is to work, then, the cooperative participation of the auditors is required as much as the professional presentation by the actors. Hence, the Chorus's repeated urging in one form or another to the audience to "[p]iece out our imperfections with your thoughts" (Prologue 23).

Within the play proper Henry exercises a role analogous to that of the Chorus, exhorting his men to strive beyond their physical limits by imitating the action of the tiger, persuading Harfleur to capitulate by imagining the terrors that would ensue if it persisted in its resistance, attempting to arouse in Katherine a response of love by letting her eye serve as a "cook" (5.2.152) to dress him more attractively than he purports to be. The similarities between the speeches within the play and those about it have

been appreciatively noted by Goldman: "Once it is recognized that the Chorus sounds very much like the King, much of the play's method becomes clear. Like Henry, the Chorus is a man whose job is to rouse his hearers to unusual effort" (59). Medium and matter are fully complementary. Shakespeare appeals to our awareness of the theatrical dynamic, the making of something of great proportion from the scantiest of props, to understand what Henry is achieving in the dramatic life of the play. That achievement is more than a mighty victory wrested from the smallest of numbers; it is a sanctioned, sacred order wrought with a minimal warrant. And Henry's accomplishment requires affirmation from his auditors just as the success of the play depends upon our willing suspension of disbelief.

Coleridge and the Chorus are at one in their insistence upon the importance of audience volition. It is not enough simply to fall under the spell of theatrical illusion or of King Henry's oratory. We must be aware of the transforming process and willingly consent to it. Otherwise, we open ourselves to what Augustine in speaking of the sacraments calls "a miserable bondage of the soul": "to take the signs in the stead of things that be signified" (Qtd. in Jewel 1: 448). To hold unwittingly to a literal interpretation of all of Henry's words is as grave an error as to regard what happens inside the theater as being the actual events of his

reign. We are placed within a world of metonymic discourse whose premises are deliberately spelled out. Since the "wooden O" cannot contain even "the very casques / That did affright the air at Agincourt" (Prologue 13-14), parts must be substituted for wholes, no matter how inadequate the outcome by standards of everyday realism: ". . . we shall much disgrace / With four or five most vile and ragged foils, / Right ill-dispos'd in brawl ridiculous / The name of Agincourt" (4.0.49-52). This awareness of discontinuity that must be both engaged and transcended closely parallels the recipient's role in the sacramental process as set forth by Jewel:

> One thing is seen, and another understood. We see the water, but we understand the blood of Christ. Even so we see the bread and wine, but with the eyes of our understanding we look beyond these creatures; we reach our spiritual senses into heaven, and behold the ransom and price of our salvation. We do behold in the sacrament, not what it is, but what it doth signify. (2: 1117)

In the words of the Chorus, we "[mind] true things by what their mock'ries be" (4.0.53).

With its associations of both imitation and distortion, "mock'ries" aptly evokes the fundamental ambivalence of the play. Efforts at action within the play, attempts at representation through the play--both will admittedly fall short and become liable to ridicule. The Chorus may proclaim that "Now all the youth of England are on fire . . ." in the King's cause (2.0.1), only for the following

scene to introduce the scurvy crew of Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol preoccupied with a private quarrel. And the next scene presents the three clowns' tragic counterparts--Scroop, Cambridge, and Grey--who acutely threaten Henry's aspirations from above as the parasites chronically undermine them from below. Immediately after Henry's fervid call for his soldiers to resume their assault on Harfleur, we see the same lowlife swaggerers shirking their duty until prodded by the irrepressible Fluellen. In his speech before Agincourt, Henry envisions a time when the survivors of the battle will hold a vigil on its anniversary and proudly show their honorable scars, but the final scene of the battle's aftermath leaves us with the discredited Pistol, now scheming to pass himself off as a wounded veteran as cover for his acts of thievery and swindling. Shakespeare builds such ironies into the play certainly not to undercut his protagonist by parody nor simply to set him off as more admirable by foil (Levin, Multiple Plot 109-24). Their major import is to emphasize, as does the Chorus with the theatrical medium, the intractability of the available materials, the cracked vessel that is human nature.

In openly confronting the traitors at Southampton, Henry acknowledges the possible depths of human depravity and places the treachery of his bedfellow, Lord Scroop, explicitly within the Biblical context of man's original lapse from integrity:

> . . . And thus thy fall hath left a kind of blot,
> To mark the full-fraught man and best indued
> With some suspicion. I will weep for thee;
> For this revolt of thine, methinks, is like
> Another fall of man. (2.2.138-42)

In the private moment of his meditation upon his predicament as a king stripped of all pretensions to magical powers, Henry must come to terms with a similarly devastating revelation. Without benefit of any rationalizations, he squarely faces the utter bareness of the ceremonial props that both signify and mock his royal identity:

> . . . I am a king that find thee; and I know
> 'Tis not the balm, the scepter 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 this world,
> No, not all these, thrice-gorgeous ceremony. . . .
> (4.1.265-72)

Echoing Falstaff's exposure of honor's powerlessness in the face of human trauma (1H4 5.1.131-33), Henry expresses his painful awareness that neither his person nor his trappings can produce cures with mechanical efficacy: "Canst thou, when thou command'st the beggar's knee, / Command the health of it?" (4.1.262-63). The effect of such disclosures is not to set an exposed reality against a fraudulent appearance, the better for us to relish the ironies and hypocrisies of "a little touch of the night in Harry" (Alvis); rather, we can better appreciate the extent of his achievement by seeing the degree to which he is devoid of illusions about himself and others.

Moreover, to the degree that Henry strips the royal body of the emblematic accouterments that previously endued it with an aura of sacrosanctity and to the degree that we are privy to this exposure of vulnerability, the more it becomes incumbent upon us to be not accomplices in desecration but participants in reconstitution: "For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings . . ." (Prologue 28). The play persists in disclosing mockeries to us while insisting that we mind true things. No wonder the Chorus keeps up his steady stream of coaxing--"Work, work your thoughts . . ." (3.0.25)--for we see one thing yet must understand another.

That mysteries once apprehended with naive illusion must now be comprehended with mature awareness is indicated by Canterbury in the first scene. Commenting on Henry's regenerate character, the Archbishop anachronistically declares the Reformation doctrine that "miracles are ceas'd; / And therefore we must needs admit the means / How things are perfected" (1.1.67-69). Canterbury himself provides a test case of the initial uneasiness that can result when the means are exposed to critical scrutiny. The opening of the first scene is devoted to establishing the political context in which he and his fellow clerics operate, as they fend off a full-scale Parliamentary attack on the revenues of the church by making a counterproposal of a significant sum to directly support the projected French invasion. Yet this

far from disinterested man is charged by the King in the next scene to pronounce judgment on the legitimacy of the latter's claim to the French throne and, in so doing, to speak with a "conscience wash'd / As pure as sin with baptism" (1.2.31-32). Here, as throughout the play, Shakespeare is insistent that the audience be aware of the full range of operative motives. Taylor provides a comprehensive defense of the essential validity--both legal and dramatic--of Canterbury's disquisition upon the Salic law and its implications for the English claim (Henry 34-39). Extending the analysis, he establishes how this is but one instance in the play's method of gaining the audience's endorsement of actions whose rightness may deliberately but only momentarily be cast in doubt:

> Having exploited a certain suspicion about the motives of both parties in order to ensure an audience's distanced, cautious, intellectual attention to the Archbishop's exposition of the validity of Henry's claim, Shakespeare does not confirm those suspicions, but labours to allay them. The Archbishop may have ulterior motives, but Henry's claim seems valid nevertheless; Henry may be looking for a fight, but not necessarily this fight or any fight he cannot morally justify to himself and others.
>
> The pattern of our reactions to Henry's decision to claim the French crown anticipates the pattern of our reactions to his ultimatum to Harfleur and his killing of the French prisoners. In each case, Shakespeare first makes us suspicious of or repelled by an action, and only afterwards justifies, emotionally at least, Henry's behaviour. (38-39)

This pattern of "first, then" serves as an effective rejoinder to the influential argument advanced by Rabkin to

read the play in terms of "either/or" (33-62). Where Rabkin imports into his interpretation the mutually exclusive rabbit/duck gestalt that results in viewing Henry as either ideal Christian king or Machiavellian self-server, Shakespeare includes within the play the image of the perspective (5.2.338-41), which suggests a more inclusive paradigm for understanding. The perspectives mentioned in Richard II--"which, rightly gaz'd upon, / Show nothing but confusion; ey'd awry, / Distinguish form" (2.2.18-20)--correspond to the pattern traced here of initial uncertainty followed by assurance. The perspective implied in Henry V is a variant type that gives multiple images, but ones that are complementary, not antithetical. When Henry observes at the Troyes conference that his blind love for Katherine keeps him from seeing all the French cities that he otherwise might lay claim to, King Charles responds: "Yes, my lord, you see them perspectively, the cities turned into a maid; for they are all girdled with maiden walls that war hath never entered" (5.2.538-41). Katherine as virgin princess functions as metonym for unspoiled France; her betrothal to Henry stands for the peaceful union of the two kingdoms, the immediate object of the past struggle and the future promise to be realized.

Those who take exception to such conjunction of the martial and sacred, the political and the sexual, and view Katherine as victim (Wilcox) might well consider Psalm 45,

which praises "Salomo/-/s beautie and eloquence to winne fauour with his people, and his power to ouercome his enemies" (gloss) and then goes on to enjoin the daughter of the defeated pharaoh to forsake her homeland and marry the conquering king of Israel: "Hearken, ô daughter, and consider, and incline thine eare: forget also thine owne people and thy fathers house. So shal the Ki/-/g haue pleasure in thy beautie: for he is thy Lord, and reuerence thou him" (10-11).[1] Katherine is placed in a situation similar to that of the Egyptian princess--"Is it possible dat I sould love de enemy of France?" (5.2.174-75)--and likewise consents to her marriage being part of a larger movement of political reconciliation and national advancement. As with the previous emphasis on theatrical limitations and on the mixed motives of the clerical advisors, Shakespeare takes care here to expose the seam, pauses with Henry's answer to probe the point where the pragmatic and romantic, stratagem and candor, meet:

> No; it is not possible you should love the enemy of France, Kate; but, in loving me, you should love the friend of France, for I love France so well that I will not part with a village of it; I will have it all mine: and Kate, when France is

[1] The Geneva gloss interprets the marriage of Psalm 45 as a figure of Christ's union with the Church. (See further discussion in Frye, Great 154-55). The case for the relevance of this psalm to the play is strengthened by Shakespeare's explicit use of the preceding one (44) as the source for Henry's declaration at the conclusion of Agincourt that "O God, thy arm was here; / And not to us, but to thy name alone, / Ascribe we all!" (4.8.108-10). See Noble 187 and Shaheen 191.

> mine and I am yours, then yours is France and you are mine. (5.2.176-82)

Reservations that we may have about Henry's protestations of sincerity eventually give way in the face of his free disclosures about all the calculations that are inextricably part of the proposal.

The betrothal scene, to which we will return for more extended analysis, culminates a series of sacramental references and images occurring in the play. Early in the first scene, Canterbury draws from the wording and substance of the baptismal service in The Book of Common Prayer to describe the King's regenerate character (274-75). Crucial here is the active role ascribed to Henry in his own baptismal-like reformation. The "[c]onsideration" that "whipp'd th' offending Adam out of him" (1.1.28-29) involves, as Walter notes, "intense spiritual contemplation, and self-examination" (xix). The good effects that Canterbury observes manifested in Henry's life are not imposed from without ("for miracles are ceas'd"), but spring from proper disposition and genuine effort. In speaking of baptism as a morally obligatory act, Hooker also stresses the concomitant need for voluntary participation:

> The greatest morall perfection of baptisme consisteth in mens devout obedience to the law of God, which lawe requireth both the outward act or thinge done, and also that religious affection which God doth so much regarde, that without it whatsoever wee doe is hatefull in his sight, who therefore is said to respect adverbs more then verbes, because the ende of his law in appointinge what wee shall doe is our own perfection, which

> perfection consisteth chiefelie in the vertuous disposition of the minde, and approveth it selfe to him not by doinge, but by doinge well. Wherein appeareth also the difference betwene humane and divine lawes, the one of which two are content with opus operatum, the other require opus operantis; the one doe but claime the deed, the other especiallie the minde. (2: 281)[2]

Henry has achieved the correspondence between inner spiritual condition and outer public action, the absence of which had done much to precipitate the tragedy of Richard's reign. Moreover, unlike Richard and his own father, whose ultimate salvation was solely personal, he succeeds in projecting a persona capable of saving his country from its self-destructive course.[3]

Where baptism primarily concerns the condition of the individual soul, the eucharist extends its effects to create a larger community of believers. The way in which a number of eucharistic motifs are included in the depiction of Agincourt is critical to understanding Henry's effort to

[2] Although Hooker is dealing here primarily with the administration of baptism, the principle of inner worthiness applies to both minister and recipient. The baptismal service in The Book of Common Prayer concludes with an admonition to the godparents that "infants be taught so soon as they shall be able to learn what a solemn vow, promise, and profession they have made by you" (276).

[3] The favorable portrait drawn by Canterbury of Henry as competent in both statecraft and religious matters makes him a model for the theocratic idea of monarchy espoused by sixteenth century Protestant thought on proper church-state relations (for a survey of which, see George and George 181-210). Hooker's characterization of admirable Christian kings (2: 421-23) could be applied almost point by point to the Henry of Shakespeare's play.

establish a new sacramental order for king and people. We have already noted in the discussion of Richard II that Aumerle-York's death at Agincourt, reported by Exeter in graphically bloody terms (4.6.7-32), constitutes an essentially voluntary sacrifice (he requests to lead the vanguard). His death may be considered expiation for the crimes of Richard's reign, to which he was an accomplice, as well of those of the ensuing usurpation, regicide, and civil war. That the burden of this history weighs heavily on Henry is made explicit in his prayer on the eve of battle: "Not to-day, O Lord! / O not to-day, think not upon the fault / My father made in compassing the crown!" (4.1.298-300). Henry's search "to pardon blood" (4.2.306) by charitable works is a plea to be released from the retributive cycle of the old covenant, which, when broken, necessitated further bloodshed (gloss for Exod. 24.8). That prayer finds answer in the miraculously small number of English casualties sustained. Not only does York's death suffice to fulfill the obligation of the old covenant, but its manner, in heartfelt communion with Suffolk, symbolically opens the way for a new covenant based on brotherhood. The "testament of noble-ending love" that is "seal'd" between them "with blood" (4.6.27, 26) directly alludes to the declaration of Christ at the Last Supper: "For this is my blood of the Newe testament, that is shed for manie, for the remission of sinnes" (Matt. 26.28).

In Reformed doctrine, the understanding of the Lord's Supper as testament moves away from the medieval idea of witnessing the priestly repetition of Christ's sacrifice and towards remembrance and thanksgiving for that act, a primary effect of which is fellowship among those participating (Luther 35: 50-51; Prenter 108-11). The homily Worthy receiving and reverent esteeming of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ presses home this significance: ". . . St Paul writeth, That we being many, are one bread and one body; for all be partakers of one bread: declaring thereby not only our communion with Christ, but that unity also, wherein they that eat at this table should be knit together" (402). Such also is the theme of Henry's most famous speech--"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers" (4.3.60)--as he inspires the company before Agincourt no longer with the injunction to ferocity that he used at Harfleur (3.1.1-34) but with the offer to be partakers in an honorable and memorable action. Those lacking the inner disposition are excluded--". . . We would not die in that man's company / That fears his fellowship to die with us" (4.3.38-39)--just as the unworthy are excluded from the Lord's Supper: "O, saith Chrysostom, let no Judas resort to this table, let no covetous person approach" (Homilies 404).

Thus emerges an explanation for one of the cruxes of the play, Shakespeare's replacing the pyx stolen by a

soldier in the sources with a pax stolen by Bardolph.[4] Although a sacramental associated with the Old Faith and abandoned as an abuse in the Reformation (Tyndale, Answer 126; Bryant, Tudor 104), the pax carries greater symbolic significance than the pyx; the contents of the latter, after all, are only bread in Anglican teaching, the unconsumed portion of which is now disposed of instead of being reserved on the altar. The pax, on the other hand, was used in a way that emphasized the participation of all in a service otherwise centered on the priestly consecration of the host. A small tablet containing a representation of the crucifixion, it was kissed by the priest and then passed among the congregation to be kissed in turn as a sign of peace and fellowship: "The pepyll of hygh and lowe degre / Kysse the pax, a token of vnyte . . ." (Lydgate 107).[5] In stealing the "pax of little price" (3.6.46), Bardolph has effectively cut himself off from the band of brothers. Painful and pathetic as his execution is, the new order being established by Henry must exclude as well as include: "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forthe as a branche,

[4] See note for 3.6.41 by Walter, who observes, "Shakespeare, who surely must have known the difference, may have substituted 'pax' for some reason not now clear."

[5] Even as he criticizes the use of the pax, Tyndale explains what its proper significance should be: "Yea, to kiss the pax, they think it a meritorious deed; when to love their neighbour, and to forgive him, (which thing is signified thereby,) they study not to do . . ."(Doctrinal 279).

and withereth: and men gather them, and cast them into the fyre, and they burne" (John 15.6).

The parable of the vine and the branches, which in the gospel of John may be taken to substitute for the omitted eucharistic institution of the Last Supper (Frye, Great 153), is critical for understanding the sacramental order that Henry is constituting just as it is for understanding what Richard was destroying. When Richard orders the "flourishing branch" of Gloucester to be "hack'd down" (1.2.18, 20), he violates, as we saw, not only the sacred bonds of family but also the larger body politic and the mystical body of Christ. In Richard's encounter with the groom immediately before his death, a genuine healing occurs, but one limited in scope and duration. Now Henry is bringing about a more extensive and lasting restoration in which his royalty serves its most important purpose, the ennobling of his people: ". . . For he to-day that sheds his blood with me / Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile / This day shall gentle his condition . . ." (4.3.61-63).[6]

[6] Daniel likewise admires Henry as a leader who imparts his own excellence to his followers:

> Who as the chiefe, and all-directing head,
> Did with his subjects as his members live,
> And them to goodnes forced not, but lead
> Winning not much to have, but much to give. . . .
>
> But here the equally respecting eye
> Of powre, looking alike on like desarts,
> Blessing the good made others good thereby,
> More mightie by the multitude of harts:
> The field of glorie unto all doth lie

Henry effects in the secular realm a process analogous to that of Christ in the spiritual:

> I am the vine: ye <u>are</u> the branches: he that abideth in me, & I in him, the same bringeth forthe muche frute: for without me ca/-/ ye do nothing. . . . Henceforthe, call I you not seruants: for the seruant knoweth not what his master doeth: but I haue called you friends. . . . (John 15.5, 15)

Further eucharistic motifs are present in Henry's officiation at Agincourt. The sorrow for past offenses and determination to make amendment that he expresses in his prayer before the battle correspond to the enjoinder to repentance before communion in <u>The Book of Common Prayer</u> (256-58). By stressing the association with the feast of Crispian and foretelling the commemoration of the event even before it occurs, Henry makes remembrance an essential part of the event. Linked to this are his repeated calls for giving gratitude and ascribing all glory to God, major themes of the eucharistic service:

> So then we must shew outward testimony, in following the signification of Christ's death; amongst the which this is not esteemed least, to render thanks to almighty God for all his benefits, briefly comprised in the death, passion, and resurrection of his dearly beloved son. The which thing, because we ought chiefly at this table to solemnize, the godly fathers named it <u>eucharistia</u>, that is, thanksgiving: as if they should have said, Now above all other times ye ought to laud and praise God. (<u>Homilies</u> 401)

> Open alike, honor to all imparts;
> So that the only fashion in request
> Was to bee good or good-like as the rest.
> (Bullough 4: 424, 426)

As for the sacramental element, the eating of the bread (which is included in both Holinshed's and Hall's accounts of the battle's eve), it is displaced into a scene of eucharistic parody, Fluellen's forcing Pistol to eat the leek, the "memorable trophy of predeceased valour" (5.1.75), which the latter has foolishly mocked.

Pistol's survival of Agincourt (and of any belligerency for that matter) and his determination to persist in a predatory life remind us that we must not go too far in minding the true things of the sacramental order without giving due consideration to their mockeries. As the Chorus repeatedly tells us, discrepancies are not incidental but integral to the method of the play. Pistol and the other remnants of Falstaff's company carry on their master's role of demonstrating how much of the king's realm is beyond his rule, how unamenable portions of it remain to the imposition of ideas. Yet their presence here does not so much invalidate Henry's efforts as challenge and thereby affirm them with qualification. As Empson has shown, the relation between double plots is often complex. His remarks about The Second Shepherds' Play, in particular the attempt by Mac's wife to hide the sheep disguised as a child in the cradle (another sacramental parody), seem apposite here: "The effect is hard to tape down; it seems a sort of test of the belief in the Incarnation strong enough to prove it to

be massive and to make the humorous thieves into fundamental symbols of humanity" (Pastoral 28-29).

The agitations of the Eastcheap company clearly serve to question the concepts of fellowship and fidelity that are central to the new order. In their first scene, Bardolph expresses his willingness to "bestow a breakfast" as a means of uniting Nym, Pistol, and himself as "three sworn brothers to France" (2.1.11-12). Their solidarity is threatened from the beginning, however, by broken faith, Nell Quickly's breach of troth to Nym in order to marry Pistol. When the disputants encounter, Pistol, always anxious to find an excuse to get out of a real fight, is immediately ready to credit the oaths offered by Bardolph to force reconciliation, first as a soldier and then by his sword: "An oath of mickle might; and fury shall abate" and "Sword is an oath, and oaths must have their course" (2.1.66, 101). When a settlement is finally patched up between them, however, it concerns not the original issue of troth but a debt that Nym acquiesces to having Pistol pay at discount. In their next scene together, with the news of Falstaff's death and the impending departure for France, Pistol now dispels any notion of reliance being placed in warrants or words: "Let senses rule, the word is 'Pitch and pay'; / Trust none; / For oaths are straws, men's faiths are wafer

cakes" (2.3.50-52).[7] As with Falstaff's exhibition of the tampered-with sword after Gadshill, these scenes constitute an exposition of a de-sacramentalized world.

Yet where Falstaff's penetrating wit and latent ambition were real threats to a state still reeling from the collapse of Richard's rule, the marginal commotions of his survivors in a kingdom that has learned "[t]he act of order" (1.2.189) remain relatively harmless. The villainy of "these three swashers" is patent but petty, as the Boy's comments make clear (3.2.28-57). It is offset by the humanity of genuine grief at the passing of Falstaff; expressive, though ineffectual, concern for one another (Pistol does earnestly plea for Bardolph's reprieve); and loyalty to the king, however muddled (2.1.125-26) or presumptuously familiar (4.1.44-48). Redemption is not totally out of the question, though it may be irregular at best (Arthur may do for Abraham). The real challenge for Henry comes from a higher rung on the social scale, the somber but skeptical soldiers who do the real fighting. Henry parts amicably from the thieving Pistol, but with the honest Williams he picks a quarrel.

[7] Taylor notes that "wafer-cakes" may refer to the communion host as well as to flimsy pastry. If so, the sense would be that a faith supposedly grounded in God's immanence (the Real Presence) is actually based on nothing but mere bread.

The scene of the disguised Henry's encounter with his troops on the eve of battle is truly remarkable in the frank exchanges that occur. As Barton has demonstrated, the scene trades on a romantic convention of the English theater in which king and commoner meet on supposedly equal footing, but it goes far beyond the convention in the seriousness of its content. However, Barton's conclusion that Henry is essentially a tragic and isolated figure does not, I believe, give ample consideration to the dynamics of the exchange and to what follows in the play. True, Henry is troubled, and his role is a solitary one. But we need to see how the "band of brothers" speech on the day of Agincourt is not discordant with what occurs the night before, but emerges from it.

We know very well from his public performances that Henry, like his father, is the consummate "well-grac'd actor" (R2 5.2.24). But also like his father, he is entitled to private moments in which he can give vent to his deepest apprehensions. In view of the numerical disadvantage that he faces and the wearied condition of his troops, he has good reasons for such doubts. That acting is becoming a strain is evident in his remarks to Bedford and Gloucester where in booster-like manner he makes virtue of necessity (4.1.1-12); if the phrase "cheering himself up" has any applicable place in the canon, surely this is it. What disguise allows Henry to do is to admit in private what

he cannot say in public, that the English cause is truly desperate: "Even as men wracked upon a sand, that look to be washed off the next tide" (4.1.97-98). Up to this point, Henry has acted like the Chorus in urging on his men to surpass limitations; now he takes on the other function of the Chorus, calling attention to these limitations, making his auditors acutely aware of the difficulties and responsibilities involved in the situation. The imaginative/sacramental act that the Chorus has asked all along of us, to see one thing and understand another, Henry now asks of his men.

Henry's assertion of the king's essential humanity--". . . I think the king is but a man, as I am: the violet smells to him as it doth to me . . ." (4.1.100-08)--is often regarded as self-pity. More properly, it should be viewed as self-disclosure. Henry parts the veil to the temple of kingship for these ordinary Englishmen; risks their seeing what lies within, only the props of ceremony; and trusts that they can emerge as mature subjects and believers, not in the bondage of mistaking signs for the things signified. He goes on to explain that the king should not be told how precarious the English position is because that news would dishearten him and, in turn, his demeanor would dishearten the troops. He thus makes explicit the function of much of kingly ceremony and rhetoric: to produce an effect,

"[c]reating awe and fear in other men," as he puts it later in his soliloquy (4.1.253).

Henry's mastery of the affective element of his office has been evident throughout the play. One critical mistake that can be made is to take all his words literally when he is speaking primarily to gain a reaction. He is clear about his own purposes. In the first act after he has predicted dire consequences for France in response to the Dauphin's sarcastic gift of tennis balls, he confides to the discerning Exeter ("This was a merry message") his real goal: "We hope to make the sender blush at it" (1.2.298-99). In a similar vein should be understood the awful results he foretells for Harfleur if it does not yield: "shrill-shrieking daughters" defiled, "reverend heads dash'd to the walls," "naked infants spitted upon pikes," and such (3.3.35-38). As Taylor convincingly argues (Henry 50) and Branagh's performance vividly demonstrates, Henry's threats here are the last, desperate attempts of a leader who has no other resources left to him but words.[8] Such use of language, no doubt, would be transparent to the soldiers or to any audience if and when they thought about it. What is remarkable is that Henry delineates the process for these ordinary men, exposing how tenuous it is, how vulnerable it

[8] Puttenham says hyperbole works by "incredible comparison giuing credit" and classes it with figures "seeking to inueigle and appassionate the mind" (154).

renders the king and therefore his army, and how all must cooperate in maintaining an illusion that they can only trust will prove substantial.

As the Chorus will not remain content in letting us fall passively under the illusionary spell of the theater, so Henry presses on with his soldiers, determined to disabuse them of the wishful notion that fighting for the king wipes out their own culpability for sin. The involved sequence culminating in the precise formulation that "Every subject's duty is the king's; but every subject's soul is his own" (4.1.182-84) is often regarded as a characteristic tactic of Henry's to evade his own responsibilities and place blame on others. But Henry does not deny his own accountability for the rightness or wrongness of the cause; what he does deny and place squarely upon the soldiers is the obligation that they have for their own salvation. They cannot console themselves with the thought that the king's writ extends to the spiritual realm, that he possesses magical power to grant indulgences. Their sins are their own responsibility, for which they must be duly repentant: "Therefore should every soldier in the wars do as every sick man in his bed, wash every mote out of his conscience . . ." (4.1.184-86). That Henry has succeeded in bringing mature awareness to his men, an awareness that does not impair their readiness to perform but, in fact, enhances it, is

indicated by the soldiers' responses at this stage of the discussion:

> Will. 'Tis certain, every man that dies ill, the ill upon his own head; the king is not to answer it.
> Bates. I do not desire he should answer for me; and yet I determine to fight lustily for him. (4.1.193-96)[9]

The final question that emerges in the interview, whether the King will allow himself to be ransomed, does not lend itself to as clear-cut resolution, however. In fact, this matter cannot be settled by words, but only by being acted out. The importance that Shakespeare attaches to the question is clear from the significant amount of space devoted to its unraveling following the battle. One issue obviously at stake is fidelity to one's word. We know from his exchanges with Montjoy (3.6.122-71; 4.3.79-128) how great a credit Henry invests in his pledge not to be ransomed. Combat with the French is a life-or-death matter for him, and he does not intend to exercise any prerogative that would exempt him from the penalties that the meaner part of his company are subject to. Yet when the disguised Henry repeats the pledge to the soldiers, Williams turns the

[9] In discussing Julius Caesar, Frye makes comments on the effects of genuine leadership that are applicable here: "The good leader individualizes his followers; the tyrant or bad leader intensifies mass energy into a mob. Shakespeare has grasped the ambiguous nature of Dionysus. . . . In no period of history does Dionysus have anything to do with freedom; his function is to release us from the burden of freedom" (Fools 19).

tables on him, using the same argument from effect that Henry had advanced earlier to explain why bad news should be kept from the king: "Ay, he said so, to make us fight cheerfully; but when our throats are cut, he may be ransomed, and we ne'er the wiser" (4.1.199-201). The other issue at stake is the special status of the king. To Henry's assertion that the king must be held accountable like any other man--". . . I will never trust his word after" (4.1.202)--Williams retorts that ordinary people should not be so presumptuous as to pass judgment on the king's actions:

> You pay him, then! That's a perilous shot out of an elder-gun, that a poor and a private displeasure can do against a monarch. You may as well go about to turn the sun to ice with fanning in his face with a peacock's feather. You'll never trust his word after! come, 'tis a foolish saying. (4.1.203-08)

Williams is far from claiming that "divinity doth hedge a king" (Ham. 4.5.124), but some divide there is, in contrast to Henry's earlier emphasis on the king's essential humanity. The exchange of gages that follows hearkens back to Richard II (1.1 and 4.1), though we note a distinct democratization in the ceremony here. As in the earlier play, the promised conflict never occurs. But where failure to follow through there evinced impasse, a system no longer able to abide by its code of conduct because its symbols were devoid of signification, here the halted quarrel represents genuine closure, insofar as that is possible in

the new order.

As for fidelity to one's word, Fluellen is conveniently at hand to speak for the strict constructionist position: "Though he be as good a gentleman as the devil is, as Lucifer and Belzebub himself, it is necessary, look your grace, that he keep his vow and his oath" (4.7.141-44). And he also appropriately suffers the comic consequences of that position when he is assaulted by Williams. What is demonstrated by the displacement of Henry's part upon Fluellen and the ultimate revelation of the king as the disputant is that, in fact, no pledge or oath is absolute, including by implication Henry's own that he must never be ransomed, should it ever come to that. Conditions of fulfillment must be taken into account as well as the original commitment. Tyndale is explicit about limitations being placed upon the royal word: "And when men say a king's word must stand; that is truth, if his oath or promise be lawful and expedient" (Expositions 57; emphasis added). To do otherwise is to invest more in the word than it can sustain. It is unthinkable, as even Fluellen realizes, for Henry and Williams to carry out their oaths. One construct of principle, fidelity, must yield before another, the majesty of the king.

Yet the second construct is also relative, as the resolution of the conflict pointedly dramatizes. When challenged with committing royal abuse, Williams performs

much better than Falstaff in similar circumstances (2H4 2.4.308-21). He has learned well from Henry's own explanation--". . . his [the king's] ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness he appears but a man . . ." (4.1.105-06)--and draws the corollary from it, that one cannot be held accountable to reverence res without the presence of signum: "Your majesty came not like yourself . . . had you been as I took you for, I made no offence; therefore, I beseech your highness, pardon me" (4.8.51-58). Outward signs, in turn, are qualified by inner disposition, as Williams explains earlier: "All offences, my lord, come from the heart . . ." (4.8.47). Thus Tyndale again on breaking oaths: ". . . I am not forsworn if mine heart meant truly when I promised" (Expositions 57). The common soldier has proved as worthy in the councils of peace as in the divisions of battle, making as just a distinction about the king's two bodies as the king has made about the subject's two duties. The king has ennobled his people not just by pronouncing virtuous words but by prompting consonant deeds and habits of thought.

The betrothal scene concluding the play continues the theme of the need for maintaining fidelity to oaths while also recognizing their ultimate contingency. Marriage with its solemn pledges becomes a symbol not only of the attempt to establish peace between two kingdoms but of the effort to bridge the secular and sacred, to construct a sacramental

order in a world without assurance of absolutes. Strong female voices have been notably rare in the tetralogy, but it was the Duchess of Gloucester who gave most profound utterance to the sacrilege that meant an end to the old dispensation (R2 1.2.9-21). And now it is Queen Isabel who articulates most earnestly the aspirations for the marital union and new national alignments signaled by the kiss between Henry and Katherine:

> God, the best maker of all marriages,
> Combine your hearts in one, your realms in one!
> As man and wife, being two, are one in love,
> So be there 'twixt your kingdoms such a spousal
> That never may ill office, or fell jealousy,
> Which troubles oft the bed of blessed marriage,
> Thrust in between the paction of these kingdoms,
> To make divorce of their incorporate league;
> That English may as French, French Englishmen,
> Receive each other! God speak this Amen!
> (5.2.377-86)

The conclusion of the queen's prayer calling for God's confirmation is notably echoed in the response of "Amen" by all present (5.2.387), just as they had previously professed assent to the blessing pronounced by King Charles (5.2.374). This stress upon vocal affirmation by an assembled community fully aware of the significance of what is being said in its name reflects a major tenet of Anglian teaching regarding prayer and the sacraments. The quasi word magic of past liturgical practice, in which members of the congregation mechanically murmured responses to prayers and rituals expressed in a language they did not comprehend, was regarded as a major abuse by reformers. The key text cited

is 1 Corinthians where St. Paul cautions against prayer in strange tongues, for that which is not understood cannot genuinely be affirmed by "Amen" and result in the edification of the hearer (14.14-17). The homily That Common Prayer and Sacraments ought to be ministered in a Tongue that is understood of the Hearers conflates several Pauline texts to argue further that conscious participation is requite for a true community of believers:

> For we are not strangers one to another, but we are the citizens of the saints, and of the household of God, yea, and members of one body [Eph. 2.19; 1 Cor. 10.17; 12.12]. And therefore whiles our minister is in rehearsing the prayer that is made in the name of us all, we must give diligent ears to the words spoken by him, and in heart beg at God's hand those things that he beggeth in words. And to signify that we do so, we say Amen at the end of the prayer that he maketh in the name of us all. And this thing can we not do for edification, unless we understand what is spoken. (318)[10]

The need for comprehension and affirmation, however, is qualified in both the play and in Anglican teaching by reservations about the capabilities of language. As the Chorus does not allow us to forget the confines of the theatrical medium, so the play keeps before us instances of linguistic limitations. Yet, as with the theater, literal discrepancies open up imaginative possibilities; and language ultimately finds a way to suggest, if not express, what lies within. We have already seen with Henry's

[10] Jewel also discusses this point extensively (1: 263-337).

speeches that sometimes we must hear one thing and understand another. Words must be considered not only in themselves, but in relation to the intentions residing behind them and the actions following from them. Fluellen is a comic object lesson of one whose overt problems with language do not impede his meaning nor hamper his effectiveness. Gower admonishes the beaten Pistol for underestimating his Welsh antagonist: "You thought, because he could not speak English in the native garb, he could not therefore handle an English cudgel . . ." (5.1.78-81). On the other hand, Fluellen's excessive precision in another formality, the disciplines of war, does not preclude our or Henry's appreciation of his essential virtue: "Though it appear a little out of fashion, / There is much care and valour in this Welshman" (4.1.83-84). The homily on prayer in the native tongue also balances its emphasis upon full comprehension with allowance for linguistic aberrations. It cites St. Augustine cautioning those advanced in grammar and rhetoric not to discount the value of what is said by those less learned:

> "Let them know also (saith he) that it is not the voice, but the affection of the mind, that cometh to the ears of God." And so shall it come to pass, that if happily they shall mark that some bishops or ministers in the church do call upon God, either with barbarous words, or with words disordered, or that they understand not, or do disorderly divide the words that they pronounce, they shall not laugh them to scorn. (324)

Katherine's English lesson (3.4) provides another demonstration of the simultaneous limitations and possibilities of language. Even at the elementary level of identifying one term for a bodily part with its foreign equivalent, discrepancies crop up: "elbow" becomes "bilbow," and "chin" "sin." More significant is Katherine's seizure upon the bawdy implications in the sounds of "foot" and "count." An overt failure in communicating apparent meaning reveals, in fact, something of more consequence--the healthy sexual interests of a princess who knows that marriage may well be in the offing. Her sudden desire to learn English suggests an awakening in her of something more than linguistic curiosity. The wooing between Katherine and Henry further shows how literal misunderstandings yield occasion for imaginatively conveying meaning:

> K. Hen. O fair Katherine! if you will love me soundly with your French heart, I will be glad to hear you confess it brokenly with your English tongue. Do you like me, Kate?
> Kath. Pardonnez-moi, I cannot tell wat is "like me."
> K. Hen. An angel is like you, Kate, and you are like an angel. (5.2.104-10)

Katherine's shrewd response to the exaggeration--". . . les langues des hommes sont pleines de tromperies" (5.2.115-16)--does not deflate the sentiment, but rather shows that she is no naive pawn in this game of love and politics. Fully conscious of the artifice, she consents to play, at once exposing and embracing the conventions. Likewise in

another exchange, Henry lays opens his hyperbole but maintains the truth of the emotion behind it: "I speak to thee plain soldier: if thou canst love me for this, take me; if not, to say to thee that I shall die, is true; but for thy love, by the Lord, no; yet I love thee too" (5.2.152-56).

Professions of intent, Henry's "good heart" that like the sun "shines bright and never changes, but keeps his course truly" (5.2.167-70), need to be confirmed and sealed by an outward sign, here the kisses between the betrothed. The first kiss in private accommodates the profane aspects of the lovers' game: the advances of one and the yielding resistance of the other, the potency of sexual arousal, the bawdy banter and innuendoes that follow when others come in upon the couple. The second kiss in public moves the relationship into the realm of the sacred. It is a visible word, a sacramental sign, preceded by the blessing of the father and followed by the prayer of the mother, both in turn punctuated by the assembled group's fervent assent in "Amen." Theatrically, it is a supreme moment of symbolic expression, of the type spoken of by Goethe (Shaaber 361), in which action and meaning are fully complementary. John Russell Brown describes well the significance and effect of the kiss:

> The long wooing scene--far more elaborate than at first seems to be required by the dramatic context--has served to show afresh and with an intermittent intensity the need for an honest

> heart, and the danger and embarrassment of relying on words alone; and, in the kiss, it suggested an inward understanding, peace, affection, unity that is a greater solvent, a more powerful reorganizing power, than words or battles: the silence of the kiss is a shared silence in which the audience instinctively participates. (xxxvi-xxxvii)

However strong the sense of satisfaction we take in this solemn moment, it is qualified by our awareness that the profound hopes associated with the peace and marriage are not to be realized. The Chorus, faithful to the end in pointing out discrepancies, concludes the play reminding us that all Henry accomplished was soon to be lost during the reign of his son, "[w]hich oft our stage hath shown" (Epilogue 13). But a similar awareness, though not prescient, exists as well within the play proper; for Henry's confidence as conqueror is balanced by a sense of the tentativeness of his achievement. In his playful suggestion to Katherine that their union will produce a male heir "half French, half English, that shall go to Constantinople and take the Turk by the beard" (5.2.216-18), he expresses a desire to see the crusading goals of his father fulfilled. When Katherine protests that it is not theirs to be certain about the future, Henry can only concur; yet he still stresses the need for human intention to seek to order events: "No; 'tis hereafter to know, but now to promise . . ." (5.2.222-23). The need for present commitment in the face of conditional fulfillment is

reflected more seriously in Henry's speech concluding the play:

> Prepare we for our marriage: on which day,
> My Lord of Burgundy, we'll take your oath,
> And all the peers', for surety of our leagues.
> Then shall I swear to Kate, and you to me;
> And may our oaths well kept and prosp'rous be!
> (5.2.388-92)

Taylor argues that by not including the professions of allegiance at Troyes (that of Burgundy and the Dauphin in The Famous Victories and that of the French King in a play referred to by Nashe), Shakespeare violates audience expectations and deliberately throws away an easy opportunity for dramatic climax (Henry 27-28). To carry the argument further, I would observe that including the actual oaths here would be a rather grim prompt to recall the casuistry, equivocation, perjury, and broken faith that litter the scenes of the First Tetralogy as well as Richard's futile insistence upon swearing by the sword that begins the Second. The dominant stress of this play is not upon mockeries, however much they are acknowledged, but upon true things. Although oaths, such as those "when men make faithful promises, with calling to witness of the name of God, to keep covenants, honest promises, statutes, laws, and good customs, as Christian princes do in their conclusions of peace, for conservation of commonwealths" be necessary and lawful (Homilies 62-63), they are not ultimate guaranties of order. In a world from which the Real

Presence has been withdrawn, no efficacy can be ascribed to the signum of ceremonies in themselves. Even an appeal to God as guarantor, such as Richmond makes at the end of the First Tetralogy--"Now civil wounds are stopp'd, peace lives again; / That she may long live here, God say amen!" (R3 5.5.40-41)--is of itself not sufficient. The contingent certitude of the new order rests on appeal to God in man, the worthy receiver, who in the presence of an affirming community pledges to hold true to his promises.

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