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“YOUR UNTHOUGHT OF HARRY”: POLITICAL LEGITIMACY AND THE ECONOMY
OF HONOR IN SHAKESPEARE’S HENRIAD

by

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Shakespeare's Henriad delves into questions of divine authority, political legitimacy, and kingly identity.¹ While it is unknown whether Shakespeare meant for the plays to be understood as a tetralogy, each play sets up the political climate for the subsequent one. However, the Henriad also tracks a pivotal transition in the understanding and composition of kingship. *Richard II* paints the portrait of a king infatuated with his own divinity. Richard's incompetency as a ruler is highlighted by two major offenses: killing his uncle Gloucester, and disinheriting his cousin, Henry Bolingbroke, who eventually leads a rebellion against the corrupted king. Richard's journey from anointed king to deposed mortal captures the dissolution of his fantasy of invincibility and highlights two conflicting viewpoints on the office of kingship in relation to political theology. Richard's tyranny, stemming from an unwavering belief in his own divine right, necessitates a replacement of kingly authority. Bolingbroke deposes Richard and effectively dissolves divine right. This dissolution leaves a void, one which vexes Henry IV (formerly Bolingbroke) and his son Hal, where kingly identity and political leadership once existed. As Prince Hal leaves behind his previous life in the taverns, he turns towards the task of establishing his own legitimacy, eventually succeeding his father and becoming Henry V. Hal's ascension and his subsequent success as a king in *Henry V* provide a stark contrast to the discontent during Richard's reign and highlight a political and ideological transition which spans three rulers and four plays.

Critical texts discussing the Henriad can serve to illuminate the political tensions within the play. Differing from standard critical practice today, mid-1900's critics were concerned with the moral of the plays and took a stance which clearly approved or

¹ While *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* are Shakespeare's most referenced plays in popular culture, the Henriad plays, especially *1 Henry IV*, were Shakespeare's best-selling works during his time.

disapproved of certain elements rather than simply analyzing them. These critics were primarily divided into two factions: the providentialists (divine right supporters) and the Machiavellians (rebellion supporters). Tillyard claims that the histories kept the past alive by means of, "...Vivid, memorable examples...teaching the audience the virtues of order and degree" and vehemently believed that the plays served as a cautionary tale against the sin of deposition.² Critics such as Wilders and Kelly argue that deposition cannot be viewed as a sin in the context of Richard's tyranny.³ Rabkin claims that, "No real compromise is possible" between the two different readings of the plays.⁴ More recently, Stephen Greenblatt⁵, the foremost authority on Shakespeare's works, approached the history plays through his "subversion and containment" thesis and accused previous critics of "legitimizing the dominant Elizabethan social order by projecting a world picture which reinforces particular class and gender interests...by presenting the existing social order as natural and God-given."⁶ In doing so, the dominant order is able to generate subversion for its own ends, a point which becomes relevant when discussing Prince Hal's political legitimacy.

Numerous documents from Shakespeare's own time also discussed divine right and related theories of kingship. One such theory important to the contextualization of Richard's deposition is the theory of the King's Two Bodies. The Two Bodies theory can be traced back to a report written by Edmund Plowden in 1571, who reported how the concept was

² E.M.W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* (New York, 1944) 6.

³ John Wilders, *The Lost Garden: A View of Shakespeare's English and Roman History Plays* (London, 1978) and H.A. Kelly, *Divine Providence in the England of Shakespeare's Histories* (Cambridge, 1970).

⁴ Norman Rabkin, *Shakespeare and the Problem of Meaning* (Chicago, 1981) 18.

⁵ Greenblatt's work is also seen as the pivotal New Historicist understanding of the history plays. For the purposes of this thesis, however, I will not be going into detail about the interaction between New Historicism and the histories specifically.

⁶ Warren Chernaik, *The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare's History Plays* (Cambridge, 2007) 19.

cemented as law in a land-ownership dispute involving the Duchy of Lancaster. Plowden's commentary would have circulated widely, and it seems likely that Shakespeare read and engaged with his work.⁷ Plowden writes, "the King has in him two Bodies, viz. a Body natural, and a Body politic. His Body natural... is a Body mortal, subject to all Infirmities that come by Nature... But his Body politic is a Body that cannot be seen or handled, consisting of Policy and Government, and constituted for the Direction of the People."⁸ While the king's own physical body constitutes the Body natural, the office of kingship itself is represented through the Body politic. In *The King's Two Bodies*, Ernest Kantorowicz properly establishes the theory as political theology and writes about the ability of language and symbols to create meaning and power, thus granting the kings their authority.⁹

Kantorowicz explains that at the king's death there is a "...Separation of the two Bodies" by which "the Body politic is transferred and conveyed... from one Body natural to another."¹⁰ This concept details the transition from one sovereign to the next and explains the phrase, "The King is dead, long live the King." As one King dies, another takes his place with the same Body politic.¹¹ C.G. Thayer's *Shakespearean Politics: Government and Misgovernment in the Great Histories* troubles this relationship between the Body politic and the Body natural. Using Kantorowicz's definitions of the Two Bodies as a foundation, Thayer

⁷ An anonymous play, "Thomas of Woodstock," includes the line: "I have plodded in Plowden, and can find no law." Kantorowicz suggests that Shakespeare might be credited as the author due to the extended discussions of divine right and criticism of Plowden's establishment of the King's Two Bodies.

⁸ Edmund Plowden, *The commentaries, or Reports of Edmund Plowden: containing divers cases upon matters of law, argued and adjudged in the several reigns of King Edward VI, Queen Mary, King and Queen Philip and Mary, and Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1571).

⁹ In viewing the production of literature as a political act, especially in his analysis of Richard II through Two Bodies theory, Kantorowicz essentially anticipates New Historicism.

¹⁰ Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: a Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton University Press, 1997) 8.

¹¹ Richard's identity crisis arises from having two kings alive at the same time, one deposed and the other a usurper.

details a King Body Politic and a King Body Natural to complicate the king's perception of his own identity.¹² While the idea of the Body natural essentially remains the same (the king's physical body subject to Nature), Thayer defines the King Body Politic as the "divine self" within the king's dual identity which confers absolute authority on him. This distinction allows Thayer to interpret the deposition scene as a dissolution of the king's divine right. Putting Kantorowicz's definition of Body politic in conversation with Thayer's conception of a King Body Politic, I propose that divine right can be seen a force separate of the King Body Politic. Richard's Body natural is prone to the infirmities of nature to a degree greater than Plowden would allow; therefore, I would define his conception of divine right as the King Body Politic, a third state separate of the Body politic and Body natural to refer specifically to Richard's perception of his own divinity. Richard's overly zealous belief corrupts the Body politic.

While Bolingbroke ascends the throne as Henry IV to replace Richard's tyranny, the dissolution of divine right and loss of the King Body Politic leads to a vacuum in which there is no governing system of kingship. Simultaneously, deposing an anointed king begs a question: when is political upheaval necessary, and can legitimacy be reconstituted? Peter Lake identifies Bolingbroke as an actor "driven by the iron law of political necessity" that "forces [players] to take actions that undermine the cause of legitimacy and thrust the world into a ceaseless struggle between individuals and factions."¹³ This transition and struggle is especially highlighted in the tone of the plays. Richard's conduct is both incredibly formal

¹² C. G. Thayer, *Shakespearean Politics: Government and Misgovernment in the Great Histories*. (Ohio, 1983) 67-70.

¹³ Peter Lake, *How Shakespeare Put Politics on the Stage: Power and Succession in the History Plays* (New Haven, 2016) 245.

and highly ritualized, or what Lake calls a form of “secular liturgy” (238). Richard’s flowery and lofty language, demonstrative of the King Body Politic, is juxtaposed with Bolingbroke’s economic language, which gives force to his action of returning from banishment to regain the land taken by the king. Lake describes this shift and Henry IV’s reign as, “A political scene...plunged into the politics of commodity” (282).

While the presence of this commodity politics becomes more important in the subsequent plays, an existing economic language becomes a key ingredient as Prince Hal establishes his legitimacy. From the members of court to Hal’s tavern mates, each character is in pursuit of self-interest in economic terms. Lake begins to claim that Hal must learn and recourse to language; however, he stops before continuing the analysis of the specific language Hal uses and manipulates. In his time outside of court, Hal has been learning to speak the idiom of the common people in various ways, a language which contains strong economic undertones. Sandra Fischer’s analysis of the relationship between economics and literature provides insight as to how Hal’s use of this language may be examined more specifically. Fischer allows the authority of words to replace the valor of deeds.¹⁴ Deeds are essentially made visible in a lexical system, allowing for the translation of one to the other. The distinction between words and deeds illuminates an important point: the history plays are less about the monarchy itself and more about kingly perception. The value of economic language is tested by Hal, and the previous system of divine right is abandoned to accept an economic construct of reality. Fischer utilizes the term “econolinguistics” to define the congruency between words and value in *1 Henry IV*; where Richard’s language of ceremony

¹⁴ Sandra K. Fischer, “‘He Means to Pay’: Value and Metaphor in the Lancastrian Tetralogy,” *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 1989: 149.

fails, Hal's study of his companions and their language proves a powerful tool to reshape and present himself.

These separate components of divine right, political necessity, and economic language converge upon a specific word. Hal, a master crafter of language, repeatedly uses "honour," a decidedly non-economic concept, in an economic manner. The theme of honor appears frequently throughout the *Henriad* and has been written about at length; however, the intersection of honor with these particular strands of political theory, legitimacy, and economics, has yet to be examined. Hal's use of honor pinpoints a key transition; in contrast to the previous conception of honor as an intrinsic value, Hal recognizes the potential economic value of honor and views it as a commodity which can be accumulated, exchanged, and transferred. Thus he uses language to effect a political and ideological shift. Fischer's model of econolinguistics further informs our reading of Hal's creation; under this framework, Hal can be seen as systemizing honor, or even creating his own econolinguistic system, similar to how econolinguistics systematizes language. In examining the political transition within the *Henriad*, we see that the necessary displacement of divine right in *Richard II* via the dissolution of the King Body Politic creates a lack of structured kingship, resulting in Hal's creation, definition, and cementation of an economy of honor to reconstitute political legitimacy. Doing so has two main goals: to install a new ideological and political system where a vacuum currently exists and to legitimize himself. Furthermore, our reading of Hal's process of stripping from honor its previous intrinsic value and assigning an externally commodified value is informed by Kantorowicz's writing, in which he gestures

to the power of the Body politic as a “man-made irreality”. We can see a similar structure in the construction of Hal’s economy.

There are many aspects of divine right kingship which lend themselves easily to the possibility of corruption or tyranny. The language of unquestionable and anointed authority can be seen in James I’s “The True Law of Free Monarchies,” an essay written in 1598 on the theory of kingship.¹⁵ The essay essentially establishes the doctrine of the divine right of kings.¹⁶ A monarch’s authority, according to James, comes from God and is not subject to any earthly authority:

The duty and allegiance of the people unto their lawful king, their obedience, I say, ought to be to him as to God's lieutenant in earth, obeying his commands in all things...Kings were the authors and makers of the laws, and not the laws of the kings.¹⁷

Shakespeare clearly shows in *Richard II* that such power can be incredibly dangerous. Several critics, in fact, seem to think that the *Henriad* was written partly as a response to James’s essay by demonstrating the perils and consequences of such unchecked authority and what may follow in way of political reconstitution.¹⁸ Richard’s own language even mirrors James’s sentiment through his lofty statements. He makes declarations such as, “Not all the water in the rough rude sea/Can wash the balm from an anointed King,” which echo and establish this divine right (*R2*, III. ii. 49-50).

The main tenet of Tudor absolutism, as a form of political theology, demonstrates the dangers of divine right as authority. Within the Tudor theory of kingship, subjects must

¹⁵ As with Plowden’s commentary, James’s essay would have circulated widely and was most certainly read by Shakespeare. It was published in Edinburgh as an octavo pamphlet and again in London when James became King of England in 1603.

¹⁶ The doctrine opposes the Scottish kirk or church theory, which maintained there was a social contract between the monarch and the people (social contract theory).

¹⁷ James I, *The true lawe of free monarchies: or The reciproock and mutuall dutie betwixt a free king, and his naturall subiectes* (Edinburgh, 1598).

¹⁸ See Paul Raffield’s *Shakespeare’s Imaginary Constitution: Late Elizabethan Politics and the Theatre of Law*

accept the king's actions and commands with "blind obedience" (Thayer 24). Thayer claims that the passive obedience seen throughout Richard II is wholly inconsistent with "good government and human dignity... Shakespeare believed in both," making Richard's relationship to his subjects both dangerous and destructive (15). The behavior of passive obedience is especially exhibited in Gaunt's character. Being urged by Gloucester's wife to avenge his death and confront Richard, Gaunt says, "God's is the quarrel; for God's substitute, / His deputy anointed in His sight" (*R2*, I. ii. 37-41). Gaunt reinforces the traditional belief that the king is accountable only to God, implying that his actions are indisputable by his subjects.¹⁹ This inability to act allows the king to take action, no matter how nefarious, without answering to his subjects. Richard's arrogance and divine prerogative certainly align him with Tudor absolutism, and his actions prove the theory even more sinister in practice. This "arrogant divine prerogative" allows him to murder his uncle, spend money extravagantly, tax heavily, extort resources, and disinherit his cousin with full impunity. Diverging from Plowden's original claim that the infirmities of the Body natural are corrected by the Body politic, Thayer and Kantorowicz both assert that being king instead amplifies the negative defects of mind and character, reinforcing the consequences a corrupted Body natural may have on the Body politic. The root of Richard's tyranny and the most pressing defect in his kingship is, indeed, his belief in his own divinity.

Several of Richard's actions, and the effects they have on the Body politic, indicate that removing divine right as a system may be necessary. A conversation between two gardeners reveals how the king's actions are perceived as tyrannical even by the common

¹⁹ This sentiment is also echoed in "An Homily Against Disobedience," written in 1571.

people. The gardener uses a series of metaphors to compare England to a garden and point out a corruption of the natural order:

Our sea-walled garden, the whole land,
Is full of weeds, her fairest flowers choked up,
Her fruit-trees all upturned, her hedges ruin'd,
Her knots disorder'd and her wholesome herbs
Swarming with caterpillars. (*R2*, III. iv. 33-39, 43-47)

The use of the word “weeds” specifically points out the corruption of the garden; most importantly, however, the weeds seem to be choking up the “fairest flowers”. Through this metaphor, the text indicates that the growth of corruption affects the “good” parts of the garden. This line can also be read as the condemnation of Richard’s multiple atrocities, as a weed, choking up the flowers, in disinheriting his cousin and murdering his uncle. The word “caterpillar” is repeated throughout the play to refer to Richard’s advisors and friends, who take advantage of the political situation and manipulate his actions to their own benefit. The language of decay and corruption is compounded by the emphasis on the corruption of natural order itself.²⁰ The speech demonstrates how the natural state of England, as a garden, has been corrupted by Richard. Furthermore, if the garden can be read as representing the Body politic by acting as a metaphor for England, by extension, the king’s divine right begins as a natural phenomenon which is then corrupted through his perception of divinity, affecting the Body politic.

Richard’s corruption of divine right not only necessitates a deposition, but requires the complete removal of divine right as a system to ensure that monarchs in the future do not become similarly tyrannical. Bolingbroke’s return to England for his inheritance signals the

²⁰ Several critics have noticed that the gardener speaks in an overly elevated fashion for a character of his status, and may be speaking for Shakespeare himself.

beginning of the transition away from a world of corrupted legitimacy in his “pursuit of immediate political and personal advantage” (Lake 245). Upon his return, Bolingbroke says:

Henry Bolingbroke
 On both his knees doth kiss King Richard's hand
 And sends allegiance and true faith of heart
 To his most royal person, hither come
 Even at his feet to lay my arms and power,
 Provided that my banishment repealed
 And lands restored again be freely granted. (*R2*, III. iii. 36-42)

While Henry’s internal monologue (hence intent) is blatantly absent from the entire play, Richard’s previous assertions of power have proven that he will not give in to Bolingbroke’s request. Bolingbroke’s address to the king can then be read as a covert declaration of attack. His use of bodily language in the phrases “both his knees” and “kiss King Richard’s hand” demonstrate the use of traditional and devotional reception as a guise for his true intentions.²¹ In his use of physical language, Bolingbroke also addresses Richard’s “royal person,” which is different from a “divine” person. The phrase “royal person” emphasizes Richard’s corporeality and constitutes the royal self as a physical, rather than divine, entity. Through his language, Bolingbroke already begins to ground this divinity which Richard zealously believes in. Bolingbroke offers to lay his “arms and power,” his only means of overthrowing Richard, at Richard’s feet, provided he is given back what is rightfully his, which Richard will assuredly not agree to. Rather than addressing Richard’s abuse of power, Bolingbroke refers specifically to his land, a symbol of material wealth and value, introducing an economic motive with his return. Bolingbroke also begins executing those who supposedly corrupted the king with their thoughts, namely Bushy and Bagot, who are described at the caterpillars of the commonwealth. The gardener observes this action by describing how the

²¹ While Bolingbroke feigns respect and formality on the surface, this is the man who, at the beginning of the play, challenged Mowbray and accused him of killing Gloucester, the only way in which he could also accuse the king indirectly.

“weeds” with the “broad-spreading leaves” of the tree sheltered are “pluck’d up root and all” by Bolingbroke (*R2*, III. iv. 53-56). Revisiting the metaphor of England as a garden, the play’s natural language views Bolingbroke’s actions as necessary to keep the garden healthy. Bolingbroke’s return to England signifies a larger shift than simply reclaiming his land from a tyrannous king; in order to restore order, he must depose the king and remove divine right as the system which first bestowed Richard with power.

As Richard comes to terms with his surrender, he firmly holds on to his deep-rooted belief in his own divine right. Rather than quietly handing the crown over to Bolingbroke, Richard creates an entire ceremony around his abdication. Richard’s theatricality and pomposity demonstrates that the deposition, importantly, is a self-deposition, as nobody else holds the power to do remove him from kingship.²² Richard’s insistence on maintaining power while lowering himself demonstrates how strongly he believes in his own divinity; because he is the only entity which has the power to depose, he will continue to view himself as superior even while lowering himself. Richard begins by saying, “Now mark me, how I will undo myself” (*R2*, IV. i. 212). Richard conveys a tone of pride and authority, as his belief in divine right leads him to believe that only he has the ability to remove himself from power. The word “undo” sets up the entire ceremony as a reverse coronation or an inverted rite. Richard continues, “I give this heavy weight from off my head,/ And this unwieldy scepter from my hand,/The pride of kingly sway from out my heart” (*R2*, IV. i. 213-215). The ending of the three lines, “head,” “hand,” and “heart,” are all symbolically important to the

²² The deposition scene was incredibly controversial during Shakespeare’s time. Elizabeth allegedly said, “I am Richard. Know ye not that?” Due to censorship (either from the Master of Revels or the playhouse), there are some textual discrepancies; the folio includes a version of the deposition scene different from the Q4 and Q5 version (which was shorter); the scene might have been part of the original play but deleted in Q1, Q2, and Q3, or added to the play before Q4 printed in 1608. The scene was most likely never acted during Elizabeth’s reign.

intermingling of the Two Bodies; as Richard hands over physical objects symbolic of kingship, they are connected to his own internal perception of his divine identity. Richard then proceeds to further eradicate his rights as king, saying:

With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
 With mine own hands I give away my crown,
 With mine one tongue deny my sacred state,
 With mine one breath release all duty's rites. (*R2*, IV. i. 216-219)

The repetition of “With mine own” gives the speech the tone of an official order or ceremony. In repeating “mine,” Richard also makes it very clear he is the only agent in this deposition. The use of the pronouns “mine,” “my,” and “I” enforces that he is the sole controller of the deposition, while he simultaneously sheds the royal “we”. Richard also confers power upon his own body in each line, as if his physical self contains the power to reverse his kingship. This connection of body and power also mixes the Body politic and Body natural, creating a juxtaposition between bestowing and taking away power from himself simultaneously. Similarly, his tears have the power to wash away his balm, when not even the “all the water in the rough rude sea” could do so previously. Most importantly, there is no language of transfer in these lines. Richard will not place the crown on Bolingbroke, or confer sacred rites upon him. He will “wash away,” “give away,” “deny” his state, and “release” duty’s rites, emphasizing a dissolution of his authority even while he emphasizes it.

Richard’s self-deposition accomplishes two goals: he asserts his own power while power is being taken away from him, and simultaneously ends of divine right. While Richard may be attempting to salvage his public image, his language indicates his complete belief that only he can attempt the impossible in reversing a sacred rite. As Richard devolves, the deposition dissolves the King Body Politic, removing divine right as a system. The

performance of a reverse coronation, demonstrated in the language above, invokes an “inverted rite”. In Early Modern Europe, reversing beneficent ceremonies were believed to evoke their opposites.²³ Hence, Richard’s deposition is a profane ritual which not only undoes his coronation, but also shatters any possible chance of reconstituting divine right; the reverse ritual cannot be undone. Interestingly, viewing the deposition as an inverted or profane rite also echoes King James’s language:

Consider, I pray you, what duty his children owe to him and whether upon any pretext whatsoever it will not be thought monstrous and unnatural to his sons to rise up against him, to control him at their appetite, and, when they think good, to slay him or to cut him off and adopt to themselves any other they please in his room.²⁴

James views his subjects as his “children,” creating a familial allegiance between himself and the people. However, he only views the children as owing a duty to him; being king, he does not have to reciprocate this obligation. Most importantly, he views any form of rebellion or rising against the king as “monstrous” or “unnatural” and condemns the action as similar to a son slaying his own father. James’s outrage at the thought of any action being taken against the king, seen in his use of “profane” and “monstrous”, indicate that an overly zealous belief in divine right can lead to that perceived divinity completely overtaking the king, as is the case with Richard. The tragedy of King Richard is essentially a tragedy of the King’s Two Bodies (Kantorowicz 26). Despite the sympathy produced for Richard as he approaches a tragic end, many critics see Richard’s death as the triumph of a new era.²⁵ This new era can perhaps herald in a man-centered kingship to replace Richard’s divine-centered kingship.

²³ William Shakespeare, et al., *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York, 2016) 890.

²⁴ James I, *The true lawe of free monarchies: or The reciprock and mutuall dutie betwixt a free king, and his naturall subiectes*.

²⁵ Barton’s 1973 production of *Richard II* spliced Henry IV’s speech on sleeplessness (from *2 Henry IV*) into the play: “...O sleep, gentle sleep...how have I frighted thee.” The effect of such a directorial decision evokes sympathy for Henry IV and shifts it away from Richard.

Despite having two plays out of the four named after Henry IV, the Henriad reads more as a bildungsroman; Richard II acts as a prequel, while the remaining plays detail Prince Hal's acquisition of experience and ascension to the throne.²⁶ King Henry inherited many problems from Richard's deposition, mainly the dangers of rebellion and civil war. Amidst this political strife, it is evident that the lack of divine right makes Henry more vulnerable to scrutiny and attack, especially by those who supported him and then were neglected after his ascension, namely the Percy family. This shaky foundation of kingly authority makes it clear that Hal will face difficulty when he ascends the throne if he cannot prove himself worthy. Quite the opposite of proving himself a dutiful son and prince, however, Hal is introduced to the reader as a profligate young man who spends his time in taverns with questionable company and, of course, the lovable Falstaff. While Henry worries that his son's profligacy is retribution for the sin of deposition, Warwick assures the king that, "The Prince but studies his companions/Like a strange tongue" (*2HIV*, IV. iii. 68-69). As far as political strategies go, Hal seems to be spending time with commoners to understand the context of their lives. Fischer, however, points out that the political conflict of the Henriad is "based on the proper use of language and the use of a proper language" (151-152). As such, Henry's study of language allows him to use current structures of value to his advantage by

²⁶ The Oregon Shakespeare Festival production of *2 Henry IV* (2017) as well as a facsimile of the play performed by revered Shakespearean actor John Philip Kemble (1821) indicate that King Henry's scenes were moved entirely to Act IV, which follows Bell's Shakespeare (the standard action version). The Induction, Epilogue, and large Northumberland scenes from I. i and II. iii were cut from Kemble's promptbook, as well as Rumor's prologue. The introduction to the promptbook states that the text was "Cut...vigorously, paring away obscurities, obscenities, and politics," and leaving the remaining scenes revolving around Falstaff and Hal's "development". This structure lends itself to placing more importance on the young prince and removing the sense of lethargy and decay generally associated with *2 Henry IV*.

manipulating the language of the people: economics. The manipulation central to cementing his legitimacy is the use of the word honor and its induction into the “lexicon of economics”.

The language of *I Henry IV* is full of debts, credits, cost, trade, and purchase.²⁷ Economic language is used by most characters in the play, from the king to Falstaff, and a recurring tendency to assign value to non-economic concepts in these references begins to raise questions about kingship.²⁸ Conversing with Hotspur and Northumberland about raising forces against the king, Worcester says, “The King will always think him in our debt,/And think we think ourselves unsatisfied,/Till he hath found a time to pay us home” (*IHIV*, I. iii. 281-283). In contrast to divine right kingship, in which God himself bestows the king with authority, Henry IV’s crown is set upon his head by the Percy family. In lieu of divine right, this relationship between the office of kingship and the king himself is understood in an economic context by Worcester. He claims that the King will be in their “debt,” making the Percy family his creditors. However, the magnitude of the debt he owes cannot be repaid, leaving him with the action of removing his debtors to maintain his authority.²⁹ On the battlefield at Shrewsbury, Douglas, who has been fooled into killing an imposter Henry IV, approaches the real king, saying, “What are thou/That counterfeit the person of a king?” (*IHIV*, V. iv. 26-27). While demonstrating Douglas’s indignation, the use of the word “counterfeit” also evokes themes of deception and fraud. The texts here troubles Henry’s acquisition of the crown by demonstrating how certain characters may view him as a false

²⁷ See Vivian Thomas’s *Shakespeare’s Political and Economic Language*

²⁸ Economic language is repeatedly used in a literal context, especially by the commoners, whose scenes provide a parallel to court life. Mistress Quickly, for example, complains of Falstaff’s debt, saying, “I know you, Sir John, you owe me money, Sir John, and now you pick a quarrel to beguile me of it” (*IHIV*, III. iii. 66-67).

²⁹ While Henry IV brings about an end to Richard’s tyranny, his own reign is far from perfect. Several critics have pointed out Henry’s hypocrisy as he attempts to rid himself of those who helped him rise to power.

king. Perhaps Hal, seeing both his father's dependence on others for the crown and the incessant questioning of authenticity, takes this economic language, which has been utilized primarily to point out the negative aspects of kingship, and recuperate its use to serve a positive agenda in relation to kingship. Hal does so by manipulating the value of an item which he can accumulate and control: honor. In conversation with Hal, Falstaff says, "I would to God thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought" (*IHV*, I. ii. 79-80). By way of a joke, Falstaff covertly equates morality to an economic transaction and even anticipates Hal's creation of an economy in which "good names," or honor, can be bought.

The Renaissance concept of honor is multivalent and complex. Curtis Brown Watson provides a comprehensive account of philosophical conceptions of honor and its application to Shakespeare's works. Paul Siegel, however, critiques Watson for diluting the concepts into a single form to explain how Shakespeare utilized the concept of honor.³⁰ Siegel divides concepts of honor into two main groups: the Christian humanist ideal and the neo-chivalric cult of honor. The Christian humanist ideal believes in "virtues of the humanist scholar... united with those of the medieval knight," using moral virtue as the central idea of honor (Siegel 41). Renaissance moralists often saw virtue as "inextricably connected with honor as the body is with the shadow".³¹ Neo-chivalric concepts of honor were expounded in dueling treatises, and honor was concerned with maintaining the reputation for the "personal courage and the spirit sensitive to anything remotely resembling a slight," or a challenge.³² In regards

³⁰ Paul Siegel, "Shakespeare and the Neo-Chivalric Cult of Honor," *The Centennial Review* 1964.

³¹ Curtis Brown Watson, *Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honor* (Princeton, 1960) 135.

³² Charles Barber, *The idea of honour in the English drama, 1500-1700* (Folcroft, 1972) 38.

to class, Sir William Segar claims that birth is a pre-disposition to virtue; however, ancestry is not enough to prevent one from falling away from the virtues of their progenitors.³³

Renaissance thinkers were, of course, conscious of the shifting concepts of honor. Lodowick Bryskett firmly believed that, “Men do now a dayes for the most part, make not any show of their fortitude, but onely of their strength and abilitie of body...whereas true fortitude, is to use these gifts well and honestly according to reason”.³⁴ Bryskett’s writing mirrored the patriotic fervor of Roman writers, which was being picked up by 16th century moralists. Cicero’s definition of glory as “praise won by honourable deeds” emphasizes the relationship between “individual achievement and social obligation,” or the twin poles of Renaissance morality (Siegel 44). Philippe de Mornay’s *De la verité de la religion chrestienne* discusses the intersection of religion and the concept the honor. Translated into English by Sir Philip Sidney as *The Trueness of Christian Religion*, the author writes, “They that attaine to honor are in continual torment...for the obtainment of one silly shadow of felicity...What is all this but winde...Reputation is but a shadow, made to follow vertue,” emphasizing a similarity between honor and vanity.³⁵ Using Watson’s metaphor of “body and shadow,” it is the shadow of reputation, rather than virtue, that accompanies the body of honor. Siegel’s definition of neo-chivalric honor aligns with this emphasis on the “shadow” of reputation. Siegel then positions Hotspur as the representative of “feudal chivalry with its characteristic defects,” leaving Hal as the embodiment of the “ideal” of Christian humanism

³³ Sir William Segar, *The booke of honor and armes* (London, 1590) 35.

³⁴ Lodowick Bryskett, *A discourse of ciuill life containing the ethike part of morall philosophie. Fit for the instructing of a gentleman in the course of a vertuous life* (London, 1606) 74-75.

³⁵ Sir Philip Sidney and Arthur Golding, “A worke concerning the trunesse of Christian religion. Written in French, by Philip of Mornay Lord of Plessie and Marly. Begunne to be translated into English, by that honourable and worthy gentleman, Sir Philip Sidney Knight, and at his request finished by Arthur Golding” (London, 1617) 319.

(Siegel 51). I take issue with this interpretation; while Siegel accurately points out the similarities in Hotspur's ideals and the ideals of the "neo-chivalric" cult, a closer examination of Hal's intentions cannot credibly align him with the Christian humanist ideal. Siegel sets up the two conceptions of honor in opposition with each other; however, in aligning Hotspur with one definition, Hal is automatically assigned to the other with little explanation. A closer look at Hal's use and understanding of the word honor may illuminate why his pursuit of honor does not include moral virtue as its central idea.

The interpretation of honor in *1 Henry IV* differs drastically by character, raising questions about its significance. Falstaff equates honor to "air," seeing it as an amorphous concept which only benefits one's reputation posthumously. Hotspur's fervor for honor ends up becoming his downfall; however, the nobility in Hotspur's character bears out his idea of honor as an intrinsic virtue. In the absence of divine right, honor, for Hal, becomes the means by which one can prove themselves worthy of ruling, an idea which both characters strictly adhere to. Furthermore, in contrasting Hotspur's representation of honor to Hal's usage of the word honor, the text demonstrates how Hal transforms honor into an external commodity which can be accumulated and exchanged. This key difference between virtue and commodity perhaps further defines the shift away from an intrinsic ability to rule and towards economic gain as a tool to obtain the right to rule. While divine right ceases to exist after Richard's death, the sentiment of intrinsic divinity or ability can be aligned with the idea of honor as an intrinsic virtue. Hotspur's own representation of honor demonstrates a moral imperative and traditional understanding of chivalry which aligns with the idea of inner "divinity" in divine right. While Hotspur does not stand in as a substitute for a kingly figure

in this alignment of Body Politic and honor, he is, nevertheless, presented as a challenge to Hal's ascension. If Hotspur emerged from the rebellion as a victorious leader, he would undoubtedly claim the throne. Throughout the play, Hotspur's honor is manifested through his prowess on the battlefield as well as his drive to restore his family's name. While Hotspur's anger and hot-blooded temperament has been seen as his character's downfall, his drive towards rebellion also demonstrates Hotspur's desire for justice, indicative of an intrinsic honor.

Hotspur repeatedly takes action to counteract a sense of injustice or corruption within the play. Henry observes Hotspur's honor in his refusal to turn over prisoners to the king:

Is not this an honourable spoil?
 ...the prisoners,
 Which he in this adventure hath surprised,
 To his own use he keeps. (I. i. 74, 92-94)

The phrase "honourable spoil" relates to a traditional understanding of honor related to prowess on the battlefield. In refusing to return the prisoners, Hotspur prioritizes his own integrity over the king's demands, adhering to an internal sense of honor. Hotspur is also referred to as the "theme of honor's tongue" and "the king of honour" (I. i. 80, IV. i. 10). In both these descriptions of Hotspur, honor is personified as an entity who both highly regards Hotspur and is subject to him as one is to a king. Employing honor itself, the text exalts Hotspur as a man of great valor and integrity. The particular use of the word "king" identifies a key tension in the play, as Hotspur's honor and drive to rebellion may, in fact, make him the next king.

Hotspur's sense of honor appears most prominently as he explains his grounds for rebellion. Although the Percy family aided Henry in Richard's deposition, they, "...Set the

crown/Upon the head of [a] forgetful man” (I. iii. 159-160). The phrase “set the crown” takes away the power of attaining kingship from the king himself and confers it onto the Percy family, as their efforts allowed Henry to obtain his crown. The particular action of “setting” the crown on the king’s head is also reminiscent of Richard’s de-coronation, as he reluctantly takes off his own crown to bestow upon Bolingbroke. The difference between these two actions draws out a distinction between Richard’s perceived power to depose himself, due to divine right, and Henry’s reliance on others to attain the crown. The word “forgetful” highlights Hotspur’s anger towards Henry. Later in the play Hotspur further explains Henry’s injustice, saying, “My father and my uncle and myself/Did give him that same royalty he wears” (IV. iii. 56-57). The phrase “give him that same royalty” emphasizes that the crown was acquired, not inherited, already pointing towards a disruption. While a king who has inherited the crown retains complete authority, Henry, who was “given” the crown, essentially owes the kingship to the aid and loyalty of the Percys. While attaining the crown in such a manner makes the office of kingship more susceptible to challenges, neglecting the Percys is seen as a massive injustice in the eyes of Hotspur, demonstrating an honorable cause for his actions. Hotspur’s behavior suggests that Henry himself has acted dishonorably by not acknowledging the forces which aided him in gaining the crown. The Percy family’s perception of themselves as kingmakers may also illuminate Hal’s choice to reject the form of acquired honor; while it serves as an alternative to divine right, Henry is now indebted to those who bestowed the power upon him.

Providing a stark contrast to Hotspur, Hal’s use and understanding of the word honor presents honor as a commodity or item rather than a moral imperative. Due to Richard’s

deposition, Henry's authority is not as secure without the assured comfort of divine right, endangering Hal's ascension to the throne. In order to demonstrate his ability to assuage his father, Hal explains how he will acquire Hotspur's honor:

I will redeem all this on Percy's head...
 And that shall be the day, whene'er it lights,
 That this same child of honour and renown,
 This gallant Hotspur, this all-praised knight,
 And your unthought-of Harry chance to meet.
 For every honour sitting on his helm,
 Would they were multitudes, and on my head
 My shames redoubled, for the time will come
 That I shall make this northern youth exchange
 His glorious deeds for my indignities.
 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. (III. ii. 131, 137-152)

This passage begins with Hal's promise to "redeem" himself on Percy's head. The word "redeem" appears repeatedly throughout the text. One specific definition of "redeem," beyond elevating oneself, is, "To make good (a loss)" (OED Online; redeem, v.). This specific use of the word "redeem" carries economic or commercial connotations; Hal intends to regain the honor he has lost in lesser company by attaining Hotspur's, much as one would gain money to make up for a loss. The phrase "child of honor" emphasizes the intrinsic quality of honor within Hotspur, creating a stark contrast between him and the "unthought-of Harry," omitting any sense of familial tie or association with honor from Hal's character. The lofty language Hal uses to describe Hotspur cements his image as an honorable and chivalrous knight. A key shift occurs with the phrase "every honour sitting on his helm." Previously, honor had been seen as a trait resulting in heroic action, implying a more intrinsic nature. However, "every honour" implies that honor is not just a material item, but also a

commodity which can be accumulated and collected. The more honor one possesses, the more honorable the man, paralleling the relationship between accumulating wealth and gaining a higher status.³⁶ The importance of “every honour” is amplified by the use of the word “multitudes,” implying that Hotspur not only has a wealth of honor, but also that he has, in Hal’s eyes, acquired his honor, diminishing the distinction between Hotspur and Hal by making Hotspur less innately honorable.

Hal begins a conversion of intrinsic honor to commodity through the use of this economic language, further employing an economic framework for his own advantage. The use of the word “exchange” implies that internal and intangible qualities such as “glorious deeds” and “indignities” can be transferred from one entity to another. In creating an economy, Hal creates the means by which he can cement his credibility and authority as a ruler, preparing for when the time comes to ascend the throne. The text pushes this economy further as Percy is seen as Hal’s “factor,” a term which defines Hotspur as a buyer or agent. Percy’s purpose is to “engross up glorious deeds on [Hal’s] behalf.” The use of the word “engross” emphasizes that honor is a commodity that can be accumulated rather than a single item. Hotspur’s internal sense of honor is essentially removed to serve as an external commodity in Hal’s economic framework. Viewing Hal’s honor as a material item rather than intrinsic undermines the idea that his honor is the more desirable.³⁷ The intrinsic quality of Hotspur’s honor hints at the previously discredited divine right, which may further motivate Hal to undermine Hotspur’s honor.

³⁶ Possibly alluding to the St. Crispian’s Day Speech in Henry V; the creation of the foundation for that speech can perhaps be seen in this passage.

³⁷ Falstaff even bemoans the absence of Hal and Poin at Gad’s Hill by saying, “Is there no virtue extant?” While the moment is a comedic one, the underlying message of personal worth and intrinsic value is brought up repeatedly.

Most importantly, Hal links his economy of honor to the crown, bearing symbolic importance in the relationship between his use of this economy and attainment of the crown. In the passage previously discussed, Hal states that he will “redeem all this on Percy’s head.” While the phrase can be interpreted as Hal assuring his father that he will successfully kill Hotspur, the text may also be pointing to the significance of Hotspur’s head as a symbol for where the crown may sit. In the configuration of the king’s two bodies, the head is also representative of the king, linking Hal’s obtainment of honor to the office of kingship itself. While Hotspur exhibits honor through his actions and staying true to his convictions, Hal acquires honor by essentially stealing it from someone else rather than accumulating it himself. While Hal technically does demonstrate honor on the battlefield, he only gains this honor once he has killed Hotspur, as if Hotspur’s honors have transferred to Hal. Addressing Hotspur, Hal says, “All the budding honours on thy crest/I’ll crop to make a garland for my head” (V. iv. 71-72). The OED defines a garland as, “A wreath, crown, etc. worn as a mark of distinction” (OED Online; garland, n.). The text intentionally uses the garland around Hal’s head as a symbol for the crown. While Hal created the foundation for his economy of honor in the previous passage, Hal effectively implements this system by taking the “budding honors” on Hotspur’s chest and converting them into a crown. Through this single line, the text demonstrates how Hal purchases the crown with Hotspur’s honor. Hal has essentially cemented the economy of honor by using it as a commodity make a purchase. Perhaps Hotspur’s death also represents the metaphorical death of virtuous intrinsic honor, as his “honor” is converted into currency, a more decided version of Richard’s death.

In tracing the use and significance of the word “honor” throughout the play, the text demonstrates a clear shift from intrinsic virtue to external commodity. Hal details the progression of this conversion by first framing honor as an item. After honor has become this item, it can now be argued that honor is a commodity which can be accumulated. Finally, if honor as a commodity can be accumulated, it can also be exchanged, gained, and taken away. Through capitalizing on the formulation of honor, Hal both accumulates and systematizes honor. The thorough creation and conceptualization of this structure allows Hal to overthrow Hotspur’s intrinsic honor, cementing Hal’s economy as effective and powerful.

Having accumulated Hotspur’s honor and secured the throne through lineal succession, the formerly delinquent Prince Hal is presented as a poised and competent leader in *Henry V*.³⁸ The fervent patriotism Henry elicits from his subjects serves as a stark contrast to the underlying discontent and conflict of the previous history plays.³⁹ His language and effect on the people around him indicate the power of his character. One common theme which fuels his speeches and motivates the people is unity in equality. Thayer addresses the theme of unity in Henry V’s Harfleur and Agincourt speeches, describing Henry’s use of a “non-hierarchic independence” as he rallies and unifies his troops.⁴⁰ Henry speaks to an individual soldier, saying, “... You, good yeomen,/Whose limbs were made in England, show us here/The mettle of your pasture” (*HV*, III. i. 25-27). Evoking a shared nationality, Henry’s

³⁸ Act I, scene 1 begins with a conversation marking Hal’s transformation in the public eye, an issue which stands separate of the economic system of honor which bestows him with authority.

³⁹ As a king, Henry has been written about following two diametrically opposed interpretations of his character; while some critics praise Henry as the “mirror of all Christian kings” in his exhibition of valiance and patriotism, others view him as a ruthless Machiavel. Norman Rabkin takes up this issue by comparing Henry’s character to the “duck-rabbit” illusion; when viewed one way, the image looks like a duck, and when viewed another way, it looks like a rabbit. Rabkin argues that Henry’s character pinpoints an ambiguity through which he can be seen as either, depending on interpretation.

⁴⁰ C. G. Thayer, *Shakespearean Politics: Government and Misgovernment in the Great Histories*. (Ohio, 1983) 164.

soldiers are unseparated by rank and class, and each is identified as a noble Englishman fighting for his country.⁴¹ *Henry V* reads as a celebratory play on several levels, and the Battle of Agincourt becomes emblematic of Henry's success in cementing his legitimacy.⁴² In his continued use of unity and equality as motivators, Henry utilizes his economy of honor in the famous St. Crispian's Day speech to demonstrate that honor is no longer hierarchical, but available to everyone regardless of class. In using equality as a motivator, Henry firmly establishes that honor is not intrinsic; therefore, it can be gained and earned irrespective of social rank. While approaching a political situation different from *1 Henry IV*, Henry utilizes the same logic to elevate others by framing honor as a commodity which can be accumulated. Henry's use of honor not only allows him to motivate his soldiers, but also test the system that validates his own elevation and authority.

Henry shrewdly uses honor as a means to motivate his soldiers, and in doing so, also reinforces its status as a commodity. While Westmoreland laments the disparity in the number of English and French soldiers, Henry quells his wish for more fighting men:

If we are marked to die, we are enough
 To do our country loss; and if to live,
 The fewer men the greater share of honor
 God's will, I pray thee wish not one man more.
 By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,
 Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost;
 It yearns me not if men my garments wear;
 Such outward things dwell not in my desires. (*HV*, IV. iii. 23-30)

Henry sets up his usage of honor by turning a blatant disadvantage into an advantage; rather than lamenting the lack of English soldiers as Westmoreland does, Henry remarks that the

⁴¹ Philip Seargeant's "Ideologies of English in Shakespeare's *Henry V*" is a brilliant examination of the ways in which language and nationalism are conceptualized in the play. Using Anderson's *Imagined Communities* as a lens, he explores the idea of "ethno-linguistic nationalism" to provide a closer look at Henry's rhetoric and his ability to rally his troops.

⁴² The amount of space Agincourt takes up in the play is indicative of its importance; five scenes are dedicated to the battle.

“fewer men the greater share of honor” for each person. Henry’s use of honor serves two purposes: honor is set up as a material form of reward for services rendered, and is used as a motivator. Henry pleads with Westmoreland to not “wish for one man more,” as the addition of each man reduces the amount of honor each person receives. In economic terms, Henry’s proposition can be viewed as a risky investment; while the odds are not in their favor, the potential for a larger payoff motivates the soldiers to fight. The Arden introduction to *Henry V* goes as far as to say that the King’s prayer is a “calculated piece of insurance” before the battle, emphasizing the economic gain and practical material value being produced in these scenes.⁴³

Henry continues by making explicit his own desire for honor through his rejection of conventional forms of material gain. He sets up a point of contrast between “gold” as a symbol of wealth or conventional material gain, and honor. In emphasizing that he is not motivated by the greed associated with wealth, he allows for his desire of honor to be acceptable by comparison. His exclamation of “By Jove” gives force to his condemnation of material wealth seen through “gold” and “garments” and allows him to portray himself as virtuous for eschewing the temptation of worldly and material objects. This rejection of wealth, however, is not a rejection of systems of value; rather, he simply replaces these symbols of wealth with honor.⁴⁴ The phrase “such outward things” emphasizes this contrast between material wealth and honor; Henry implies that his desire for honor is an inward (rather than outward) and seemingly virtuous prospect. In anticipation of a counterargument,

⁴³ William Shakespeare and T.W. Craik, *King Henry V* (London, 1995) 58.

⁴⁴ The same theme can be observed in More’s *Utopia*; while the society condemns the use of gold and jewels, these objects are simply replaced by other ones, indicating that a system of value is still in place.

he explicitly calls himself a sinner, saying, “But if it be a sin to covet honor,/I am the most offending soul alive” (*HV*, IV. iii. 31-32). Henry asserts that by eschewing materially, it is acceptable for him to sin by coveting honor. His acquisition of honor, as seen in the previous passage, is a purely economic gain; however, he strategically demotes himself as a sinner in pursuit of the same honor to motivate his soldiers to portray himself as on the same level.

The value of the honor accumulated from St. Crispian’s Day is reflected in Henry’s assertion that history will not forget the names of the people who fought at Agincourt. He says, “Crispin Crispian shall ne’er go by/From this day to the ending of the world/But that we in it shall be remembered” (*HV*, IV. iii. 58-59). This honor in being “remembered” is not reflective of a virtue at all; rather, it is linked to the conception of honor as a representation of vanity, as discussed previously. While fighting in the war might be a risky investment, Henry’s use of rhetoric to market a larger stake of honor indicates his incredibly sophisticated understanding of motivation. Whether he is talking to a commoner or a noble, each man values the same commodity: honor. His understanding of this motivation allows him to portray himself as a fellow man amongst his soldiers similarly after the attainment of honor. While Henry lowers himself to the level of the soldiers and raises them through the prospect of honor, he is ultimately able to gain superiority because he possesses the most honor. Unlike Hotspur, whose intrinsic honor posed a threat, the soldiers prove no threat to his authority. The fact that Henry think about the ordinary man in these terms demonstrates the production of his economy; once birthright, like divine right, has been disregarded, nobility can only be earned through honor. Using language in this manner, Henry gives each man the chance to be equals, motivates his soldiers, and legitimizes his own grounds for authority at

the same time. This rhetoric becomes a tool to testify to his conception of kingship and contributes to the project that authorizes his power.

Looking back at Henry's construction and implementation of this economy, Falstaff's catechism on honor cuts directly against his project:

Can honor set to a leg? no.
 Or an arm? no. Or take away the grief of a wound? No.
 Honor hath no skill in surgery, then? No. What is honor? A word. What is in that word "honor"? What is that "honor"? Air. A trim reckoning. Who hath it? He that died o' Wednesday. (*IHV*, V. i. 131-136)

Falstaff shrewdly separates the concept of honor from its practical use. He finds honor to be useless, as it cannot "set a leg" or "take away the grief of a wound". In addition to having no purpose, honor is an immaterial and intangible concept, as Falstaff likens it to "air," a comparison which harkens back to *The Trueness of Christian Religion* where honor is likened to wind. Furthermore, honor is only possessed by those who are dead, acting as a "scutcheon" to decorate their graves with (*IHV*, V. i. 140). Through this speech, the text implies that honor has no intrinsic value; rather, it is a construct which poses a clear problem for Falstaff in its emptiness. For Hal, however, this seeming problem of valueless honor becomes an advantage. In order to construct an economy out of a commodity he can control, Hal begins with something of no value, allowing him to infuse honor with value determined by himself. Where honor has no substantial or tangible value, Hal is able to create value out of nothing.

Interestingly, this particular formulation of honor connects back to the system we began with: divine right. Regardless of whether Richard actually has divine right, his King Body Politic, or perception of his own divinity, bestows power upon him. Kantorowicz

gestures to the power of the Body politic as a “man-made irreality...that strange construction of a human mind which finally becomes slave to its own fictions (Kantorowicz 5). While Kantorowicz associates this “irreality” with the Body politic, our examination of Richard’s demise indicates that it is the King Body Politic, his own idea of his power, which ultimately corrupts the kingship. This “irreality” does not reflect the power itself, but Richard’s perception of his power, a construction built upon no apparent value. This foundation of power resting upon an immaterial concept relates directly to the construction of Hal’s economy. The value conferred upon honor seemingly comes from a non-value, or an “irreality”. While the external appearance may be different, the internal value of kingship remains the same; the “man-made irreality” we see Hal create reproduces Richard’s construction of his own power. One might ask then, how did Henry V succeed where Richard failed? Honor is both nothing and something; by effectively replacing divine right, Henry not only capitalizes on the same structure which would bestow power upon him, but uses the economic language of the people to do so, building his system of governance on a more solid foundation. In learning from the mistakes of the previous kings, Henry avoids both the corruption of power and being indebted to institutions of economic power beyond his control.

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