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「辯」「証」之中—

論法斯塔夫在《亨利四世(上)(下部)》裡對謠言、驗證與懷疑論的操控

Falstaff's Rejection Justified

—Rumor, Verification and Skepticism in Shakespeare's *1 and 2 Henry IV*



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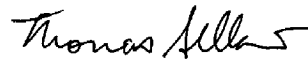
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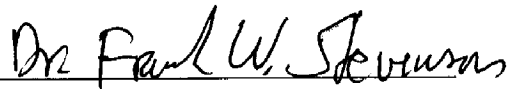
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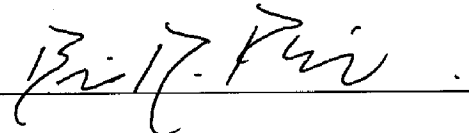
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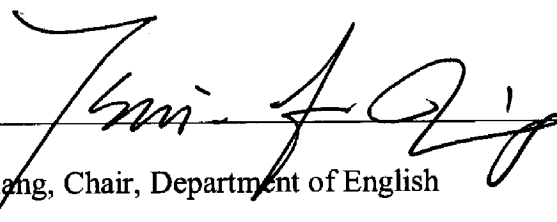
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Initially, this is quite a difficult topic as my aim is both to introduce a new trajectory to understand Falstaff's rejection and to introduce the concepts and methodology Frankfurt's analytic philosophy applies. My argument and topic in this regard have been revised much more than I expected as I discovered critical ideas and approaches between *Henry IV 1* and 2 and skepticism. It therefore takes me many years to develop this thesis presented here.

Like other graduate students, I have constantly confronted anxieties and self-doubt about the utility of this thesis and this subject field. With years of contemplation, I have come to believe that the pursuit of study itself is the reward. Academic research may not manifest its utility now, but the process in which we learn to analyze and solve emergent problems is important. I have enjoyed those times of inquiry.

Here I would like to give thanks to a number of people, who both support and assist me personally and emotionally. Along with other family members, my father has cared for me for all these years. Hoating, a friend in my college days, has always been welcoming to spend her time whenever I am in my downtime. Betty Teng, Jennifer Chang and Anny Wang, the staffs in the Department of English, have been very generous and kind whenever I have problems. Professor Tsui-fen Jiang has helped a lot during the time I am about to drown in the deep ocean of literary references. Professor Thomas Sellari offers interesting references to Frankfurt and Wittgenstein. I am much indebted to them for their kindness.

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國立政治大學英國語文學系碩士班
碩士論文摘要

論文名稱：「辯」「証」之中－論法斯塔夫在《亨利四世(上)(下)部》裡對謠言、驗證與懷疑論的操控。

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論文提要內容：本文旨在探討法斯塔夫如何運用謠言虛實參半的特性，將其中謠言中的不確定性轉化為對驗證方法的質疑。藉由探討文藝復興戲劇如何利用不確定性展現懷疑論者對既定概念的挑戰與啟發，轉向分析法斯塔夫如何利用同樣模式對既定觀念展現反思。另一方面，此種不確定性卻也可能被濫用。如同法斯塔夫嘗試藉由各種驗證方式（如邏輯、證據）支持自利的觀點，此種濫用驗證的傾向最終將導致如同懷疑論般質疑驗證是否必定導向真理的疑問。並以此觀點嘗試解釋為何驅逐法斯塔夫是必要的。

Abstract

Although critics for centuries attempt to offer a unified view to describe Falstaff's nature as benign or vicious, some critics seem to fall short of evaluations to consider Falstaff's motivations when they interpret Falstaff's behavior along with his words. Critics such as Nicolas Rowe (1709) and Samuel Johnson (1787) have evaluated Falstaff's character relevant to specific aspects of his behavior — such as Falstaff's charm, wit or offenses — to justify that Falstaff is more mirthful than immoral. However, those lines of thought would remain contentious if we are not aware of the motivations when Falstaff exhibits dubious actions and beliefs. Even if recent critics appear to relate to Falstaff's motivations to justify their evaluations of Falstaff's character, they oftentimes focus more on Falstaff's individual demeanor than the guiding principles behind.

The failure to perceive the principles that guide Falstaff's behavior is significant because it would affect the way we should plausibly understand Falstaff's nature, his behavior, and eventually his rejection. Since these issues are largely connected, to misconstrue one or more of these issues would render our evaluations problematic. Naturally enough, we should best identify Falstaff's underlying principles before determining whether Falstaff's rejection is justifiable or not.

In this regard, I argue for self-interest to be Falstaff's inherent principle. Because of his expedient frame of mind to misuse verification systematically to justify dubious self-interest, Falstaff is detrimental both to our methodologies to verify and the conception of truth. Moreover, this inherent principle seems to be what Harry Frankfurt (2005) demonstrates to be the origin of skepticism, the distrust that we

could obtain neither the methods nor the capabilities to perceive truth (64). This expedient frame of mind renders Falstaff the agent who fosters skepticism throughout *1* and *2 Henry IV*, and justifies why Falstaff's rejection is legitimate.



Chapter One

Introduction

The controversies about Falstaff's rejection invoke diverse frameworks and discussions about the ways we should plausibly understand Falstaff. Many of these lines of inquiry demonstrate specific examples that appear persuasive to justify each distinct argument. However, Falstaff's rejection remains debatable. Controversy arises when audiences find it difficult, even problematic, to integrate Falstaff's indecent, even extreme, character with his hilarious speeches. One prominent view is that Falstaff embodies all those evil qualities, whether morally or politically, that Falstaff's rejection should be legitimate. In contrast to this moral and political framework, some critics argue that to reject Falstaff is not justifiable, and should be deemed an artistic failure.

This disparity to deem Falstaff's rejection appropriate or not therefore influences how audiences were to understand the rejection scene, and it thus provides the starting point for my argument. My primary concern is that Falstaff is the agent who fosters skepticism throughout *Henry IV 1* and *2*. Because of this expedient frame of mind to misuse verification, Falstaff is detrimental to both our methods to verify and the conception of truth. Despite Falstaff's seemingly truthful and falsified speeches, I shall argue that it would be mistaken to perceive Falstaff to be either truth-telling or misleading if we overlook what Falstaff purports to, namely, his motivation: expediency. By clarifying why most critics would construe Falstaff's nature either as a liar or truth-teller, I shall offer alternative views to how we should perceive Falstaff's nature and his rejection in relation to *Henry IV 1* and *2*, views that justify Falstaff's rejection rather than our sympathy.

1.1 The Guiding Problems

Because most of these controversies seem to stem from the disparity about our understanding of Falstaff's nature, here I shall start with the guiding questions that initiate my subsequent argument:

- a. How we should construe the nature of Falstaff's character.
- b. How we should understand Falstaff's rejection.
- c. How we should resolve the disparity between a charismatic Sir John and the morally detestable Falstaff.

The first question is pivotal because it would affect the ways we anticipate and deliberate on the second and the third problem. Obviously, we can find some of these controversies among the evaluations on Falstaff's nature. For example, H. N. Hudson (1872), John Webster Spargo (1922) and John Dover Wilson (1964) all stress that Falstaff symbolizes evil, offering befitting contexts to justify Falstaff's immorality. However, Bradley (1909) argues that Falstaff remains comical no matter how gruesome his action is "so long as the humorous atmosphere is preserved" (270).

This disparity exemplified by Wilson and Bradley is pertinent to the second problem because our evaluations on the first would dovetail with the second. In other words, evaluating Falstaff's nature as evil or benign implies an explanation of Falstaff's rejection. When critics such as Wilson argue for Falstaff's immorality, this judgment thereby deduces their subsequent lines of inquiries that Falstaff ought to be rejected. On the other hand, when critics such as Rowe, Johnson and Bradley emphasize that Falstaff's sin is venial, this explication seems to offer a sensible basis to argue Falstaff's rejection is unjust since Shakespeare fails to detach our sympathies away from Falstaff (Bradley 272).

Ultimately, these differential assessments are related to the third question about

the contradiction between the charismatic Falstaff and the odious Sir John. I shall argue that to resolve this controversy would require primarily our understanding of Falstaff's motivation before we determine whether the rejection of Falstaff is sensible or not.

1.2 Literature Review

Critics have evoked enormous debates especially on the character, Falstaff, *1* and *2 Henry IV*. Topics and methodologies which critics adopt are approximately of three kinds: (1) the rejection of Falstaff, (2) Falstaff as a deliberative character, or interchangeably, a character to evoke audiences' deliberation, (3) Falstaff as either the symbol, or as examples to reify the symbol, and (4) to differentiate and define Falstaff's true character.

For the rejection of Falstaff, contemporary critics are inclined to argue whether Falstaff's rejection is justifiable or not. When it comes to justify our sympathy for Falstaff's rejection, critics more or less adopt four different approaches. The first approach focuses on Falstaff's distinctive characters and audiences' emotional responses. Nicolas Rowe (1709) argues that Shakespeare's mistake is perhaps to characterize Falstaff's vices (i.e. cowardice and deception) but simultaneously endows Falstaff with so amusing and overwhelming witticism (par. 2). The result of the two conflicting characteristics eventually makes audiences find it difficult to accept Falstaff's rejection (Rowe, par. 2). For example, both Elizabeth Montagu (1769) and Samuel Johnson (1787) have argued that Falstaff is distinctive in his excessive characters for more laughter than harm. For Montagu, Falstaff's witticism is rather more welcoming than what wit oftentimes is, satirical (333). On the other hand, Johnson argues that Falstaff's fault is venial, when Falstaff in fact aims at mirth (164). A. C. Bradley (1909) argues Falstaff remains comical no matter how gruesome his

action is “so long as the humorous atmosphere is preserved” (270), concluding that Shakespeare fails to detach our sympathies away from Falstaff’s rejection (272). William Empson (1963) argues that critics such as Wilson have a bias when they ignore the fact that Hal is equally immoral as Falstaff.

Hence one of the most controversial problem afflicted scholars is Falstaff’s theatrical function within *Henry IV 1* and 2. One obvious consensus among scholars is that Falstaff serves to be the source for comical laughter and relief within the austere *Henriad*. To this point Roy Battenhouse (1975) adopts the second approach: the functions of characters. Differing from the critics above, Battenhouse shifts his focus from Falstaff’s moral characters to Falstaff’s theatrical functions. Battenhouse thereby argues that Falstaff is actually the fool who mocks the hypocrisy of Henry IV and Hal, and Falstaff’s jests, a mirror of the disordered England (41).

Since critics dated back to Montagu and Johnson have posited Falstaff’s position in the foreground of comical laughter, even recent critics such as Loren M. Blinde (2008) develop similar foundations to solve this problem. For example, Blinde argues that Falstaff “adds an immense amount of play and fun to the drama” even if Falstaff is “a historically unnecessary figure” (43).

The third approach focuses on the symbolic representation of Falstaff and Hal to justify the rejection scene. Moody E. Prior (1987) argues that Falstaff is the symbolic prince of comedies while Hal is the prince of politics (68-69). Thus to reject Falstaff manifests how politics rejects liberating impacts in comedies (Prior 69). Similar to Bradley, Jill L. Levenson (2005) and Andy Mousley (2007) tend to take Falstaff’s rejection as undue, and justify audiences’ sympathy for Falstaff. Both Levenson and Mousley demonstrate that Falstaff exemplifies humanity. On the other hand, as Levenson’s emphasis on James C. Bulman’s (2002) criticism entails, Hal exemplifies

the grim and detached, political welfare (pars. 8).

Differing from this dichotomy is the fourth approach, which rejects framework reading because it would limit and hinder audiences from identifying plausible interpretations for Shakespearean dramas, specifically *Henry IV 1* and 2. Thelma N. Greenfield (1994) argues that to place Falstaff within the comic framework is to oversimplify Falstaff into comic laughingstocks (142), and offers counterexamples when Falstaff clearly does not correspond to Aristotle's definition of the comic (150). On the other hand, Fred Tromly (2010) objects the framework to interpret *Henry IV 1* and 2 as a series of prodigal story (pars. 2-4), concluding that Falstaff is a foil of Hal when Hal is in the dilemma to be damned irrespective of whether he obeys or disobeys his father, Henry IV (pars. 33, 42).

Despite their attempts to render Falstaff's rejection implausible, still such critics would remain controversial if we turn to those scholars who vindicate Falstaff's rejection. To justify Falstaff's rejection, the first approach situates *Henry IV 1* and 2 within the framework of biblical and morality plays. The emphasis on framework to elicit proper understanding is perhaps best described by H. N. Hudson (1872), John Webster Spargo (1922), John Dover Wilson (1964) and Harry Berger Jr. (1998). Except for Berger, all stress that Falstaff symbolizes evil, and therefore should be rejected. On this view, Hudson builds his argument involving the contrast that Hal represents virtue, and Falstaff, evil (par. 2). Wilson argues that to reject Falstaff is essential since Falstaff symbolizes the Evil within the moral prodigal framework, and identifies this specific structure to be the crux to understand *Henry IV 1* and 2 properly. In that the prodigal story and its moral significance are embedded in *Henry IV 1 and 2*, audiences oftentimes misunderstand the play while Elizabethan audiences are fully aware of this context (Wilson 20).

Rather than focusing on audiences as the agents who adopt the prodigal framework, Berger provides another alternative outlook onto the characters as the agents utilizing this framework. Hence, he argues that Falstaff is in effect aware of the prodigal framework: of his role as misleader and Hal's, as the prodigal son ("The Prince's Dog," 40-41). In this regard, Falstaff deliberately elicits his own rejection in exchange for Hal's reformation ("The Prince's Dog," 40-41).

Unlike Wilson, who adopts prodigal readings of *Henry IV*, Jane Kingsley-Smith (2003) offers a pastoral reading on Falstaff and Hal to demonstrate that Falstaff's rejection and Hal's libertine image in Eastcheap are exiles in comparison (82). According to Kingsley-Smith, critics mistakenly overemphasize the former's sentimental impacts, ignoring that Hal's transformation is in fact identical to the pattern in pastorals (82). Characters rectify themselves to be victorious after exiles, and Hal likewise becomes a competent governor after his self-indulgence with Falstaff (Kingsley-Smith 82, 94-95). Michael Davies (2005) applies Calvinism to analyze Falstaff's speeches, concluding that to reject Falstaff is part of the Calvinism framework within *Henry IV 1 and 2* (351-354). On the other hand, Mathew Fike (2003) takes *Henry IV 1 and 2* within the framework of Dives and Lazarus, maintaining that Falstaff resembles both the Dives in his evil (279-282) and Lazarus in his redemption (288-289). Marcia Eppich-Harris (2014) also adopts the prodigal framework, but argues instead that Falstaff is the alternative prodigal son who is skeptic toward honor and Machiavellian doctrines (par. 3).

Still framework readings are not exempt from criticism. Edward J. Berry (1977) and David Womersley (1996) are representatives for the second approach. Again, both find framework structures are limited to fragmented pieces, and fail to provide coherent explanations for the entire play. Berry argues traditional critics are either

moralistic or sentimental for Falstaff's rejection that they are wry to justify their own frameworks (201). Far from being true and insightful, Berry argues that these critics are so limited to the rejection scene that they fail to incorporate their arguments to take *Henry IV 1* and 2 in a holistic structure (218). Womersley remarks that both Dover Wilson and C. L. Barber fail to explicate why Shakespeare deliberately takes Oldcastle, the prototype of Falstaff, to manifest the image for Evil and obesity, since Oldcastle is in effect neither fat nor evil (2).

Minoru Fujita (1982), Ricardo J. Quinones (1987), Nicholas Crawford (2002), Bernard J. Dobski (2011), and Jennifer Nellis (2013), however, have taken on the third approach to uphold Falstaff's rejection. Approaches of this kind are liable to delineate the compass where Falstaff violates, be it moral, political, or religious, hence doomed to rejection. Fujita and Quinones argue that Falstaff cannot exempt from rejection when he is more distasteful than mirthful. This is one of the reasons why Fujita argues for Falstaff's rejection. After linking the concept of apparel to the indicator of rectitude, Fujita identifies Falstaff to be morally intolerable to appear in tatters because Falstaff's apparel indicates depravity, if we compare Falstaff's attires with Hal's magnificent gown in the rejection scene (pars. 49-52).

Likewise, Dobski argues that Falstaff ought to be rejected when Falstaff violates social compass, for example, in his catechism upon honor (par. 8). Falstaff's misconduct hence constitutes Hal's political education to differentiate and comprehend natural and judicial orders (Dobski, par. 8). In contrast, Crawford develops the concept on compass in terms of a breakdown between reality and dreams (pars. 24-26). Hal has always been on the verge between reality and dreaming until he rejects Falstaff, a symbol of the immobile (Crawford, par. 27). More importantly, to reject Falstaff implies Hal's rejection of the dreamy world so as to wake himself up to

his “kingly reality” (Crawford, par. 26). Nellis unpacks nationalism to argue Falstaff’s rejection is plausible when he violates the very political limit to mislead the prince (1).

No doubt Falstaff’s rejection offers the thematic positions to probe Falstaff’s nature. Nonetheless, another approach to analyze Falstaff’s character deems Falstaff not as an object for our evaluation but as the agent who either offers insightful critiques or is the object to elicit audiences’ insights. Sherman Hawkins (1975), Marc Grossman (1995), Mark Taylor (2002), Ellen M. Caldwell (2007), Grace Tiffany (2008), Herbert Weil (2008), Robert H. Bell (2011) and Joshua Avery (2013) all adopt the first approach. Generally critics take Falstaff to be a skeptic who questions anything, and apply this line of thought from comprehensive concepts such as honor, justice, and loyalty (Grossman, pars. 44-45, 48) to concepts far more distinct. For example, Taylor argues that Falstaff questions the legitimacy of Henry IV (par. 73) during the analysis of “proleptic imitations”. On this view, Falstaff becomes the philosopher who parallels Montaigne to search for truth in *Henry IV 1* and 2 (Weil, pars. 1-4), a “foolosopher king” who challenges whatever seems to be lofty and high in his catechism on honor and mockery on the sovereign (Bell 35).

For more specific views, views that associate Falstaff with the attempt to expose hypocrisy, Hawkins argues that Falstaff exposes the hypocrisy of justice (pars. 27-28) with his “perverted likenesses of wisdom” (par. 27). On the other hand, Caldwell argues that Falstaff exposes Hal’s “bravado, deceit, and false image-making” (219). Another specific subject is the religious critique pertinent to Catholic and Protestant doctrines (i.e. Caldwell). Critics such as Avery typically yield insights that Falstaff symbolizes our distress when finding Catholic and Protestant beliefs uncertain (79). In response to Caldwell’s critique, the critique that takes “Falstaff’s attempts to present

Hal as both king and human” to be “the Protestants’ rejection of the transubstantiated for the consubstantiated Eucharist” (“Falstaff’s Iconoclasm” 31), according to Tiffany, is far more implausible than what Caldwell initially aims at, namely, that Shakespeare tends to imply the monarch is equally human (“Falstaff’s Iconoclasm,” 31).

Mary Flavia Kruegel (1962), Grace Tiffany (2011), Joan Pong Linton (2011) and Paul Dean (2012) adopt the second approach to turn Falstaff from what seems to be a deliberative character into a character to be deliberated. On honor, Kruegel argues that Falstaff is the symbolic irony against honor when he feigns himself to have killed Hotspur (210-211) while Tiffany argues that Falstaff’s speeches suggest guns become the threat to corrode the tradition of honor when fighting on equal terms becomes impossible (“Rank,” pars. 1-2). On whether unbiased and truthful historical accounts are possible, Linton notes the death of Falstaff questions whether historical accounts are sufficient enough to be truth without records (par. 3). Dean argues that Shakespeare and his theatrical characters are manipulating historical truths for their own purposes (pars. 4, 8-9).

To pursue this line of inquiry, critics turn to what Falstaff symbolizes, or at least how Falstaff serves as the instance of a symbol. Hugh Grady (2001) adopts the first type. Grady argues that while Falstaff symbolizes Hal’s alternative subjectivity, Falstaff is in fact incompatible with Hal’s legal self (612). On the other hand, Frank Manley (1972) and David Ellis (2007) adopt the second type. Manley argues that Falstaff’s rejection exemplifies the symbolic betrayals permeating in *Henry IV 1* and 2 (par. 4). Ellis argues how practical jokes on Falstaff can integrate Hal’s two incompatible images, the libertine and Henry V.

While it might be controversial to identify a robust feature upon Falstaff’s real character, Maurice Morgann (1777), Richard Stack (1788) and Arthur Colby Sprague

(1953) undertake this inquiry. Despite their mutual affection for Falstaff, Morgann and Stack are at odds to what constitutes Falstaff's true character. For example, Morgann differentiates audiences' understanding from emotions and feelings derived from our first impression upon characters (par. 4). Hence, Morgann argues that our understanding to render Falstaff a coward would reduce Falstaff into a simplified stock character, and ignore the fact that Falstaff is actually courageous (par. 6).

Disagreeing with Morgann, Stack argues instead that we need not exclude cowardice from Falstaff's true character so as to rationalize our affection despite of Falstaff's flaws (pars. 3-4). Likewise, Sprague finds to deny Falstaff's cowardice is implausible, when cowardice is the necessary element to make Falstaff's witticism efficient as a comic character (135).

1.3 Theoretical Framework

Much critical analysis concerning Falstaff, be it thematic, functional, symbolic, or of his essential feature, has accumulated up to this point. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the research about the argument that Falstaff carries a conceptual distinction among truth, nonsense, lies and falsehood, does not earn much attention. Here my project is to examine how Falstaff's speeches, especially during those moments when Falstaff seems to utter gibberish and audacious excuses, do demarcate the differences between nonsense and lies, and more importantly, between truth and falsehood.

Despite rumor seems to be enigmatic, at a minimum we might perceive this concept from what Kai Wiegandt (2012) identifies: uncertainty seems to be the inherent quality of rumor (*Crowd and Rumour* 4-5). Though Wiegandt's idea is important to my subsequent analysis on the relationship between rumor and Falstaff, I shall underline the nature of rumor to remain unverified, and its perpetual state that

represents both truth, if verified to be real, and falsity, if proven to be false, to be detrimental to truth itself. By remaining indeterminate, rumor is capable to counterfeit what seems to be truth, but simultaneously undermines the credit of what we regard as truth, or more specifically, the proofs for truth.

Indeed, this is precisely what Peto, in *1 Henry IV*, describes: Falstaff claims to have fought valiantly on the basis of his proof, a cracked dagger, which is undoubtedly another piece of evidence Falstaff fabricates. Were Peto never confronted his audiences to tell the truth, what Falstaff fabricates would certainly remain to be either rumor or a tall tale without verification, in a manner akin to how Falstaff depicts the robbery in Gadshill.

When Peto remarks Falstaff “would swear truth out of England” (*IH4*. 2.4.306), it is significant that G. Blakemore Evans (1997) annotated Peto’s words to mean “vanquish truth by the force of his lies” (903). By counterfeiting and passing on itself as truth, rumor could exploit its indeterminate state to misrepresent truth that what used to be taken to be truth, whether it is of proofs or of logic, could be mistaken to be false. Subsequently, rumor hence renders us the disorder to mistake truth for falsehood, or the otherwise. For critics who have taken Falstaff to be a truth-teller and philosopher, e.g. Robert H. Bell (2011), I shall differentiate from Bell, and add his notion fuller details to evaluate those critical moments in *Henry IV 1* and *2* with the framework of rumor.

Since the image and the character of Rumor dominate both *Henry IV 1* and *2*, we should first turn our due attention to the etymology and literary prototypes of rumor pertaining to literature, then how rumor develops in Shakespearean plays, and finally, to examine rumor in *Henry IV 1* and *2*.

Both Philip Hardie (2012) and Wiegandt (2012) have addressed literary

prototypes for rumor, from Virgil's tongue images to Ovid's personified figure. Moreover, Hardie links this concept of rumor to its Latin origin, *fama*, and analyzes this concept from ancient Greek Stoics, Christian traditions, to classics such as Cicero to support his interrelated cluster of binary ideas derived from *fama* for both (1) fame and infamy, (2) honor and shame, and (3) glory and pride/vanity (22-23). Because of rumor's embedded meanings and complexities, it seems difficult to attain a concise, single definition to incorporate its effects and phenomenon. Still, as a starting point, we might first examine this concept down to the basis. According to *OED*, rumor has its earliest meaning out of Latin to be "noise, clamour" ("rumour"). From thence rumor derives its meaning as "noise, din" from marching armies in Anglo-Norman and Middle French, together with "clamour, outcry" in the early fifteenth century, respectively.

This is precisely what rumor might firstly attract critics to its acoustic influences. While arguing that Rumor applies Falstaff's rhetoric to make the world full of false reports (Berger, "Sneak's Noise," 66), Harry Berger, Jr. (1984) emphasizes that what Rumor delineates itself to be "a pipe/Blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures" (2*H4*. Ind.15-16) in 2 *Henry IV* implicates that either rumor is, explicitly, the agent which perplexes the world with false reports, or implicitly, that all these hypothesis and speculations are partly from the listeners of the false reports, rather than speakers (Berger, "Sneak's Noise," 67).

Kai Wiegandt (2007) observes that rumor in the Renaissance carries its Latin etymology proclaiming "noise" and "tumult" ("Rumour is a pipe," pars. 9) as *OED* annotates, wherein he links this auditory quality to both its potential causes and effects: "Rumour appears as sound because it plays on the pipe of fear and desire . . . tempting ears to neglect inspection of meaning and often dimply suppressing it"

“Rumour is a pipe,” pars. 9). Invoking King’s references to melody, Wiegandt thereby specifies the type of sound rumor excels at to manipulate crowd: music (“Rumour is a pipe,” pars. 10) in *Henry IV 1* and 2.

Focusing on Rumour’s acoustic influences, we might find this acoustic undertone almost pervasive. Given that Wiegandt has explicated how the etymology embedded in rumor would imply the sounds of wars, it is not surprising that Rumour becomes the origin not only of such noises, but also a series of riots and rebellions we see in Gaultree forest (Knowles 133). Derived from its Latin etymology “uprising, tumult” in the fourteenth century (“rumour”) as *OED* implicates, this derivative shall offer another ground for examining the personified Rumour in *1 Henry IV*.

Indeed, although it could be controversial as to how characters such as Falstaff embody and manipulate qualities of Rumour throughout the *Henriad*, most critics would agree that the sounds Rumour entails seem to be pertinent to those riots in *2 Henry IV*. For example, Loren M. Blinde (2008) analyzes Rumor in *2 Henry IV* in the view of a pipe which “merely facilitates playing, producing both music and discord” (Blinde 41). Since Rumor has an antique history in the emblematic *Fama*, a character which Knowles depicts as “covered with eyes, ears, and tongues and as blowing a trumpet, the herald of Mars’ chariot of war, running before his horses, Terror and Fear, and his attendants, Impetuosity, Fury, and Violence” (133) during Renaissance, these images and allusions surely have significant implications for the type of unquiet, from the noises in wars, to the kind of unquiet referred to as national rebellions found in *2 Henry IV* (133). Substantial connotations derived from uprising and tumult are therefore indicative of an exclusive cluster of ideas particularly associated with sounds in *2 Henry IV*, when word choices such as “quiet and unquiet, noise, clamor, riot, and deaf (-ening, -ness)” were motivated by this exclusive etymology in the topic

of Rumor (Knowles 133).

What these etymologies imply is perhaps important for our understanding to the exact origin in which rumor derived from, especially when the kind of tumults rumor implies also elicits directly the uprising we know in wars: rebellion (Knowles 134-135). Like prior allusions, here Rumor already offers copious links that might suggest both its causes and effects in the Induction. According to Knowles, words such as enmity (*2H4*. Ind.9), surmises and conjectures (*2H4*. Ind.16) would entail the origin of Rumor while images such as wounds (*2H4*. Ind.10) or “smooth comforts false” (*2H4*. Ind.40) would indicate the effects of Rumor (Knowles 135).

Applying this idea to Rumor’s rhetorical question, “Why is Rumor here?” (*2H4*. Ind.22), Knowles might offers the answer that at once links various seemingly irrelevant scenes to the developing motif, like Wiegandt, of Rumor’s acoustic influences. According to Knowles, the tumult and unquiet voices Rumor implies are the focus underlying both the main and comical subplots (135). If Rumor’s turbulent noises explain the disorder and rebellions displayed among crowds, we shall notice that the outset of *2 Henry II* would be clearly pertinent to Rumor when what Northumberland receives in Act I is actually a series of tongues playing the pipe, namely Rumor, to dispatch false, silent, or true messages (Knowles 135).

On the other hand, Wiegandt links Rumor in the Induction to the traditional prototypes of *Fama*, a character oftentimes depicted to be full of tongues (“Rumour is a pipe,” pars. 11-12). He thereby attributes this personified figure to Falstaff, whose self-depiction, when Falstaff claims to have “a whole school of tongues” (*2H4*. 4.3.18), is precisely identical with this tongue image (“Rumour is a pipe,” pars. 11). According to Wiegandt, this image for a character full of tongues, and for its “uprising” potential, is symbolic of the disorder between merited honor and unmerited fame

“Rumour is a pipe,” pars.13). More specifically, it symbolizes the telling differences between Hal and Falstaff when Falstaff claims to have slain Hotspur so as to steal the honor which should be justly for Hal (“Rumour is a pipe,” pars.13). Meredith Evans (2009), on the other hand, argues that Rumor is subversive in nature to underline the fact that the political body and legitimacy Henry IV claims is artificial and manipulative *per se* (pars. 3-5, 16).

In the pertinent research of rumor, Philip Hardie (2012) has identified specific features of rumor that might be best attributed to the Latin word *fama* (Hardie 1). To understand rumor, his studies are quite indicative when *OED* offers yet another explication for critics to contend about: from the negative connotations for “unfavorable report, ill repute,” to what is strikingly positive to be “favorable report, esteem” (“rumour”). As Wiegandt has explained above, this origin corresponds with Hardie’s explanation on *fama*’s binary nature. When speaking *fama* for “report,” Hardie distinguishes its derivative *facta* that stands for “deeds” from another derivative, *fabula*, that refers to “fictional tale” (Hardie 4). The former would entail truthful remarks while the latter, as Hardie describes, “the cloudy distortion of the truth” (Hardie 4). *Fama* is thus the indicator for rumor whereby truth and falsehood discriminate from one another.

Whence emerges a wealth of discussions, lastly, concerning rumor in Shakespearean plays, *Henry IV 1* and *2*, in particular. Harold Toliver (1983) believes that rumor, in *Henry IV 1* and *2*, is linked not only to truth manipulated by Falstaff and Hotspur (par. 6), but also, and more importantly, by Shakespeare, when Shakespeare distorts historical facts to embellish his works (par. 44). Arguing Rumor symbolizes Henry IV’s awareness on his illegitimacy, and must subside when Hal reforms his former self (467-495), Richard Abrams (1986) notices that Falstaff

represents Rumor particularly when he manifests his intellectual ability to misconstrue “the true cause the false way” (2H4. 2.1.110-112) (par. 12). According to Abrams, Falstaff’s capacity for producing falsified images detrimental to Henry IV and Hal mirrors the fact that both Henry IV and Hal are not eligible to be the sovereign (par. 12).

Propelled by issues such as rumor, history, and historical truth, Loren M. Blinde (2008) offers some of the lucid details for rumor when she argues that Shakespeare attempts to manipulate and underline the fact that histories, along with historical truths, are not exempt from imagination (35-36). Although historical facts seem to be objective and intact, Blinde argues that Shakespeare adopts Rumour to signal the fact that imagination is the crux to a well-organized history, or historical reflection, “to unfold the events so that they come together as stories” (38). On this historical level, the personified Rumour is susceptible of the abilities “as storyteller as well as meaning-maker,” through its constituent feature for uncertainty (Blinde 38). Believing that Rumor plays an essential role to be the carrier for both true and false information (Hardie 490-491), and thereby capable of subjecting truth and falsehood to be promiscuous in *Henriad* (Hardie 502), Philip Hardie (2012) argues that Falstaff embodies Rumor when he exploits this promiscuous quality on the concept of fame, upon Coleville, to be, equivocally, famous and infamous (506-507).

1.4 Originality

Because rumor embodies these murky features and because so much research has more or less links these qualities to Falstaff, another important step is to examine rumor’s distinctive feature for uncertainty. In that rumor, its feature of uncertainty, and whence this feature originates and associates with Renaissance dramas, I shall turn to William M. Hamlin (2005) and Kai Wiegandt (2012).

Hamlin focuses on how uncertainty, and more significantly, skepticism, is appropriated within Renaissance and Jacobean dramas. For example, Hamlin argues that uncertainty seems to offer the space and access to open discussions that are both liberal and deliberative. Yet skeptical withdrawal as such not only fosters tentative and liberating views, but also to misguided and misconstrued viewpoints, when this flexibility skeptics offer is subject to abuses. Perhaps the most noteworthy examples of this flexibility being abused are when Falstaff appropriates this quality to justify whatever is expedient for himself. Where conceptual reversals are present, Falstaff is likely to abuse whatever seems to be logical for his advantage. To justify his cowardice, honor, far from being priceless, is nothing but “a trim reckoning” (*IH4*. 5.1.135), and counterfeit, for life (*IH4*. 5.4.105-127).

It is this indifferent attitude to care neither truth nor honesty that fosters skepticism permeating through *1* and *2 Henry IV*. Underneath his abuses of logic and evidence, what Falstaff implies is skeptical doubt. Falstaff’s misuse of logic and evidence implies the distrust on our method for validation. Neither logic nor proofs would be the trustworthy enough to attain truth. What characterizes this distrust is that it essentially raises a skeptical point on our methodology to attain truth. Falstaff, who abuses any potential methodologies to verify truth to justify whatever is advantageous for himself, I shall argue, is thus the agent to be detrimental not only to the link between verification and truth, but also, and most importantly, truth itself.

Eventually, my intent to draw their analysis is to underline how Falstaff employs this feature, uncertainty, for his expedient purposes. This shall echo and raise a series of skeptical doubts throughout *Henry IV 1 and 2*. As Northumberland is skeptical about whether hearing is credible for proof, it is equally disputable whether Mortimer is the traitor. It is obvious to observe what the king and Hotspur are at odds with.

Hotspur emphasizes the ocular proof, to “prove that true/Needs no more but one tongue for all those wounds” (*IH4*. 1.3.95-96) while the king remains doubtful upon the evidence Hotspur raises. Henry IV eventually accuses Hotspur of “belying,” a word that Evans annotates to mean “not tell the truth about” (894).

If Falstaff is the origin of skepticism in *Henry IV 1* and 2, his rejection should be justifiable if we were to restore our understanding and trusts upon verification. During this analysis for Falstaff’s character, I shall draw my argument from Harry G.

Frankfurt’s (2005) work *On Bullshit*, of whose work his topic on bullshit (or we could otherwise term it nonsense) is pertinent to my conceptual analysis on truth, falsehood and nonsense, respectively. Beyond these, I shall also refer to Peter Klein’s (2015) explanation about skepticism and its development, to be the preliminary basis for my argument.

1.5 Chapter Design

The primary purpose for my thesis is to explicate Falstaff as the agent who induces skepticism upon our ability to verify, even procure, truth itself. Hence this focus and the background research would constitute most part of the introduction in the first chapter. Although rumor manifests these obscure and enigmatic features, it seems to be easier to tackle its quality by starting with what seems to be the most distinctive feature, uncertainty, to develop the preliminary analysis for rumor. Since both rumor and Frankfurt’s bullshitters share this quality of uncertainty, it is therefore crucial to examine this feature, and to access uncertainty within the context of dramas. On this point I shall turn to what Hamlin has well demonstrated the ways how dramatists appropriate uncertainty both of its topics and tactics. This assessment should direct us to the issues pertaining not only to the use, but also to the misuse, of uncertainty. In particular, I shall concentrate on the analysis of how Falstaff shares

this quality with rumor, and his efforts to manipulate this quality, within *1* and *2 Henry IV*, in the framework of my second chapter.

After assessing Falstaff's nature within the framework of rumor, I shall underline how Falstaff applies uncertainty to practice the type of skeptic deliberation. In the third chapter I shall first focus on how our methods for verification could become fallible with examples from *Othello*. This insecurity shall be the starting point to characterize that Falstaff as well deploys this quality for skeptical reasoning.

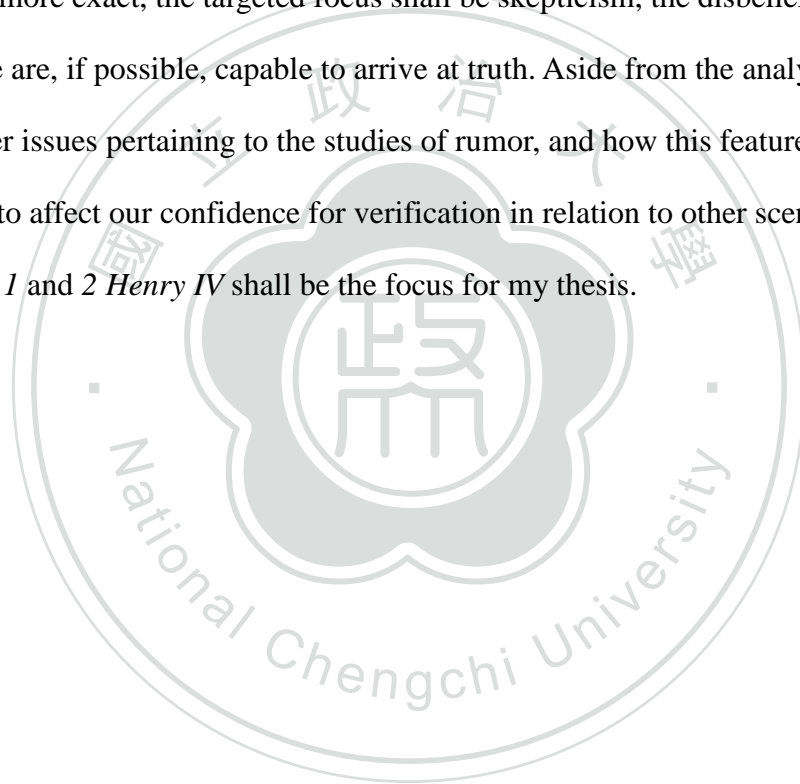
Whereas uncertainty may lead us to skeptic reasoning, it still seems obscure how this skeptic mindset would contribute to our reasoning in actual examples. In regard to actual examples in practice, I shall focus on the common presumption that honor seems to be immortal in *1* and *2 Henry IV*. I shall demonstrate that Falstaff in his sense is almost Hamlin's skeptic who offers alternative viewpoints by challenging dogmatic concepts in the fourth chapter.

While uncertainty seems liberating, it could become dubious when our motivation to operate this feature is biased. On this view it would be important to highlight Falstaff's expedient attitude in terms of Frankfurt's distinction among liars, truth-tellers, and most importantly, bullshitters. This time it is important to elicit Frankfurt's analysis during this part of research, because his observation presents us the relevant concerns to understand Falstaff's motivation, and of which character, truth-tellers, liars or bullshitters, shall we define him to be. Optimistically, I shall integrate what Falstaff is liable to and what Frankfurt characterizes bullshitters of to argue Falstaff, who devotes much his efforts to promote whatever is expedient and advantageous for himself, is the very embodiment of Frankfurt's bullshitters within the fifth chapter.

As Frankfurt emphasizes this expedient attitude bullshitters uphold entails

skepticism toward both our capacity and the concept for objective inquiry, this is an pivotal implication, if we were to apply this analysis to understand Falstaff's nature. Guided by what Frankfurt entails, I shall then turn to issues pertaining to how Falstaff abuses specific methodologies for verification, including acoustic proofs, such as hearsay and rumor, ocular proofs, and more importantly, logic. In each case I shall present examples that are central to confirm how Falstaff abuses verification actually affects, even challenges, our confidence for the link between verification and truth.

To be more exact, the targeted focus shall be skepticism, the disbelief to question whether we are, if possible, capable to arrive at truth. Aside from the analysis of rumor, other issues pertaining to the studies of rumor, and how this feature is positioned to affect our confidence for verification in relation to other scenes throughout *1 and 2 Henry IV* shall be the focus for my thesis.



Chapter Two

Rumor, its Salient Features and Falstaff

Various critics undertake the project to analyze, explain and even theorize rumor for our understanding. It seems that systemizing the mysterious qualities of rumor, even if rumor is elusive and difficult to describe, would be significant if we attempt to analyze systematically how phenomenal rumor affect the personified Rumor. Some among these researchers, including those of sociology and psychology, attempts to anatomize rumor into distinct elements and frameworks. More importantly, this subject becomes influential from the scientific domain into literary studies, especially works directly associated with rumor and its portrayal, such as the personified Rumour in *2 Henry IV*, for example.

Although a brief glance at this personified character, Rumour, seems sufficient to embark our initial inquiries for rumor, its salient features and, hopefully, how this particular phenomenon affects and concerns our understanding for Falstaff, it is not clear how we should understand, or even distinguish, the phenomenal rumor, which is oftentimes the focus for scientists and psychologists, from the emblematic Rumour, which shares a literary tradition and prototypes dated back to classics such as Ovid and Virgil. Even if it seems that rumor and Rumour conceptually resemble one another, particularly in their seemingly mutual circulating and acoustic features, it is important to examine each in regard of those qualities Rumour adopts and derived from rumor, before we turn to the historical background Rumor inherits from literary traditions.

More significantly, we should distinguish rumor and Rumour before we embark on what exactly Falstaff manipulates when we identify that Falstaff embodies the personified Rumor. Here I would like to underline the difference between Rumor in

capitals and rumor in small letters. The former represents the personified Rumor in emblematic traditions while the latter refers to the social or natural phenomenon analogous to gossip. One major reason for this inquiry is that viewing Falstaff as the personified Rumour in *2 Henry IV* is so dominant among critics that they oftentimes confine discussions within the literary images upon Rumour, and how those images are projected unto Falstaff. Confining discussions within the emblematic traditions, we would ignore the fact that Falstaff also appropriates features derived from rumor, and hence invokes series of questions upon doubts and skepticism in *Henry IV 1* and *2*. It is better to embark on an analysis with the phenomenal rumor first as the starting point from which we could probe into Falstaff's character.

A distinctive quality of rumor is its obscure nature. Derived from its Latin origin denoting "gossip, report," rumor develops its most familiar definition in the thirteenth century: "general talk or hearsay not based on definite knowledge" ("rumour"). Not until the early fifteenth century, according to *Oxford English Dictionary*, does rumor finally have a meaning characterizing, akin to currency, its circulating nature: "unverified or unconfirmed statement or report circulating in a community" ("rumour"). Accordingly, *OED* provides us with initial steps to reduce what constitutes rumor to the following: (1) of its circulating quality within a shared group, and (2) of its "unverified" and "unconfirmed" status ("rumour"). On this view, Wiegandt has well explicated the first feature when he differentiates slander from rumor in Shakespearean plays. The phenomenal rumor must be both (1) psychologically believable, and (2) circulates within a community on the basis of its societally shared emotions (*Crowd and Rumour* 5).

To place this quality within *Henry IV 1* and *2*, we might observe that rumor dovetails with this etymology. Although critics tend to identify rumor primarily from

the personified Rumor in *2 Henry IV* because of the conspicuous characterization of rumor, rumor emerges at the outset of *1 Henry IV*. For example, Westmerland delivers his report that Mortimer is taken captive allegedly upon “A post from Wales loaden with heavy news” (*IH4*. 1.1.37). We might recall from the etymology above that rumor is a type of hearsay “not based on definite knowledge.” We may acknowledge that Westmerland’s news is a form of general hearsay. First, Westmerland obtains this news in the form of hearing as the messenger delivers this information. This method would recall the concept that rumor is inherently acoustic. Moreover, to transmit information from the messenger to Westmerland also implies the circulating quality of rumor.

Second, Westmerland’s information would be hearsay if we could neither verify the authenticity of the information nor the credibility of the source. Westmerland’s source of information would remain doubtful if we recall parallel scenes in *2 Henry IV*. When Lord Bardolph delivers the false news about Hotspur’s victory, we might notice the source from which Bardolph believes to be credible is in fact false. While Morton justifies his credibility on the basis of visual evidence as he himself is the witness who just “ran from Shrewsbury” (*2H4*. 1.1.64), Bardolph justifies the credibility of his source, a gentleman, on the basis of good reputation. On this view, Bardolph accepts “these news for true” (*2H4*. 1.1.27) simply because such information is from a man “well bred and of good name” (*2H4*. 1.1.26).

If Westmerland receives the information in the form of hearing, the credibility of the source is once again the problem. The example of Bardolph’s false news only demonstrates that Westmerland’s news cannot escape this doubt. One might object to this view by invoking the example of Travers, who ends up with genuine news about Hotspur’s death through the similar way of hearing. We should be aware that these

outcomes are largely the result of verification. Without Morton's visual evidence for comparison, Bardolph and Travers would not have the chance to verify their news other than dubious hearsay. Only after we could verify Bardolph and Travers's news in comparison with Morton's visual evidence can we determine the truth and falsity of the disputed news. This unverified nature of Bardolph and Travers's news only stresses how general hearsay as such is caught between being true and false before verification.

Indeed, we might notice that the "unwelcomed news" (*IH4*. 1.1.50) about Hotspur and Archibald's battle against Scots is similarly in the form of hearing. Subsequent lines highlights the rumorous nature of this news to be "shape of likelihood" (*IH4*. 1.1.58), while its presumable outcome, "Uncertain" (*IH4*. 1.1.61). Here the focus on information "not based on definite knowledge" suffices to exemplify this point, especially if we consider the formation of rumor.

This uncertain quality implies the second feature of rumor: the unverified nature. Without the type of explicit character we have in *2 Henry IV*, here rumor starts to tilt toward the very idea of hearsay circulating from unverified sources. More to the point, the initial scene in *1 Henry IV* has offered hints about rumor far more earlier than the self-depiction of Rumor in the Induction as "a pipe/Blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures" (*2H4*. Ind.15-16). The precise nature of surmises and conjectures shall remind us of the state of Westmerland's news, the "shape of likelihood," is likewise of "likely conjecture" (Kastan 145). This unassured quality should suggest that all of the news is in the form of rumor in the state of uncertainty.

If rumor as a social phenomenon tends to manifest this unverified feature, and if Rumor largely inherits its features out of this distinct social phenomenon, Rumor inevitably encapsulates concepts associated with this unverified quality. In this regard

we should be able to clarify some of the possible misunderstandings about Rumor. One problem is that Blinde is prone to be conceptually misleading when she develops the view that Rumor would be willing to disclose truth once he is aware of the cause of the disorder (47). It is certainly mistaken to say that Rumor is unable to convey truth is because “he may not know the nature of the ‘other grief’” (Blinde 47), since Rumour demonstrates its attempt well enough in Induction for the sake of “Stuffing the ears of men with false reports” (2H4. Ind.8). The primary purpose of “Why is Rumor here?” (2H4. Ind.22) is to spread and replace truth with all those “smooth comforts false” (2H4. Ind.40) embedded in its unverified news.

Although it is possible that Rumor or rumor would sometimes convey truth after we verify its content, we might better think that Rumor/rumor could convey truth not because “he knew the reason” of the dubious matter at hand (Blinde 47) but because Rumor/rumor itself consists of potentially both truthful and falsified information before we examine it. We might object to Blinde’s version of Rumor willing to tell truthfully “in a confessional mood” (47) with counterexamples that Rumor could tell what he thought is the true cause of the matter but is in fact false. In other words, we might envisage a situation that Rumor could offer a justified reason he does believe to be true, but is in effect false. The only reason Rumor seems to be willing to convey truth is not whether he know the cause or not, but because the cause of the matter is part of the content undergone our examination. Once we verify the alleged justified cause to be true, the supposed dubious content of Rumor/rumor now no longer appears to be dubious, but real. Hence Rumor/rumor ceases to be caught in a pending status between both possibly true and false after we assure its authenticity.

Another problem is that Blinde seems to promote a paradoxical view about Rumor: when Rumor in 2 *Henry IV* generates unsubstantiated news of which “there is

no ‘matter’ to support such an assertion,” Blinde argues Rumor thereby impairs its own credentials as the source for unverified news (47). In this regard Rumour is incapable of controlling his own production of “the wrong-headed common reports” (Blinde 47). This inability seems to be what Blinde identifies as Rumor’s failure because Rumor in fact could neither tell nor know the genuine cause behind those unverified news, contrary to its assertion to be eligible for such a task (47).

The argument seems alluring when Blinde infers from Rumor’s paradoxical manner to render Rumor more of a passive role to produce seemingly plausible scenarios than an omniscient role to perceive actual causes of events and to manipulate common opinions at its will. This line of reasoning is unfortunately somewhat mistaken. First, it is implausible to argue that Rumor shall be able to perceive the actual causes and would disclose truth if it is aware of it. We shall not overlook the fact that Rumor in fact acts upon qualities derived from phenomenal rumor with which to reveal truth is more of the result of verification than the choice of Rumor at its will. Although Rumor appears autonomous in this personified character with its own consciousness and will throughout *2 Henry IV*, to perceive Rumor as if it could choose to reveal the truth or not would be misleading. Because rumor itself constitutes both potentially true and false information before we verify its content, to disclose truth is more of a possible propensity than a necessary outcome only if the content turns out to be true but not otherwise. In other words, to reveal truth or not is dependent upon the rumorous content in question happens to be truth. Were the unverified content happen to be lies after our verification, Blinde’s version of Rumor with its will to tell the truth would no longer be applicable. It is the actual status of rumored information in question that is decisive for whether a specific piece does convey truth or not, not the will or choice of the personified Rumor.

Second, it is Rumor itself that should be the agent embodying the kind of “wrong-headed common report” Blinde characterizes (47), not that the common opinion is the agent independent of Rumor as if the opinion in question is yet another separate entity that Rumor must compete with. Blinde argues that “Rumor describes the big belly of the world, but the narrative that others attach to the world’s swollenness is not the appropriate one” (47). Blinde in fact treats all those dubious reports as if they are independent objects for Rumor to control. Indeed, Blinde adopts the analogy that the world is the “bodily text” with which Rumor plays more or less the role of a surgeon. To encapsulate this concept, Blinde acknowledges that we might best construe Rumor’s possible scenarios to explain events of the world as “an anatomy of a bodily text, in this case the world’s belly” (47). This analogy matters because it implies how Blinde would perceive Rumor to be separate from those reports instead of an integral part of those common opinions.

However, we might object to her view if we examine the passage from which Blinde derives her argument. Although Blinde is correct to identify Rumour’s tongue image with Falstaff’s belly to show that both share a similar feature of flexibilities so as to generate any seemingly plausible narratives (45-46), she ignores the mechanism from which Rumor makes its “fearful musters” (2H4. Ind.12). While Blinde argues that it is others that generate the falsified rationales to explain the causes of events (47), we might better revise her view by replacing others with Rumor as the subject who enhances those falsified opinions.

Rumor has indicated the way in which it “wounds the world” by substituting peace with enmity (2H4. Ind.9-10). Both Giorgio Melchiori (2012) and Hardie have somewhat reinforced this concept of how Rumor evokes fear. The former explains that Rumor seems to make true and false reports indistinguishable from one another

(81) while the latter argues that gossip of this kind is on behalf of “the nameless multitude who endlessly circulate words” (Hardie 8). In this case it is neither others nor the common crowds that attempt to elicit verisimilar explanation for how the world is filled with grief, but rather Rumor itself is the multitudes and falsified report. Given the fact that Rumor oftentimes appears in multitudes of tongues (Hardie 505), the idea from whence false opinions originate shall thus be clear: Rumor causes the kind of fear that in fact embodies “no such matter” (2H4. Ind.15) in its emblematic cloak full of tongues.

Wiegandt’s above distinction on rumor as psychologically believable shall raise the third pertinent feature of rumor, believability. Like Wiegandt, Blinde emphasizes the circulating nature of rumor that we might best understand Rumour to be “a sort of egalitarian instrument for which everyone has an aptitude” (41). Although Blinde is in accord with Wiegandt in virtue of the principle rumor acts upon to disseminate itself, Blinde offers insight far beyond this principle. When Blinde differentiate rumor from history, she argues that rumor aims not at truth but believability so that “rumor is tantalizing . . . if it hints at something that could be true, at some kind of secret knowledge” (43).

What Blinde attempts to exemplify is perhaps to display how history is analogous to rumor in their shared feature for believability to construct, if not truthful, at least believable or reasonable scenarios (43-44). Such focus brings back similar inclinations between the unverified and uncertain status rumor demonstrates. What Blinde would imply about rumor when deeming it alluring is perhaps its uncertainty. Rumor becomes alluring not simply because it signifies “secret knowledge” but because what it implies “could be true.” This potential rumor possesses is the origin for the liberty or flexibility to construct whatever seems to be plausible, no matter

whether it is truthful or not. Indeed, the induction of Rumor shows that it transmits information that originates out of “surmises” and “conjectures” (2H4. Ind.16).

Apart from specifying its truth or falsity, rumor gives us conjectures that are more prone to be probable than real. Indeed, rumor has well manifested its believability when *1 Henry IV* in effect opens with believable, unverified conjectures. Rather than verified facts, Westmerland excuses Hotspur’s disobedience out of his conjectures that it must be “his uncle’s teaching; this is Worcester/Malevolent to you in all aspects” (1H4. 1.1.96-97).

Believability also emerges when the king offers seemingly believable scenarios, albeit wishfully, that “it could be prov’d/That some night-tripping fairy had exchang’d . . . our children” (1H4. 1.1.86-88) to explain his son’s depravity. It seems to be paradoxical to argue it could be “prov’d” when in fact what validates the King’s statement is not actual evidence except his own scenario. It also raises the problem on whether such conjecture is valid even if it seems to be probable. Given the quality of believability, rumor once again offers two seemingly compelling scenarios about Mortimer.

For example, consider the methods from which Hotspur and the king prove their statement, or conjecture, to be true. On one hand, we shall notice that the king attempts to justify Mortimer “willfully betray’d” (1H4. 1.2.81) with the proof that Mortimer eventually marries Glendower’s daughter. On the other hand, Hotspur justifies his belief with the visual evidence that the “mouthed wounds” are self-evident enough “to prove that true,” and “Needs no more but one tongue for all those wounds” (1H4. 1.3.95-97) to validate Mortimer did fight against Glendower.

Yet the image of tongues once again reinforces the emblematic portrait of Rumor full of tongues. We are not assured whether a specific statement Rumor utters with its

tongue is true or false. Equally convincing, both Hotspur and the King offer what would account for justified evidence to support their claims even if their methods vary: the King uses logical inference whereas Hotspur applies visual evidence. We might question whether it is possible that we could differentiate, if not truth from falsehood, at least the more believable or plausible from the less sensible in the world Rumor constructs. Given the fact that Rumor oftentimes offers seemingly believable information or knowledge, we might infer that it seems to be almost impossible to differentiate the true from the false. What makes such differentiation difficult actually implies one further feature of rumor, that is, its unverified status.

For the third feature, we should note that rumor, like gossip, is in a state of suspense, between truth and falsehood, before we verify its authenticity. For example, Blinde has acknowledged rumor's "unverified nature" when she describes that rumor "by definition are creatures of the moment" (Blinde 36). Blinde proceeds to link this extempore nature to the unverified news Northumberland receives from Lord Bardolph and Travers at the outset of *2 Henry IV* (44). What is even more important is that, by identifying the upcoming news as rumors, Blinde differentiates rumor somewhat from other states of propositions by arguing the messengers "have brought rumors instead of certainties" (Blinde 44).

Indeed, to place rumor between certainty and uncertainty differentiates rumor from other properties of statements such as truth and falsity because truth and falsity imply assurance or certainty about the status for a given proposition. Wiegandt refers to this quality as well when he identifies this indeterminacy of rumor as uncertainty, and goes on to define uncertainty to be "something may or may not be the case and is therefore inherent to rumor, for every rumor provokes the question whether its content is true or false" (*Crowd and Rumour* 4). Hence Wiegandt identifies the third feature,

uncertainty. Wiegandt argues that uncertainty elicits ambivalence in Shakespearean plays when uncertainty seems to render potential different viewpoints (*Crowd and Rumour* 5). Consequently Wiegandt argues that rumor oftentimes invokes problems, not pertinent to meaning, but to truth (Wiegandt, *Crowd and Rumour* 4).

Here the pivot to understand rumor is to analyze uncertainty. The dual nature of uncertainty is liable to influence our perceptions when it offers both positive and negative implications in Renaissance dramas. We shall hence analyze those features underlying uncertainty, and how playwrights and theatrical characters, Falstaff in particular, might manipulate this distinctive quality. More to the point, although uncertainty seems to be evident within the prototypical Rumor, it is not clear how we should differentiate this capacity Rumor displays within the literary texts from those examples inherited to uncertainty upon individuals and social groups in which rumor is more of a natural propensity than a dramatic, personified role that has its own consciousness. It might seem to be necessary, therefore, to characterize the nature of uncertainty in relation to rumor and its theory in general, or more specifically, uncertainty appropriated within personified Rumour, and eventually, by Falstaff.

Because both rumor and skepticism share this feature of uncertainty, it is crucial to focus upon how the type of uncertainty Rumor manifests eventually induces skepticism throughout *Henry IV 1* and 2. On the unverified status explicated earlier, it might be more plausible to distinguish the uncertainties in Rumor from those inherent in skepticism. If Falstaff is the personified Rumor, then it is important to answer the question how Falstaff exactly manipulates uncertainties within his remarks as the incentive to foster another type of uncertainty we understand in skepticism. For the sake of brevity, I shall focus on uncertainties within rumor and skepticism, and postpone my further analysis of rumor, skepticism and verification till the fifth

chapter.

As what Wiegandt aforesaid, Renaissance dramas have already suggested this tendency for uncertainty to emphasize ambivalence and provisional truths. While Wiegandt recognizes that the uncertainty of rumor is the origin for contesting viewpoints in Shakespearean dramas, it is also what William M. Hamlin (2005) identifies to be the characteristic feature derived from skepticism which English Renaissance and Jacobean dramas (6), tragedies in particular (2), oftentimes appropriate. For example, Hamlin emphasizes that Elizabethan playwrights such as Marlowe and Shakespeare have already utilized topics and features of skepticism (9). Because Renaissance education enables its audiences to deliberate various, even contrary viewpoints on a given issue (Hamlin 2-3), Renaissance and Jacobean playwrights would oftentimes present contested opinions underlying discursive dialogues (Hamlin 7-8). This kind of withdrawal is strikingly similar to skepticism, when it becomes more of a mental habit in its feature to question incessantly, especially when this feature serves to challenge any dogmatic judgments (Hamlin 5).

Although Hamlin argues that skepticism offers and induces open-minded viewpoints, I would like to highlight that this exact quality also strongly contributes to our distrust of our capability to attain truth. Skepticism, in turn, seems to afford us the outline of a more integral notion of uncertainty – a sketch that allows for a much more precise explication between what skeptics uphold concerning doubt and how Renaissance dramatists appropriate this skeptic practice. Uncertainty derives in part from the difficulties when (1) either priori or epistemic knowledge is subject to doubt and (2) when both our possibilities and the accesses to validate knowledge seems to be questionable (Klein, pars. 14-20). In this regard, doubts on methodological difficulties, along with the discredit toward the validity of evidence and reasoning,

recall issues about Othello's asking for "ocular proof" (*Oth.* 3.3.360). In chapter 3, these problems shall be helpful for us to examine how Falstaff would misuse evidence and logic to justify his fault at Gadshill and the Battle of Shrewsbury.



Chapter Three

Uncertainty and Skeptic Deliberations – Falstaff as a Skeptic in Practice

We might begin with Wiegandt's analysis of skepticism and *Othello* to illustrate how uncertainty and skepticism are connected to one another. More specifically, how this relation would apply to our understanding for Falstaff's character. According to Wiegandt, the Venetian society in *Othello* parallels Elizabethan London: both invoke rumor and conjectures to be the proof and the measure to approach truth when certainty and assurance are unattainable (157-161, 165-166). Because of this uncertain nature of rumor to be potentially both true and false, Iago thus manipulates uncertainty to be the source of Othello's skepticism (Wiegandt 158).

More precisely, what characterizes Iago's methodology to undermine the credibility of ocular evidence is when Iago elicits uncertainties in which the alleged link between ocular evidence and truth are subject to doubt. Ocular evidence involves not only our visual perceptions with regard to the appearance of the disputed matter, but also systematic associations to derive plausible interpretations out of tangible evidence. Wiegandt recalls the example when Iago adopts conditionals "If they do nothing, 'tis a venial slip" (*Oth.* 4.1.9) after the hypothetical ocular proof to spot, if possible, Desdemona naked with Cassio in bed (167). Hence Wiegandt has excellent grounds to believe that Shakespeare alludes to Montaigne's *Apology for Raymond Sebond*. Montaigne argues that ocular proofs are unreliable given their dependent nature on transient human perceptions (Wiegand 168).

A significant feature of this example is that it seems to be more crucial to examine the specific measure Iago adopts to arouse skepticism than to argue Iago elicits imagination. Wiegandt rightly points out that Iago adopts series of questions to confine Othello's imagination to Desdemona's infidelity (167). Nonetheless I would

like to emphasize, in this respect, Iago's use of ocular proof, and perhaps more significantly, logical conditionals "if," when Falstaff emphatically employs those strategies as well to vindicate his own dubious statements.

To begin with, one motivation for Iago to elicit ocular proof is that Othello is inclined to rely more heavily on ocular proofs than probability and guesses to deduce and obtain knowledge (Wiegandt 166). We might take the evidence Iago appropriates, the handkerchief, to be the instance of how evidence is subject to "wrenching the true cause the false way" (*2H4*. 2.1.110-111). More importantly, this example displays that if the link between logic/evidence and truth is not certain, then this breakdown will likely leave an unsettling implication on our assurance to the outcomes such methods deduce.

Similar devices emerge when Falstaff invokes the cracked dagger to be the ocular proof to justify his dubious merit for valor (*IH4*. 2.4.164-168). As manipulative as it may seem, Falstaff's statements indeed highlight the problem that ocular proofs do not necessarily direct to truth. If visual evidence such as the cracked dagger could cease to be in conjunction with truth when Falstaff actually does not "fight longer than he sees reason" (*IH4*. 1.2.185), then to present ocular evidence would not be sufficient to explain or justify any dubious claims.

Another equally dubious example is what Falstaff invokes in his mock dialogue to "practice an answer" (*IH4*. 2.4.375): "I do not speak to thee in drink, but in tears; not in pleasure, but in passion; not in words only, but in woes also" (*IH4*. 2.4.414-417). This example also recalls precisely matters relating to uncertainty because the way Falstaff appears to us does not correspond to Falstaff's actual state of mind. Falstaff in effect has just done the reverse: to speak in drink, but not in tears; in pleasure, but not in passion; not in woes, but in jests. Obviously, here facial

expressions cease to be an indicator to support our inference to detect the inherent thoughts of others. Incoherence like that would challenge the method we used to infer about other minds. Such contradiction should remind us that Falstaff has asked for sack a few passages earlier to fabricate the ocular evidence, eyes bloodshot, to make believe as if he does weep (*IH4*. 2.4.384-386). What supposedly seems to be the assurance for truth, in both examples, hence turns out to be uncertain when the link from evidence to truth seems to be unsettled.

If the link between ocular proofs and truth appears uncertain, we might turn to logic itself with the belief that reasoning such as deduction seems to be far more reliable *per se*. Logic relies upon specific forms or structures to ensure its validity so that if all the statements within premises are true, the claim derived from its premises must be true as well. With this concept, logic seems to be certain as a link to truth, while visual evidence relies upon external perceptions that are likely to err. Hence we might be liable to invoke logic to be the alternative link for truth.

But Iago's patterned use of conditionals might refute the assured link between logic and truth. When speaking of conditionals, Wiegandt observes that Iago tends to invoke images "in questions, subjunctive clauses and negations" (165). To be more precise, in order to elicit Othello's doubt upon what he used to find most reliable, the ocular proof, Wiegandt argues that Iago offers tentative situations with conditional "if" to depict possible scenarios where ocular proofs are subject to errors (167).

Apart from the troubling implications and possible abuses of ocular proofs, Iago's presentation of scenarios suggests that the alleged link we find between logic and truth here is not certain. Moreover, I would like to focus on this example in terms of Iago's similarity — i.e. his abuse of conditionals — with those dubious arguments Falstaff constructs. Falstaff tends to exploit, almost excessively, logical "if"

throughout *1 and 2 Henry IV*. The first example occurs when Falstaff justifies his “incomprehensible lies” (1H4. 1.2.187) about the fight in Gadshill. During this part of conversation, we could observe Falstaff’s frequent abuses of conditionals, like Iago’s, while he swears “I am a rogue if I were not at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours together” (1H4. 2.4.164-165). The second example occurs when Falstaff attempts to justify his youth falsely when arguing with Lord Chief Justice. Within this claim Falstaff asserts “If ye will needs say I am an old man, you should give me rest” (2H4. 1.2.216-217).

Again, here we have examples in which Falstaff exploits conditionals like Iago, except for the fact that both examples represent more than simple counter scenarios but specific and ingenious hypothetically derived syllogisms. Although both Falstaff and Iago tend to employ hypotheticals, the tactics each adopts do vary. Recall that Wiegandt marks that Iago’s instances of conditionals oftentimes serve as counter scenarios wherein ocular proof, as certain as it may seem, might be dubious. Once again, the example Wiegandt offers is the hypothetical Iago employs when Iago sets forth the scenario wherein it is possible that Desdemona remains innocent even if spotting her “naked with her friend in bed” (*Oth.* 4.1.3) but “mean no harm” (*Oth.* 4.1.4), provided that “If they do nothing, ’tis a venial slip” (*Oth.* 4.1.9) (167).

An important point for this instance, aside from skepticism on ocular proofs, is that what motivates Othello to turn to rumor he formerly discredits for alternative proof likely derives from his quest for certainty (Wiegandt 166-167). Because apparent ocular evidence is not accessible, Othello must begin to adapt to rumor to be the only methodology available in a society where uncertainty is pervasive and treated to be the systematic way to approach truth more in terms of probabilities Venetian society upholds than distinct clarity Othello used to adopt (Wiegandt 166). On this

view we might be able to distinguish, I shall argue, Falstaff's device from Iago's despite of their similitude. To elicit Othello's doubts, Iago's is more inclined to offer scenarios in the hypothetical way similar to thought experiments than to offer any definite facts or proofs. To say "Iago limits his speech to questions that prompt Othello into imagining ocular evidence" (Wiegandt 167) is consistent with my argument that Iago in fact attempts to disturb Othello not simply in the absence of certainty, but in the presence of any possible hypothetical scenarios in order to forge persistent challenges to Othello's beliefs.

By contrast, Falstaff tends to employ hypotheticals different from Iago's scenarios. In fact, Falstaff compiles counter-examples with syllogisms. David Scott Kastan (2002) notes this implicit structure of syllogism. Kastan, for example, has annotated that what Falstaff applies when responding to Hal's "a natural coward, without instinct" (*IH4*. 2.4.494) is, in principle, a syllogism: "(a) major premise: all men who run away are cowards; (b) minor premise: Falstaff runs away; (c) conclusion: Falstaff is a coward" (235). When Falstaff argues "I deny your major" (*IH4*. 2.4.495), he entails, in effect, counter-examples to reject the major premise to argue "one might run away for various reasons other than cowardice" (235).

Although both Falstaff and Iago apply hypothetical structures, I shall distinguish Falstaff's way of applying hypotheticals from Iago's with another two examples. One is the example that Falstaff argues for his valor in Gadshill. Another is the example that Falstaff justifies his youth. Combined in the form of syllogisms, both examples correspond with the conditional "if" for the major premises embedded in the syllogism to form the following logical structure: if *a*, then *b*. What Falstaff invokes, to justify his dubious claim, is in this case a series of syllogisms, and utilizes its variants as well when denying himself to be "a natural coward" (*IH4*. 2.4.494-495).

Hence what Falstaff's speeches implicate is the underlying minor premises and conclusions: if not *b*, then not *a*.

Applying this conditional proof to the first example, Falstaff hence argues on the basis of the major premise, if "I were not at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours together," then the minor premise, "I am a rogue." Yet denying himself to be the coward, what Falstaff implies in his syllogism for us to deduce is the negation of the conditional premise: he has fought valiantly with dozens of looters. Logical deductions of this type appear in the second example as well. As Lord Chief Justice rebukes Falstaff that "Do you set down your name in the scroll of youth" (2H4. 1.2.178-179), Falstaff justifies his dubious claim that "If ye will needs say I am an old man, you should give me rest" (2H4. 1.2.216-217). Here Falstaff's syllogisms distinguish sharply from Lord Chief Justice's visual and aural evidence. When Lord Chief Justice argues Falstaff is "old with all the characters of age" (2H4. 1.2.179-180), Lord Chief Justice firstly demonstrates a list of visual evidence that "Have you not a moist eye, a dry hand, a yellow cheek, a white beard, a decreasing leg, an increasing belly" (2H4. 1.2.180-182). Lord Chief Justice then demonstrates aural evidence that "Is not your voice broken, your wind short" (2H4. 1.2.182-183) to justify Falstaff is "blasted with antiquity" (2H4. 1.2.184).

Refuting Lord Chief Justice's ocular and aural evidence, Falstaff justifies his youth with the major premise: if he is indeed of senior age, then he should not be appointed to any offices. Negating having the retirement elders are entitled to, Falstaff justifies his youth by having audiences deduced themselves to refute the original premise that he is, undoubtedly, not of old age.

Indeed, as Wiegandt observes that "Iago . . . speaks like Antony, who uses images rather than logic and frames his invitation to rebellion in subjunctives" (165),

this concept shall prompt us to further differentiate Falstaff's ploy from Iago's. Falstaff is markedly unlike Iago because Falstaff tends to apply logic to offer deductive statements and arguments that are much more clearer than Iago's hypothetical scenarios. Although Falstaff and Iago seem to employ the same methodology with hypotheticals, Iago never explicitly expresses what his scenarios aim at in the way Falstaff's logic does. Moreover, this difference also implies Falstaff's ability to highlight and to manipulate uncertainty when Falstaff in fact shows that logic might well be an insecure vehicle for truth. Falstaff's dubious counter-examples by inference hence demonstrate that the link between logic and truth might well be uncertain, and not as faultless as we used to think.

To imply that the methodology we apply to verify truth is contentious would raise the problem that what kind of mindset we shall adopt before we could develop any modifications or alternatives to improve our methods for verifying truth. To put this differently would be to suggest that we might be liable to defer our judgment because the current methodologies available are not yet sufficiently immaculate enough, at least not as we originally conceive. Because the methods for verifying truth remain debatable, it might be best to refrain from any judgement before we can be assured. If our methods are fallible, then the result necessarily follows would be, in short, to suspend our judgment.

This skeptic mindset becomes the second inchoate basis to originate uncertainty when to object making further judgment entails to suspend our judgment before we could be certain that the probabilities or the methods to verify truth are intact. Unlike the objection skeptics previously raised during the course of verification because the methods available seems to be problematic, here the point is the mindset to remain detached in suspension before it is certain that we remove all those difficulties and

doubts.¹ In this regard we might best construe this suspension as a form of uncertainty in practice, or the kind of mentality, according to Hamlin, both philosophers and dramatists apply (5).

The skeptic mindset to suspend our judgements then becomes the starting point for the freedom to deliberate among contesting viewpoints. Indeed, Hamlin has already exemplified this skeptic uncertainty when, deeming Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* the indicator as a form of skeptic withdrawal, he observes that there are marks of a skeptic mindset when Dryden describes his work as discursive dialogues to embody various viewpoints in doubt so that audiences would have to deliberate on their own (Hamlin 7). While to suspend our judgements is the response for skeptics to retreat from unnerving uncertainties, it also pointedly manifests that playwrights are actually consistent with skeptics to put their judgements in suspension for "polyphonic rumination" (Hamlin 7). Here the uncertainty derived from suspension offers ample flexibilities to the type of freedom that allows for more open conversations to deliberate on disputable issues (Hamlin 7-8).

In fact, Hamlin attempts to unpack this skeptic mindset for suspension by identifying this freedom more as "toleration" (8). Although Renaissance writers, like Shakespeare or Thomas More, may not actually have the access to publications on Pyrrhonism, these writers do coincidentally promote the view "consonant with the

¹ Uncertainty also derives from our attitude when whether we could attain knowledge remains dubious, and hence we suspend our judgment from claiming any kinds of assurance. Pertinent discussions of what this uncertainty would induce largely occur when Pyrrhonists attempt to demonstrate that neither the evidence nor the premises dogmatists rely upon are completely intact (Klein, pars. 117). This failure, in turn, renders the entire process of justification into circular reasoning, which is grounded in the proof dogmatists claim to validate their point (Klein, pars. 117-118). Yet neither the premise dogmatists uphold nor the proof itself are self-evident, and therefore requires further, additional proof *ad infinitum* (Klein, pars. 118). What this recess induces is therefore what skeptics, in particular Pyrrhonists, argue for in response to this dilemma: to withdraw our assurance to claim both whether we could, or could not, to obtain knowledge (Klein, pars. 20); in other words, to suspend our judgment (Klein, pars. 117).

practical consequences of scepticism's detachment from dogmatic positions" (Hamlin 8). Hamlin was concerned with detachment because this might well be the intricate starting point in which different types of uncertainties converge — those of intellectuals developed by skeptics, and those of English Renaissance societies (8) — but this notion of detachment does not thereby obviate the previous depiction of freedom. Rather we might understand this detachment to be the response to “dogmatic positions” from the parallel reaction of Pyrrhonists and dogmatists.

Pyrrhonism is notable for its particular epistemic position to suspend our assurance of whether we could obtain knowledge pertaining to external world, and thereby differentiates itself from the type of skepticism Descartes develops, Cartesian skepticism. Instead of suspension, Cartesian skepticism denies that we could obtain any knowledge about external world. In contrast, we might best think of this distinction to be part of the Pyrrhonian attack on the certainty to either affirm we could obtain any knowledge about external world, which Epistemists uphold, or denies this very Epistemists' notion, which Cartesian skeptics manifest (Klein pars. 18-19).

Indeed, this is one of the reasons why Pyrrhonism distinctly differs from Cartesian skepticism and Epistemism. Because Cartesian skepticism and Epistemism either affirm or deny the possibility concerning whether we could obtain external knowledge, they both at least affirm the position that it is certain that we could know, or could not know, the external world (Klein pars. 18-19). Pyrrhonism, however, might be best construed as a discrete response to either part of the epistemic positions because it neither affirms nor denies, but remains detached status to formulate its position even on the issue to validate whether we could obtain the external world or not is itself uncertain, hence its suspension (Klein pars. 19).

Pyrrhonism could hence sometimes be quite clear if we apply a tentative analogy derived from Socrates. We might understand Socrates' common claim that "The only thing I know is that I know nothing" to be quite an apt example similar to Cartesian skepticism because both presuppose that we are at least capable of knowing, and assured of, the fact that we could not get certain knowledge. A typical response from Pyrrhonists, however, to this Socratic statement might be that "I am not even assured whether the only I know is that I know nothing or not." In brief, Cartesian skepticism and Epistemism manifest their positions to affirm a particular fact that it is certain that either we could, or could not, attain knowledge about the external world, while Pyrrhonism at once renders even the slightest certainties about whether we know we indeed could, or could not, know anything doubtful.

This link between skepticism, especially Pyrrhonism, and uncertainties could be helpful to understand Falstaff's character. First, although Pyrrhonists are largely concerned with epistemic questions, the type of uncertainties they imply could be influential to the way Renaissance playwrights and the characters they create formulate intricate, even contrary views, to invoke or challenge what audiences used to assume for certainty. If Pyrrhonists aim to be critical of dogmatists on their assurance to obtain knowledge (Klein pars. 19-20), what Pyrrhonism offers dramatists is the skeptic commitment for "dislodging people from settled opinions and biases" (Hamlin 5). In other words, if the doubt Pyrrhonism promotes enables skeptics to question what seems to be certain (Hamlin 5), this mindset also motivates playwrights to adopt the exact device whereby audiences could avoid those narrow and simplified answers (Hamlin 8).

Concerning the deliberations the skeptic mindset elicits, we might be able to examine Hamlin's description of the Pyrrhonism and Renaissance dramas to analyze

Henry IV 1 and 2, or more precisely, the character of Falstaff, as a provocateur.

Although Hamlin aims at Pyrrhonism generally to explicate the deliberative feature Renaissance dramatics apply and not Falstaff, new insights are brought to our attention as we reevaluate Falstaff along with this deliberative propensity. It does seem that what Pyrrhonists imply about the freedom and flexibility for dramatists also applies to Falstaff when he deploys this approach similar to Hamlin's description of alternative viewpoints deriving surprising, and sophisticated, thoughts. A notable example is perhaps Falstaff's catechism on honor. Critics generally refer to this catechism to exemplify Falstaff's witticism together with his theatrical charisma, but this catechism is less far more important for its comicality than for its display of skeptic mindset.

A brief glance shall be sufficient to manifest this quality of uncertainty when Falstaff analyzes the implications of honor. At the cursory level, the focus Falstaff demonstrates calls the concept of honor into doubt, and breaks down the assurance by presenting challenges to our presumption. To sacrifice one's life before natural death because "honor pricks me on" (*IH4*. 5.1.129-130) presupposes that we prioritize honor over life. To value honor above life, moreover, presupposes the concept that honor is far more pivotal for us. While life is oftentimes transient, honor is eternal as part of our reputation circulated even after we die. Hence we arrive at the dogmatic view with the assurance that honor is far more important than life.

What is provocative in Falstaff's assessment of honor, however, is that Falstaff does unsettle the dogmatic certainty on the value honor implies when others such as Hotspur and Vernon typically take for granted. Challenging the first presumption that honor is more important than life, Falstaff demonstrates counterexamples in which to prize honor over life is implausible because honor neither cures nor relieves our actual

suffering (*IH4*. 5.1.131-133). To refute this concept Falstaff derives the implication that honor is much more like a “scutcheon” (*IH4*. 5.1.140), a symbolic decoration, than an actual object of practical use. Refuting the second presumption that honor is immortal, moreover, Falstaff constructs another compelling counterexample in which valuing honor over life is irrational because down to its essence honor is nothing but air (*IH4*. 5.1.127-141). Even if most would take honor to be far more priceless in part because of its link to individual, and eternal, reputation, the unnerving fact is that it is only transient when slander emerges (*IH4*. 5.1.139).

At the meditative level, what is even more unsettling about Falstaff’s catechism is that this analysis also offers a seemingly liberating argument Hamlin highlights to deliberate whether the idea, honor itself, is indeed as assured as we used to think. The result for this unnerving implication is that it at once creates the suspension similar to Pyrrhonism. When Falstaff’s remark startles audiences into discretion by reasoning “honor is mere a scutcheon” (*IH4*. 5.1.140), the type of discretion is different from those such as Hotspur and Vernon demonstrate. When Douglas questions that Vernon’s reply is “out of fear and cold heart” (*IH4*. 4.3.8), the discretion Vernon highlights derives precisely from the dogmatic view that “If well-respected honor bid me on/I hold as little counsel with weak fear” (*IH4*. 4.3.10-11). Although Kastan annotates “well-respected” specifically to be “well-considered, thoughtful” to draw the parallel upon Hotspur’s lack of this character (295), here the discretion (“well-respected”) is not pertaining to the discretion Falstaff exemplifies. Unlike Falstaff, who elicits discretion to evoke skeptic challenges and deliberation on those dogmatic views we find most certain, Vernon’s discretion largely reinforces this dogmatic certainty on honor.

Indeed, although Vernon seems to distinguish his discreet character from Hotspur,

who is almost devoid of any discretion but honor, both in fact presuppose the view that honor is more important than life. Even if Vernon seems to manifest courage on his precondition of prudence different from Hotspur, Vernon's aforesaid remark actually emphasizes Hotspur's image in Vernon. When Vernon objects Douglas' outright surmise that Vernon's discretion is derived from cowardice, this latent slander finally precipitates Vernon into swearing upon his life to safeguard his own reputation and honor (*IH4*. 4.3.6-9).

Obviously, most of these apologies are dogmatic because they presuppose underlying beliefs for the standards to evaluate the priority and value without doubt. Rather than examining or deliberating, these speeches tend to embrace dogmatic presumptions irrespective of whether what we believe or what our beliefs presupposes is truly correct and incorrigible. Oftentimes what Hotspur and Vernon, and indeed other characters' speeches reflect are the various dogmatic beliefs we believe most certain. The fact that Vernon or Hotspur's speeches imply standards characterizing honor as superior and worthy of anything, even at the cost of their lives, is just one typical example among other similar values we think, or even without thinking, free of doubt.

More importantly, the presumptions implied by Vernon's remark just affirm Falstaff's statement that our belief that honor is immortal is just wrong. Indeed, when Douglas seems to accuse Vernon of his cowardice, Vernon's immediate reply "Do me no slander" (*IH4*. 4.3.8) right after Douglas is tellingly significant to imply this Falstaffian idea. One implication is that slander must be so detrimental to honor that Vernon has to eradicate any risks of doubts on the spot, and hence his immediate reply. Nonetheless, if to maintain honor intact means to exempt honor from slander, and the method to keep honor from such infamy implies to reduce any possibilities that might

damage honor, this extreme discretion only verifies how fragile honor is, as Falstaff enunciates that it even “will[’t] not live with the living” (*IH4*. 5.1.138-139). In this regard, Vernon’s term of “slander” seems to imply that what makes slander particularly pernicious to honor may not just because it would dim or smother the glory honor exhibits, but because it posits the possibilities to perish honor if slander emerges (“Detraction will not suffer it”) (*IH4*. 5.1.139).

Even if there are methods to secure honor from slander, the counter-example entailed within the last act of 2 *Henry IV* only adds more irony to this dogmatic assurance. Hal’s tribute, to the death of Hotspur, might be the apt example to explain the irrationality to embrace dogmatic certainty. To be sure, heroic models like Hotspur should have been immortal in the way befitting the dogmatic idea for honor. Surely Hal does develop an idea of honor well according Hotspur with immortal image honor prescribes when he emphasizes to have Hotspur taking his honors (“thy praise”) (*IH4*. 5.4.99) to heaven while the disgrace should “sleep with thee in the grave” (*IH4*. 5.4.100) but “not rememb’red in thy epitaph” (*IH4*. 5.1.101) in the scene of Hotspur’s death. To highlight what should be left “rememb’red in thy epitaph” for generations to come hence seems to be the specific, and vivid, concept not only for our self-images, but more importantly, for reputation and honor generally.

Unfortunately, although these depictions shall characterize the concept honor in sufficient details and thereby justify Hotspur’s steadfast status on behalf of honor, these views are gradually demolished by the subsequent events. First, Hotspur’s bravery and fame vanish after Hotspur dies. Even if the concept Hal evokes seems to reinforce Hotspur’s image as immortal honor, those portrayals are more likely to serve as the foil for the dejected image than to offer consistent supports to those heroic characters after Hotspur’s demise. Those glorious images — such as “the budding

honors on thy crest” (*IH4*. 5.4.72), “great heart” (*IH4*. 5.4.87), “contain a spirit/A kingdom for it was too small a bound” (*IH4*. 5.4.89-90) or “so stout a gentleman” (*IH4*. 5.4.93)—are in effect discrete from those ironic facts that, after Hotspur dies, what are left for records are those precisely the contrary—the honor Hotspur earnestly accumulates now becomes Hal’s “garland” (*IH4*. 5.4.73), the lofty mind is now “for worms” (*IH4*. 5.4.86), the grand aspiration “shrunk” (*IH4*. 5.4.88), and this noble personage, like his past glory, is now “dead” (*IH4*. 5.4.92). In other words, honor dies with Hotspur’s death. The glorious images only underline the ironic facts that many of those presumptions about honor are falsified, especially when those images juxtapose ingeniously with a list of brutal facts within the same paragraph to encapsulate a simple message—honor could, and is indeed, past.

Naturally enough, honor does not seem to be eternal in the way most people are assured of, but is better thought of as transient, and most importantly, fragile. In short, honor seems to be rather transient—particularly because the way it ceases to exist upon the point of death—and if any failures—even the slightest possibility derived from those of unverified rumors or scandals—could obliterate the honor in the way that Hal crops instantly what Hotspur has long accumulated and built for simply because of one single defeat. Then this fragile nature shall refute the confidence we typically hold for honor, eventually turning this incredulity into a field full of uncertainties where we could exercise the freedom derived from such skeptic mindset so as to both challenge whatever could be falsely believed and to deliberate the methods with which we could observe, or even modify, our false beliefs, as Falstaff’s catechism demonstrates.

Second, to argue honor is “insensible” (*IH4*. 5.1.137) because it only coexists with those who are exempt from the infliction derived from rumor or infamy, namely,

the dead (*IH4*. 5.1.137-139), Falstaff incidentally implies another skeptical question about whether our concept of honor could be in fact erroneous. Recall once again that Falstaff breaks down our certainty on the belief that honor should be valuable. In his catechism to justify the unconventional claim, Falstaff elaborates his argument by questioning the concept honor down to its basis. The first question is “What is in that word ‘honor’?” (*IH4*. 5.1.134), and the second, “What is that ‘honor’?” (*IH4*. 5.1.135).

For the first question, Falstaff starts his analysis with “What is honor?” (*IH4*. 5.1.133-134), and his answer “A word” (*IH4*. 5.1.134) is highly indicative of the nature of honor to be dependent on words mostly because of their descriptive and representational purposes.² This idea corresponds with Hardie’s distinction that honor and fame are largely the products of spoken words from both verified and dubious sources (4-5). Nevertheless where verified and unverified sources are differentiated, there are also different types of fame and honor characterized by those sources (Hardie 24-25). One problem is that since the credibility of words relies upon the sources from which they derive, not all forms of depiction about honor are equally truthful or trustworthy. Hardie observes that because words have to circulate within at least specific groups in order to convey information, it is significant to distinguish sources out of anonymous crowds such as those of hearsay from those of identifiable, oftentimes reputable, selective personages (4, 24). The former suggests the mobs or multitudes who convey unverified, oftentimes rumorous, even fictitious opinions while the latter, a singular elitist group or individual who forms trustworthy reports corresponding with reality (Hardie 4, 7, 24).

² “Words are just representations of things that happen elsewhere, but words have the power of *enargeia* to bring things and events, real and fictitious, vivid before the eyes of the mind” (Hardie 10).

From thence appears the type of honor Falstaff's catechism seems to question because its nature is prone to be doubtful. As Hardie invokes Cicero's contrast between the true fame which embodies the real essence from the false, imitative type that only mirrors the seemings of true glory, this distinction raises the problem that honor could be potentially counterfeited (24-25). As for true fame, Hardie explains that the conceptual difference Cicero underlines resides in "the nature of the source of what is thought and said about the man who aspire to glory" (24). In other words, true glory is truthful because of its credible source, oftentimes an elite group which offers sound evaluations (Hardie 24).

As for the false type of fame, Hardie explains that it is false because it derives from the unauthorized mobs characterized by their lack of credibility to give accurate pictures of the very subject in question (24-25). More specifically, mobs or multitudes tend to render the deceitful appearance analogous to the real fame, but without the essences. On this view Hardie thus alludes to Platonic idealism to demonstrate the following distinction that we might understand the false fame well accords with only either "the reality of a visual image (*effigies*) or aural echo (*resonat tamquam imago*)" of the real fame, but in fact its essence is empty and its appearance, a counterfeit like rumors' to "deceive through their likeness to true events in the world" (25).

Altogether these distinctions seem to cohere with what exactly Falstaff's catechism is questioning and skeptical about the concept of honor as a perfect ideal worth sacrificing anything. The ocular appearances or auditory reflections Hardie underlines concerning the false kind of honor are particularly important. When Falstaff demonstrates a mimic resurrection after his paradoxical claim on counterfeit (*IH4*. 5.4.115-126), Hal cries "we will not trust our eyes/Without our ears: thou art not what thou seem'st" (*IH4*. 5.4.136-137) at the sight of the supposedly deceased

Falstaff. Although Hal mostly expresses his astonishment when uttering “is it fantasy that plays upon our eyesight?” (*IH4*. 5.4.134-135), what Hal attempts to validate is to reassure whether the sight itself is illusionary or not (*IH4*. 5.4.134,145). Yet what Falstaff’s seemingly dubious presence implies is that honor may likewise be such a seeming illusion that honor could be not what it seems. Indeed, with the simulated wound in the thigh of Hotspur’s corpse (*IH4*. 5.4.151), what Falstaff counterfeits is not simply the visible evidence to validate his alleged valor but rather honor itself. The counterfeited visible evidence Falstaff offers gilds honor the seemingly appearance, the “visual image” (Hardie 25), of the genuine fame but is in fact empty of the actual essences Cicero demonstrates.

What is even more dubious about Falstaff’s counterfeited evidence, however, is that such simulated wound itself questions honor implicitly down to its essence, hence Falstaff’s second question about “What is that ‘honor’?” (*IH4*. 5.1.135). To be sure, there is a long literary history for which wounds entail both the indicator of martial honor, and more specifically, the images for which to speak out the courageous deeds on behalf of the very heroic characters themselves (Hardie 16-17). According to Hardie, many of these references about wounds derive from the Roman literary traditions in which wounds serves as the visible evidence for valor (16). Visible evidence like those derived from Roman classics thus appears extensively in Shakespeare’s plays such as *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar* and in particular, *1* and *2 Henry IV* (Hardie 16-17, 505). In this regard wounds tellingly embody the images of mouths and the tongues within for their capacity to announce and spread the alleged honor implied by those wounds (Hardie 16, 505).

Hence this is the case where Hardie points out that those wounds on Mortimer seem to dovetail the personified Rumor in Induction (Hardie 505), but with a decisive

difference. As Hotspur advocates Mortimer's valor against the treason Henry IV accuses Mortimer of when justifying "to prove that true/Needs no more but one tongue for all those wounds...which valiantly he [Mortimer] he took" (*IH4*. 1.3.95-97), the "mouthed wounds" (*IH4*. 1.3.97) are themselves sufficient to iterate and validates the true honor Mortimer deserves (Hardie 505). Such images of wounds for mouths thus differentiate the "tongue to bear true witness to his valor and loyalty" from those multitudes of tongues Rumor exhibits to pronounce "continual slanders" (*2H4*. Ind.6) (Hardie 505).

But whereas wounds seem to be the plausible basis to justify the lofty character of honor, the wound Falstaff counterfeits challenges this nature of honor. That is, again, what we used to believe about the image of wounds manifesting the mouth to convey truthful reports on honor could be doubtful. On one hand, it seems that Falstaff counterfeiting evidence to obtain honor implies that the concept of honor is not as steadfast and eternal as we generally hold. What we think is steadfast about honor could be easily replaced and called into question as Falstaff ironically steals honor from Hotspur with his counterfeited wound on the corpse of precisely the deserving owner. In this regard the image of wound ceases to be the truthful narrator like those presented in Roman classics nor ever resembles the "aural echo" (Hardie 25) of the honor in question. On the other hand, another more disturbing implication is that we might reconsider whether the type of honor we treasure could be in fact trivial. As Hardie explicates that Cicero distinguishes true fame from the false from which its source is credible or not, we might well accord Cicero's idea with Falstaff's counterfeited proof to evaluate the essence of honor.

To begin with, we shall recall what Hardie has previously reminded us of the reason why Cicero justifies that we shall depreciate honor derived from dubious

sources: those sources tend to generate false or arbitrary judgment about the honor one deserves. Here this rationale matters because we might likewise apply this difference to Falstaff. While Falstaff counterfeits the visible appearance and evidence that which seem to be real, Falstaff might be the dubious origin for honor analogous to those of mobs or crowds Cicero identifies. First, Falstaff fits this distinction of dubious source when Hardie already acknowledges that Falstaff plays the role of personified Rumor (506-507). This idea to align Falstaff with Rumor is certainly common if we notice how A. R. Humphreys (1981) annotates Falstaff's self-depiction about his belly with "school of tongues" uttering nothing except his name (2*H4*. 4.3.18-20) "in all languages to the world" (Humphreys 133). It seems obvious that this focus of "in all languages" shall sufficiently imply Rumor's earlier monologues in which it declares to deliver slanders "in every language I pronounce" (2*H4*. Ind.7).

Developing this line of thought, Hardie offers closer analysis of depictions with Falstaff's images of a belly full of "a whole school of tongues" (2*H4*. 4.3.18). According to Hardie, we might best think of this image as the "guarantee both of the multitude of tongues and his inability to match words with deeds" (506). To put it differently, the image depicting Falstaff with multiple tongues implies Falstaff's abilities, like Rumor's, to equivocate and to counterfeit the alleged heroic actions via "feigned words" (Hardie 506). Collectively those capacities render Falstaff the unentitled honor in the Battle of Shrewsbury whereby his counterfeited wound on Hotspur has generated the fame Falstaff equally does not qualify for to capture Coleville the Dale (Hardie 506-507). In this line of reasoning, we might view that the honor Falstaff claims is skeptical not simply because he offers the knockoffs of honor, but because he embodies the untrustworthy, even false, source of judgment and opinions Cicero discredits as Rumor exemplifies.

While Hardie is focusing on how Falstaff wields the features of Rumor in the example of Gaultree Forest, Evans implies that Falstaff would demolish our assurance about honor. On one hand, Rumor is the direct source of unverified and skeptical information in which we could view Falstaff from those rumorous features. On the other hand, what Evans glossed on the aforesaid passage about Falstaff's "school of tongues," in which "school" means "crowd" (Evans 953), also suggests the multitudes and crowds Cicero previously identifies as sources offering questionable judgment on the due honor. In this specific sense we might otherwise invoke what Hardie describes Falstaff with "multitude of tongues" since to equate Falstaff's belly of tongues with crowds seems to be strikingly similar – albeit implicitly – to the implication those rumorous features induce.

Aside from the concept that crowds only offer biased version of honor, this comparison of tongues with crowds emphasizes another viewpoint from recipients that are the subject for crowds to comment on. One skeptical point is that Falstaff seems to be the parallel version of Hotspur in their unlimited yearning for honor, and with this similarity we might gain another insight of why honor could be not as valuable as we think, but insignificant. In part, what Falstaff describes about his belly full of tongues is again the starting point in which he claims those tongues speak nothing except his name (*2H4*. 4.3.19-20). This would be an obvious indicator that Falstaff actually yearns for honor. Unlike the indifferent attitude embedded in his former catechism, here Falstaff exhibits strong desire to fill the world with his fame just as crowds of tongues populated in his belly could disseminate solely the alleged honor with his name.

Falstaff's strong desire shall both recall Hotspur's infinite cravings for honor and mark why honor most people uphold becomes dubious. Because this yearning is

mostly narcissistic (Hardie 7, 13) about the way the common crowds would judge his/her image, it is therefore difficult to dissociate honor from the crowds (Hardie 13). Yet to identify with crowds is dangerous because Cicero already demonstrates that the type of discretion the crowds generate would mislead us to pursue what is shallow and external, honor, rather than what is eternal and true of essence, our virtues (Hardie 24). For Cicero, since honor is merely the shadow of virtue, honor is thus like a counterfeit (Hardie 24). As Hardie notes, Cicero is so fascinated with his own fame that this desire becomes an obstacle to discern what is liable to be his own defect (23), those limitless yearnings also distract us from both the correct evaluation and justified pursuit of honor (Hardie 23-25). Indeed, to illustrate one step further why this limitless craving for honor could be harmful, Hardie alludes to Sambucus' emblem in which discretion is the key to immortal fame: we shall rather "rule with judgment" to pursue virtue rather than ruled by the "fickle ambition" which aims to win the delight of the public (26-27).

Of this analysis we shall recall how Worcester rightly criticizes Hotspur of his obsession with honor, not as part of virtue, but as "Defect of manners, want of government/ Pride, haughtiness, opinion, and disdain" (*IH4*. 3.1.182-183). Here the "want of government" and the "pride, haughtiness, opinion" are crucial. The former marks substantially the excessive obsession both Hotspur and Falstaff exemplify for honor as it directly shows how such craving would be "lack of self-control" (Kastan 250) as "want of government" suggests. The latter, on the other hand, implies the narcissistic reflections one minds about the self-images as pride or arrogance ("opinion") (Kastan 251) entail. Such element shall explain the cravings of Hotspur for honor and Falstaff, to popularize his name.

But more substantial is the implication when Lord Bardolph pointedly describes

Hotspur's excessive desire for honor not as valor, but as a madman who immerses himself either in the "insubstantial" (Kastan 33) or "false" (Evans 934) fancies to ignore what truth shall be ("winking") (Kastan 34) until this finally leads Hotspur into death (*2H4*. 1.3.27-33). Here the indiscretion highlights how Hotspur is blinded with his uncontrolled desire for honor, when that quest for honor does not direct him to the immortal fame he seeks for, but only the illusionary seeming images of virtue analogous to valor that render his own downfall. This is the apt instance in which we would find Cicero's distinction justified: the cravings and pursuits of honor in effect shall be false, like the counterfeits of virtue, because they produce nothing but false judgment, like the mobs or the crowds Cicero emphasizes. What Cicero distinguishes virtue from honor hence justifies why we shall depreciate honor, especially the kind of popular fame circulating among crowds. The honor we oftentimes uphold only evoke counterfeits and biased discretions as those Falstaff fabricates and exemplifies.

Clearly, Worcester would best characterize this distinction — with the contrast between discretion and indiscretion — the way Hotspur thinks about ("apprehends") (*1H4*. 1.3.208) honor would surely be false. Because Hotspur understands honor in "a world of figures" (*1H4*. 1.3.208) but not in "the form of what he should attend" (*1H4*. 1.3.209), in which Kastan notes "figures" to mean "images" and "form" as "actual substance" (177), Worcester offers us reasonable grounds to infer that Hotspur probably mistakes all those falsified, illusionary images for real essences of honor. On this view, it is the possible reason to explain why both Hotspur and Hal would depict honor as if it were tangible, actual object.

For example, Hotspur insists to "pluck bright honour" (*1H4*. 1.3.201) even if honor might be almost impossible to attain in places such as the surface of the moon or the bottom of the ocean. Other examples appear when Hal describes Hotspur as

“the factor” (*IH4*. 3.2.147), which Evans terms “agent” (910), and vows to “crop” (*IH4*. 5.4.73) those “budding honors” (*IH4*. 5.4.72) from Hotspur. What is common among these examples is that Hal and Hotspur seem to regard honor consistently as a concrete, material object which Hal could harvest and Hotspur could pluck as a collector. All these analogies imply that honor appears to be of actual substances like real objects we could touch or pluck rather than the mirrored images of actual objects. Since the idea honor appears rather concrete, unlike Cicero’s idea of honor as merely the shadowy reflection of actual virtues, the analogies in the minds of Hal and Hotspur would provide us with ample evidence that Hal and Hotspur are liable to entrap themselves into similar misconceptions to view honor the otherwise.

Indeed, when Falstaff replies “Air” (*IH4*. 5.1.135) toward a series of questioning, “What is in that word honor? What is that honor?” (*IH4*. 5.1.134-135), Kastan explicates that Falstaff’s “Air” in fact implies nominalism, which views abstract entities as non-existent so as to differentiate from those who mistakenly perceive them as actual or concrete objects (312). As applied to the concept of honor, Falstaff would probably identify with nominalism while Hotspur, with his concrete images of plucking (*IH4*. 1.3.202,205), the latter (Kastan 312). In this sense we could say that Hal exemplifies the false thought (“discretion”) and frame of mind to be so assured of a traditional concept without further deliberations.

To put this differently, to deliberate implies ambiguity when we could not clarify in what way deliberation distracts us from, or contributes to, provisional truths. The former implies to deliberate is a form of reflection not just on what might be the best plausible choice before taking decisions, but also whether such decisions would interfere with, or be appropriate to, the preconceptions with which one strongly identifies. In this sense to deliberate presupposes specific boundaries in which we

could deliberate the plausibility among different options most of the time and reasonably like most do, provided that this neither contradicts to nor steps beyond those preconceptions. It neither requires nor allows us to obtain the liberty to deliberate on those rules and limitations, even if they are liable to be outdated or implausible. As applied to the examples out of Vernon and Hotspur, we might say Vernon does exhibit his ability to deliberate what shall be the reasonable choice, but not the capability to think beyond, nor reflect on, those preconceptions as those such as “honor is valuable” or “honor is worthy to die for.” On the other hand, Hotspur seems to be almost void of the ability to deliberate reasonably both within and beyond those preconceptions. He just upholds those preconceptions altogether as his terminal goal to live for. In this regard, Hotspur is not just indiscreet as what Vernon and Worcester characterize him of. Hotspur lacks the ability to render any reasonable second thoughts whenever it comes to honor, but more importantly, the fact that what makes Hotspur pettish also implies that even if Hotspur exhibits deliberation (“discretion”), it may probably of false kind.

Since Hotspur never allows himself the time or freedom to even ponder on whatever is contrary to honor to the slightest degree, this impatience will likely deprive Hotspur of possibilities to moderate or revise his line of thought, hence magnifying Hotspur’s defect when his thought is already on the wrong track in the first place. If Hotspur accuses Hal of wounding his thought by depriving him of those honorable titles (*IH4*. 5.4.79-80), Hotspur is certainly mistaken to ascribe this wound in his thought to Hal but not himself. Where Hotspur could have deliberated more plausibly as Worcester, who speculates that the plan becomes dangerous without Northumberland’s army, Hotspur chooses to think the otherwise: this danger would add “a lustre and more great opinion/A larger dare to our great enterprise” (*IH4*.

4.1.77-78) if they proceed. This positive talk shall highlight that Hotspur's line of thought is already biased at the starting point. To identify what wound Hotspur's thought, we might better remind ourselves of this slanted way of thinking as the wound, or defect, in his thought. Since this biased thinking produces all those promising illusions, Hotspur inevitably renders himself the victim of his own false discretion to conclude "out of this nettle, danger, we pluck this flower, safety" (*IH4*. 2.3.9-10) before he could have regretted his "loss of brittle life" (*IH4*. 5.4.78). In contrast to the letter, which Hotspur appears comically argues with is ironically accurate to point out the flaw embedded in his thought (*IH4*. 2.3.1-35), Hotspur's deliberation is by contrast far from reasonable.

At this point it seems obvious that such discretion as Vernon, Worcester or Hotspur exemplifies would be implausible, given that their ways of thinking strongly comply with preexisting assumptions that they neither question nor doubt before. To think that deliberation is insightful and allows us the method with which we could reasonably embark on our inquiries does not mean that the conclusion whereby we arrive at is necessary accurate. Oftentimes, it reinforces those biased and stereotypical presumptions, the defects in our rationalizing, precisely as Rumor amplifies the seemings, the aural echoes of what we think is true, but in fact counterfeits of truth in reflections. The ideal of honor Hotspur upholds then is now merely empty, meaningless like the "vain glory" when Hardie depicts the ambition honor evokes in Sambucus' emblem (26). Although it seems to be typical to presuppose honor is the ideal we worth sacrificing for, Cicero's analysis shall imply that how Falstaff's counterfeits, both of honor and its evidence, break down this certainty and elicit discretions directly challenging this concept.

However, this is also consistent with the type of discretion Falstaff's skeptical

mindset evokes, when Falstaff challenges the ideal to die for honor is nothing but “the counterfeit of a man who hath not the life of a man” (*IH4*. 5.4.116-117) whereas counterfeiting death shall not be cowardice but a method to keep “the true and perfect image of life” (*IH4*. 5.4.119). Here it is obvious that Falstaff provides justified rationales from such paradoxes between the counterfeit of death which leads to the image of life and the counterfeit of life which renders honor insensible to those who willingly die for such fame, only for the sake to tie their names to these honorable titles. But even more noteworthy is how Falstaff differs from Vernon on the role of discretion when Falstaff argues “The better part of valor is discretion” (*IH4*. 5.4.119-120). Whereas Vernon evokes discretion to reinforce the prevalent ideal of honor, Falstaff does not attempt to enhance this cliché but rebuts this concept by calling all those assumptions into doubt, if not nullify. Why we should not insist upon this old-days heroic ideal for honor? A part of Falstaff’s previous reply is to show how ironic and implausible Hotspur’s honor, being once widely appreciated, now stolen by another who is utterly undeserving, Falstaff. With his counterfeited wound on Hotspur, Falstaff establishes one part of his skeptical questioning that honor is neither immortal nor steadfast.

Another part of Falstaff’s reply, however, focuses on two kinds of discretion with which each adduces contrary understanding about honor. One line of thought is to view honor as of essences, and hence is real and true as those concrete objects are. Yet it is important to recall how Cicero’s argument already refutes this assumption. However, another line of thought leaves the possibility to reconsider whether honor might be not only void of essences as Cicero explicates, but in effects as empty as air.

So far my argument explicating how first type of deliberation thus far shall manifest how such deliberation is liable to be tyrannical particularly when it is not

continuous with the flexibility and freedom as skeptics would practice. On the other hand, to extend the inquiries of doubt into the methods and contexts would require us to question with freedoms not only toward those we find mostly assured of, but more importantly with the persistence, even if this skeptic deliberating might induce conclusions liable to deprive us of our security. Here, this contrast shall now suggest us to turn to the second type of discretion, as skeptics and Falstaff embody within *1* and *2 Henry IV* in forth chapter.



Chapter Four

Self-doubt on Display—Falstaff’s Questioning on Honor

Before I begin to analyze how Falstaff would manifest the skeptic mindset, I shall first clarify what exactly it means when I emphasize that the skeptic deliberation might deprive us of our security. To be sure, skeptics exhibit a tendency of self-questioning to confront their possible errors through reexamining the principles with which they operate and hence derive their conclusions. Of this self-referential feature, Hamlin has termed it “the failure of uncertainty” (6). Hamlin observes that skeptics, who are beset by uncertainty resulting from constant doubts, attempt to keep their minds tranquil by suspending judgment to escape uncertainty (6). Unfortunately this line of reasoning does not thereby exempt skeptics from skeptical doubts as well (Hamlin 6). When Montaigne questions in turn whether such suspension necessarily render us peaceful, this suspicion shall highlight that even the principles deduced from skeptical mindset cannot escape from our scrutiny (Hamlin 6).

Skepticism then becomes a mental response to question a seemingly assured concept or conclusion, and its scrutiny provides us with freedom to follow not just those rules with which we judge, but to examine those judgments and rules themselves. In this regard dramas embody this feature of self-questioning as those of skeptics who examine their solution, the suspension of judgment, by means of constant skeptical questioning and counter-examples (Hamlin 6). For example, tragedies demonstrate that uncertainty, far from what skeptics believe to be relieving, may in fact produce anguish (Hamlin 6). With this demonstration tragedies in effect elicit similar deliberations analogous to skeptics who enforce their doubts even on skepticism itself (Hamlin 6).

To examine our judgment self-referentially demonstrates that even skepticism

itself is not exempt from its own scrutiny, and hence originates anxiety. In part, this anxiety derives from what skeptics attempt to formulate, an all-encompassing framework to subject everything into doubt, including those which dictate and formulate skepticism itself. Like skeptics, however, Falstaff exemplifies this all-encompassing, self-referential doubt – a version that rather initiates audiences, than Falstaff himself, to speculate upon. Indeed, although Hamlin argues dramatists have appropriated skeptic subjects to offer divergent viewpoints on a given, contentious topic, so does Falstaff.

The problem of which honor could be itself both a counterfeit and a production of counterfeited evidence is again our focus. This time Falstaff distinguishes himself from Vernon or Hotspur, who treat honor as a supreme, concrete being. Given that Kastan links Falstaff to nominalism on the issue of honor, we might develop alternative viewpoints in accordance with the way Falstaff thinks about honor: honor is as empty and changeable as names are.

Why is valuing honor, even if it is the indicator of renown, implausible? Perhaps one problem is that Falstaff attributes honor to both of “a word” (*IH4*. 5.1.134) and “Air” (*IH4*. 5.1.135). The former reduces honor to be merely “a word” coincides with Hardie’s claim that honor and glory are nothing more than the result and production of words circulating among societies (Hardie 4-5). On Hardie’s view, words, either spoken or written, are the origin of honor because they either record the deeds or reflect what general people might evaluate the agent for those deeds (Hardie 4-5, 12). In particular, Hardie introduces Stewart’s (1994) argument on honor in which Stewart links the concept of honor to those of good names (12). In this sense honor is like names to the extent that both stand for a favorable kind of reputation such as fame or honor (Hardie 5, 11-12).

If Hardie's link is true, we might be able to explain why Falstaff would identify honor with nominalism. Since honor is similar to names in the sense that both function as indicators or labeling of specific heroic actions, honor is indeed a kind of names with which it both implies the opinion from the general public and the titles it grants unto the alleged deserving individual as Hardie acknowledges. Both honor and names are conceptual labels that mark individual's merited honor in accordance with their actions.

Yet what seems to be problematic is that both honor and name are basically developed through words, a medium Hardie characterizes as transient and changeable particularly when it formulates rumor or gossip (3). If inquiries into the nature of honor and name reveal that they are nothing but changeable, probably unreliable records or words, it eventually raises the question whether the name itself is important at all. Indeed, when Juliet questions "What's in a name?" (*Rom.* 2.2.43), she reasons that names are nothing substantial because they neither affect nor are relevant to the essence of the entities to which those names refer just as roses would smell the same even if we name them by "any other word" (*Rom.* 2.2.44).

But more crucial is her final conclusion that Romeo would be still as perfect even if he is without the same title since it "is no part of thee" (*Rom.* 2.2.48) as those bodily parts are to a man. The same applies to our understanding for the word "honor" that the word itself may not as significant as we used to think. Although Juliet is mostly concerned with the link between the name and the individual it stands for, we might better think of names not just as a way to address a specific individual, but more in the sense that names, particularly when Juliet mentions Romeo by his last name Montague, also imply family reputation as honor does unto an individual. We shall remember that her question of "What's Montague?" (*Rom.* 2.2.40) appears to be

a possible response to Falstaff's catechism when she argues the name itself is "nor hand nor foot/Nor arm nor face, [nor any other part]/Belonging to a man" (*Rom.* 2.2.40-42). In the similar vein, honor can neither "set to a leg" (*IH4.* 5.1.131) nor take away "the grief of a wound" (*IH4.* 5.1.132). Far from practical, honor may in fact do not consist of any parts of an individual just as Juliet describes about names. Given that honor and names gain their credit by words, and given that words could be unreliable foundation with which to produce biased records or viewpoints, honor may not be satisfactory for its function to describe or record specific deeds of an individual. In effect, honor could be irrelevant to the essence of the individual as names do, although it seems to be so for most of us.

Hence the implication of this view is pivotal because Falstaff's reply would challenge what honor actually is. If the word "honor" is nothing more than names in words, we shall not construe honor in the realistic way as Hotspur would. In other words, what the challenge in the question of "What is in that word 'honor'?" implies is that the concept in question might not be actual or real, but seems to be rather arbitrary because both the word and the concept for honor are merely labels for an artificial, factitious concept derived from mental construct. Hence Falstaff is dubious about "What is that 'honor'?" except nothing but air. In this regard this line of thought is consistent with Kastan's prior depiction to categorize Falstaff's view into nominalism, which, according to Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra's (2015) classification, a position that upholds abstract objects do not exist (pars. 3).

Yet more is problematic than the assumption to construe honor as realistic is the implication that our understanding for honor could be erroneous. Henceforth raises the second problem that, if our basis to understand and attribute that concept honor could be false, it seems that Falstaff also implies whether honor itself could be

doubtful. In part, this skeptical doubt about honor derives from Falstaff's instances of "insensible" honor in which honor could only coexist with the dead because honor is susceptible to rumor originated from the biases of the living (*IH4*. 5.1.138-139). What this incompatibility between honor and the living hence induces the problem Hardie underlines. To the extent that honor is dependent on the words and public opinions about the individual in dispute, honor in this sense is more or less like a specific type of rumor circulating in words regarding a certain individual (Hardie 4-5).

In this respect to associate honor with death seems to be consistent with what happens in *1 Henry IV*. When Falstaff utters "There's honor for you!" (*IH4*. 5.3.32-33) to Sir Walter Blunt's corpse, such situation precisely exemplifies this link since Sir Walter Blunt should now be exempt from the kind of "worldly concerns" (Kastan 322) slanders or rumors might bring about if he were alive, hence Falstaff's claim "Here's no vanity" (*IH4*. 5.1.33). Although what Falstaff formulates seems to offer a tentative remedy to secure honor, thus safeguarding our ideal image for immortal honor, still it is rather unnerving when we become aware that this sketch of honor evokes problems about Hotspur's death. One problem is the aforesaid instance in which Hotspur's death does not seem to be sufficient enough to secure honor after his defeat. Another problem arises when Hotspur's death refutes this line of thought is mostly because Falstaff counterfeits the wound in Hotspur's thigh, even after Hotspur's death, so as to make a false impression for honor (*IH4*. 5.4.128). What Falstaff suggests is that many preconceptions among these dogmatic concepts are simply fallible, especially if we examine those thoughts with the skeptic mindset Falstaff's catechism exemplifies.

Chapter Five

Falstaff as the Origin of Skepticism: a Rejection Justified

Although oftentimes uncertainty seems to offer liberties with which we are able to revise those dubious concepts as skeptics rightly apply it, at some point this exact freedom might be subject to errors through intentional manipulations. Perhaps we could detect the crux in which uncertainty no longer motivates the type of skeptic deliberation but mostly dubious excuses and expedience when Blinde observes that rumor develops and conveys information on the basis of misunderstanding (Blinde 42). However, this exact principle of misunderstanding is also applicable to whoever manipulates rumor to produce information (Blinde 42). The point for rumor therefore is that it “transcends misunderstandings not by resolving them but by removing the need to get the story straight” (Blinde 42).

What this passage implies is substantial. Although Blinde neither tilts rumor toward specific views on uncertainty, nor renders explicit links to what rumor might entail if everyone is liable to wield this freedom toward misunderstanding, her words do suggest the danger ensuing from explicit manipulations when either individuals or groups render this freedom to justify whatever is expedient for themselves. Because Blinde previously describes rumor as more of a nature to overlook than to confront the accuracy of the matter in dispute, her version of rumor indicates that rumor in fact concerns more about producing probable alternative views than seeking the truth of the event itself.

Moreover, because Blinde further advocates that other characters more or less mirror the personified Rumor with the way “rumor makes meaning through misunderstanding” (42), both Rumor and rumor in this regard would allow the exact liberties for characters to promote extraneous, if not falsified, explanations suited to

their devised purposes. Hence the focus of rumor is more a matter of expediency for whoever attempts to utilize rumor to induce those alternative intelligence and reports favorable for themselves, “to make meanings,” than a matter of accuracy, “to get the story straight” (Blinde 42).

Now the focus of uncertainty becomes crucial to our analysis of Falstaff’s nature, along with those inherited affinities that critics have linked Falstaff to the emblematic Rumor, the features associated with this social phenomenon, rumor *per se*. Qualities such as uncertainty is obvious for scholars such as Wiegandt and Blinde, but neither associate this feature with skepticism, which Hamlin characterizes to be inspirational for Renaissance texts. Even if critics generally identify rumor with Falstaff, either on the basis of emblematic traditions or social phenomenon, it is not clear how Falstaff manipulates uncertainty to unfold our doubt on verification. In this chapter, these links shall dominate the forthcoming discussion about Falstaff as the origin who fosters skepticism.

There seem to be several misconceptions about the framework with which we make reference to Falstaff from the perspective of Rumor. One is the view that because Falstaff is the emblematic Rumor, we thereby suppose that Falstaff would necessarily reflect the type of behavior Rumor proclaims in the Induction: to spread and circulate falsity. It seems to be so common that we oftentimes overlook the fact that there are implicit differences between Rumor and Falstaff about the way how each would apply rumorous qualities. Oftentimes these qualities appear to be so apparent that critics likely conclude that Falstaff thereby embodies Rumor in his way to substitute lies for truth. For instance, Wiegandt holds that Falstaff embodies personified Rumor in his similar way to replace truth with lies in the case of Coleville: Falstaff replaces the truth that he is in fact a coward with the lies that he captures

Coleville by his hands (Wiegandt 151-152).

Strictly speaking, although both Rumor and Falstaff would sometimes manifest their implicit attempts to beguile others with pieces of false news, we should be aware that this pattern does not always apply to Falstaff particularly because Falstaff appropriates both truthful and falsified information as parts of his stories. In contrast to appropriating falsified, but seemingly sensible, information as Rumor appears in 2 *Henry IV*, Falstaff also incorporates truthful accounts into his scheme for persuasions and justifications. Of this disparity it shall pointedly direct us to distinguish Falstaff from Rumor even though Falstaff indeed inherits traits derived from rumor. That is, inheriting traits of rumor does not mean that characters derived from rumor necessarily act upon the same pattern. We might envisage that Falstaff and Rumor inherits features of rumor and manifest some of those characteristics respectively, but those inherited traits could neither predict nor guarantee that the principles upon which characters act always go together.

To put it differently, it would be somewhat confusing to yield a type of Falstaff as Wiegandt describes. If we have to fit Falstaff into the framework of Rumor by arguing that Falstaff would necessarily act in the way Rumor professes its office to replace truth with lies, we would overlook the fact that Rumor's intention presented in the play is in effect different from Falstaff's, and hence their behavior differs. Even if we disregard Wiegandt's view by recalling that Rumor declares its purpose for "Stuffing the ears of men with false reports" (2*H4*. Ind.8), it would be mistaken to identify Falstaff with Rumor in terms of the manifest attempt to substitute falsity for truth.

Another misconception of some critics is that because Falstaff and Rumor seem to be so akin to one another, Falstaff's intention is analogous, if not identical, to

Rumor. For example, Blinde argues that Falstaff in principle works in the way Rumor “manipulated linguistic half-truths” to construct history in virtue of their shared images of tongues (46). Blinde argues for a type of Falstaff who shares a unifying goal with Rumor, a goal that goes beyond “notions of true and false” (35). It is as if Falstaff aims at co-editing history with Rumor in *2 Henry IV* with the idea that “history is fundamentally imaginative” (Blinde 35) in mind.

Although Blinde seeks a unified explanation between Falstaff and historical narratives in general, it would be dangerous to conflate Falstaff’s motivation and Rumor’s simply because they exhibit similar attributes or behavioral patterns in the play. To be sure, a prototypical personification such as Rumor would be different from theatrical characters which exhibit much more complex mindsets in respect to their responses and motivations within plays. Indeed, it is widely recognized that personified characters like those that appear in morality plays are oftentimes flat characters whose purpose is to visualize, rather simply, a specific abstract feature such as Evil or Envy to convey the moral of the story. Unlike characters which more or less simulate actual human beings, personified characters are at most labels for abstract concepts only.

Yet certainly this is not to say that characters that appear realistic do not have theatrical functions. Nonetheless, we should keep in mind that personified characters lack intentions and thoughts complex or reasonable enough to qualify as those actual characters that do manifest unique psychological transitions or attitudes. It thus marks the stark contrast between Rumor and Falstaff despite of the fact that they share some of the rumorous qualities or behavioral patterns derived from such literary prototypical tradition. Even if Falstaff sometimes manifest similar patterns to spread lies as Rumor propagates “smooth comforts false” (*2H4*. Ind.40) over the actual news

about Hotspurs' death, there is a distinct contrast between Rumor's and Falstaff's motivation behind why they would do so.

Indeed, as I have differentiated personified characters from those realistic ones, it is not difficult to discern that Rumor appears almost as an utter theatrical prop whose aim is to introduce the forthcoming storyline and motives in the subsequent scenes. The point of "Why is Rumor here?" (2H4. Ind.22) is to "noise abroad that Harry Monmouth fell/Under the wrath of noble Hotspur's sword" (2H4. Ind.29-30), a piece of rumorous news that turns out to be a lie in the next scene. In this regard, Rumor might be intentional in a way differing from Falstaff because its sheer purpose is merely to unfold the upcoming events for audiences. Although Rumor does present ideas and images relevant to upcoming scenes and thereby offers us hints to ponder on issues pertaining to the main plot, we must admit that its presence is limited only within the Induction. Nowhere else could we find its appearance again after the Induction.

In contrast, why Falstaff conveys falsity seems to be far more intentional, and indeed personal, than simply for the sake of intruding storylines. There are already plenty of examples illustrating Falstaff conveys falsity in previous chapters. Examples include Falstaff's lies such as "if I fought not with fifty of them, I am a bunch of radish" (1H4. 2.4.185-186) and "I have scap'd by miracle . . . my sword hack'd like a hand-saw" (1H4. 2.4.165-166, 168) in the case of Gadshill. These are "the incomprehensible lies" (1H4. 1.2.187) that subsequently rebutted by the fact that Falstaff flees from the fight, and hacks his dagger only afterwards to appear valiant, let alone Falstaff's damage unto Hotspur's corpse only to affect himself the hero who has "fought a long hour by Shrewsbury clock" (1H4. 5.4.148) defeating Hotspur. Obviously all these lies point to one single aim, that is, to snatch any potential profit.

It is a critical difference imbedded in motivation. Lying becomes far more self-interested for Falstaff than for Rumor because it would bring what Falstaff desires for, in this case, honor.

Indeed, lying oftentimes presupposes specific goals of which the liars are consciously aware. In spite of this presumption that lying seems to always aim at certain purposes, Saint Augustine's challenge to this idea would perhaps offer us suggestions to differentiate Falstaff from Rumor.

In differentiating types of liars, Frankfurt acknowledges that Saint Augustine's has classified eight kinds of lying, one of which being "rare and extraordinary" (59). On Augustine's view, most liars that have purposes except for lying itself are not truly liars since for such type of liars lying at most is the means to achieve their goals, not the ends (Frankfurt 57). However, Augustine contends that there is a peculiar kind of liars whose goal in doing so is precisely for lying (Frankfurt 58). In regard to this singular type of liars, Frankfurt aptly describes this group as the lover of lying, who "loves to lie and passes his time in the joy of lying" (58).

With Augustine's distinction in mind, we might further characterize Falstaff and Rumor into two distinct groups of liars, one that lies to obtain various goals while another is purely for the sake of lying. Clearly Augustine's account of ordinary liars would explain Falstaff's reason for lying. Falstaff lies for the sake of either obtaining unearned reputation or evading consequences thereof. On the other hand, Rumor seems to yield lying both its means and end. If it is not compelling enough to say rumor appears aimless to lie as a flat character, it would be tempting to think of Rumor in Augustine's portrayal of liars, particularly those who lie solely out of enjoyment. In this regard, Rumor appears aimless to lie is not because it truly lacks any reasonable goals, but because lying is the goal in and of itself. This view explains

what appears to be a puzzling state of mind if we have to examine Rumor's motive, and would incorporate both the psychological complexities with its theatrical purpose. In short, both critics attempt to characterize a unifying property between Falstaff and Rumor, and apply patterned generalizations to accommodate Falstaff's behavior in the way Rumor does. However, since each character might bear distinct motivations, it would be improper to infer the motive of a character from another's simply because they seem to display similar behavioral patterns.

Yet how would this disparity affect our understanding of the ways Falstaff and Rumor deploy uncertainty separately? To put it differently, if there is some truth to Blinde's principle about the way other characters follow the pattern of Rumor by resonating consciously with rumor to produce the type of misunderstanding in accord with their purposes, this observation shall also apply to an individual character to explain his/her elusive nature and actions.

Perhaps one possible answer is imbedded in our definition of liars. It would seem inappropriate to assume that Falstaff is thus a liar. From the previous passages, various examples support the claim that Falstaff appears to be a liar. But to equate Falstaff with liars is to ignore the fact that Falstaff sometimes utters truth as well. In each case, to define Falstaff as either a truth-teller or a liar is insufficient, because each concept only designates a portion of Falstaff's actions. Of course this is not to say that Falstaff is thus neither a liar nor truth-teller. To be sure, my attempt here is to characterize Falstaff with the most befitting concept so that we can incorporate most of Falstaff's behavior in this class. If we have to designate Falstaff as the liar, we must examine the prerequisites to define a liar beforehand.

To lie effectually requires at least at three levels: (1) the listeners are unaware of what the speakers intend to, namely, to deceive, (2) the speakers have both the belief

what they utter is false, and more significantly, the intent to deceive (Frankfurt 8), and hence (3) the deceivers at least heed their speeches to accord with reality (Frankfurt 55-56) in order to make lies believable. For (1), what Lord Chief Justice utters, “I am well acquainted with your manner of wrenching the true cause the false way” (2H4. 2.1.109-111), is indicative that Falstaff’s listeners, Hal and Lord Chief Justice for example, probably perceive lying to be what Falstaff is inclined to. Such awareness and knowledge are preliminary to withdraw our belief to take Falstaff as a liar if to deceive becomes impossible. In particular, it would be difficult to construe lying if Falstaff might be knowledgeable what Hal and Lord Chief Justice would react, given their knowledge, in turn, about Falstaff’s disposition.

For (2), to define Falstaff to be a liar seems to be less plausible if we consider Falstaff’s speeches from his self-depiction in Gadshill, a description which marks Falstaff to be a deprived youth that “young men must live” (1H4. 2.2.90-91), and his encounter with Lord Chief Justice, “You that are old consider not the capacities of us that are young” (2H4. 1.2.173-174). Recall Frankfurt argues that to lie requires the liar to have both the belief of what he says is false, and the intent to utilize this false claim to deceive. To the first feature Falstaff certainly knows what he utters is false because both utterances are self-evidently contradictory, almost ridiculous, when Falstaff names himself “in the scroll of youth” (2H4. 1.2.178-179) but is in fact “blasted with antiquity” (2H4. 1.2.184).

Nevertheless, because this self-contradiction is so obvious, we might question whether Falstaff does intend to lie given the fact that both speeches are so ridiculous to such a degree that they are hardly believable. Indeed, here we might have sufficient reason, for (3), to believe that Falstaff does not even intend to deceive when what Falstaff utters falls so far behind to accord with truth. Hence this excessive

incoherence between what Falstaff claims and what reality is renders Falstaff's alleged intent to deceive impossible.

On the other hand, this incoherence needs not reduce whatever Falstaff utters to falsity. Far from falsity, it could be truthful of what Falstaff claims if we were to identify his speeches both in and out of their contexts. On the face of it, what Falstaff describes is oftentimes truthful. Albeit jokingly, Falstaff is right to point out his weakness that "Thou seest I have more flesh than another man, and therefore more frailty" (*IH4*. 3.3.166-168). Albeit cruelly, Falstaff rightly argues that his soldiers needs not be brilliant because they would end up to be "food for powder" (*IH4*. 4.2.66). Other all too common examples abound, again, such as Falstaff's noteworthy catechism on honor (*IH4*. 5.1.121-141), one which treats honor as nothing but air, and his claim on counterfeit (*IH4*. 5.4.105-127), as essential to procure life.

We should best understand these remarks as excuses to justify whatever Falstaff aims at, despite of their seemingly truth-telling feature: either his cowardice, or the bribery he extracts from those who avert his enlistment. If Blinde's pattern is indicative of the way Falstaff exerts freedoms derived from this creative ability of Rumor to justify his self-interest, her idea at least would allow for the starting point with which we could possibly explain how Falstaff promotes skepticism. Both Rumor and Falstaff seem to resemble rumor with their patterns to create plausible scenarios of explanation, but here Falstaff is much more intentional than Rumor to put this freedom into sophisticated methodology to justify dubious excuses.

While Blinde identifies the personified Rumour in *2 Henry IV* to be potentially creative and flexible to produce the seemingly coherent history out of disjointed events in virtue of the indeterminate quality of rumor (37), Falstaff takes this creative quality as a point not to edit pieces of historical fragments into coherent narratives but

to gloss over his self-contradictory excuses into persuasive, at least plausible, justifications. Expedience of this kind is consistent with Frankfurt's distinction between liars and bullshitters. Despite its obscenity, here Frankfurt's adoption of the term "bullshit" is significant because it aptly expresses the expedient attitude. For the sake of clarity, I adopt the Frankfurt's use of this term in the following analysis.

I shall then turn my focus to Frankfurt's analysis, especially when he first argues that what differentiate bullshit, or nonsense, from lies resides in both speakers' motivation and whether each acts upon the imperative truth prescribes (51-55). To differentiate, Frankfurt offers an elaborate analysis of why motivation matters if we were to distinguish liars from bullshitters.

According to Frankfurt's distinction on bullshitters, whether an utterance is truthful or not is important only to the extent that its truthfulness is pertinent to his/her purposes (56). On Frankfurt's view, truthfulness is not the key for bullshitters that it is for truth-tellers and liars because their motivations are in principle disparate (54-55). On the face of it, truth-tellers and liars seem to be at odds with their behavior from which we oftentimes observe that liars aim at disseminating falsehood while truth-tellers aim at the reverse (Frankfurt 56). Yet the principle with which liars and truth-tellers presuppose is in fact identical (Frankfurt 56). Both prescribe their statements in accordance with truth, despite contrary outcomes (Frankfurt 56): truth-tellers modulate their utterance in accord with truth to conform to reality while liars steer by the principle of truth to generate false statements ingeniously so as to "insert a particular falsehood . . . in order to avoid the consequences of having that point occupied by the truth" (Frankfurt 51). In other words, we might best think of liars and truth-tellers not as distinctly separate, but as quite analogous when both uphold truth as their measure of actions.

Here truth appears to be the guideline for truth-tellers and liars. The principle of truth clarifies why the motivation underlying two seemingly opposing groups, namely, liars and truth-tellers matters. Yet it would be misleading to say that whoever manifests similar patterns, particularly those of liar's, also relies on this principle of truth. To be sure, to lie is a complex idea. On Frankfurt's view, it involves at least two primary steps in order to put lies in work: liars must belie both the state of what reality actually is and the state of what they believe to be true (7-8, 54-55). This means that the liars shall falsely represent reality and their belief about what is real as if they conceive it to be true.

On the other hand, to bullshit is much simpler, more flexible and even more creative than lying (Frankfurt 52-53). To bullshit presupposes misrepresentation neither of any beliefs about reality nor the states of reality itself (Frankfurt 54). The only defining feature that marks bullshitters substantially from liars and truth-tellers is that to bullshit does involve misrepresentation of a specific kind: their motivations (Frankfurt 54). For bullshitters, anything that is irrelevant to achieving their goals is not under consideration (Frankfurt 56). The implication behind such an idea is that we might best think about bullshit more in the way of fakery than falsity (Frankfurt 47). In this case bullshit is not necessarily false, but might be true as well (Frankfurt 47-48). For bullshitters, the point concerns neither what is true nor whether what they utters corresponds with truth, but whatever is useful and expedient for their purposes (Frankfurt 56).

On this view Falstaff is more attentive to what is useful for his profit, to "turn diseases to commodity" (*2H4*. 1.2.248) than just utilizing whatever could be true or deceptive. Like bullshitters, while what Falstaff utters may not necessarily be wrong, the point for Falstaff resides neither in truth nor in falsity, but expediency.

Because of its indifferent nature to what truth is, Frankfurt argues that bullshitters neither act what truth dictates nor attempt to conform to reality (56). Lies would not resemble nonsense but truth. Albeit contrariwise, lies and truth at least presuppose what truth is, and act accordingly: lies oppose to what is true and replaces truth with falsehood, while truth reports what is genuine and correct (Frankfurt 60-61). Frankfurt thereby argues that bullshit is much more detrimental to truth than lies are, because it is indifferent virtually to the significance of truth (61).

Thus Frankfurt deduces important implications between nonsense and skepticism. This indifference to truth bullshitters develop entails skepticism that denies our capability to differentiate truth from falsity, even undermining the concept for objective inquiry (Frankfurt 64). More precisely, this prevalent indifference apparently entails skeptic consequences either to “deny that we can have any reliable access to an objective reality” or “to reject the possibility of knowing how things truly are” (Frankfurt 64). The denial of the former would lead to doubts on methods for verification. On the other hand, the denial of the latter would leave us with utter distrust about our ability to know anything.

Pertinent implications concerning Falstaff’s nature start to accumulate, if we were to refer what Frankfurt argues to what Falstaff does. Expediency is the key that Falstaff is the agent who fosters skepticism throughout *1* and *2 Henry IV*, when Falstaff manipulates various methodologies for verification, such as logic and evidence, to justify whatever is advantageous for himself, be it ocular or acoustic, false or truthful. His indifference to accord his use of logic and evidence with truth entails skepticism for our methodologies to verify what truth is, since these methodologies are neither exempt from manipulation nor errors. What’s more, this skepticism, which Frankfurt believes to be the complete denial that neither “we can

have any reliable access to an objective reality” nor “the possibility of knowing how things truly are” (Frankfurt 64), does resonate skepticism we anticipate when, for example, Northumberland is skeptical, in *2 Henry IV*, that Lord Bardolph relies on “hearing” to be the evidence to verify that Hotspur is alive (*2H4*.1.1.24-27).

Indeed, Falstaff seems to originate skepticism, even on those seemingly most credible, ocular proofs for example, to render everything into doubt. When Warwick states that “Rumor doth double, like the voice and echo” (*2H4*. 3.1.97), words such as “voice” and “echo” shall pointedly suggest acoustic evidence, including reports or news, is one of the ways we verify rumor. In part this emphasis derives from Rumor’s acoustic quality Wiegandt specifies, when ocular proof such as witnesses seems to be more reliable source and evidence than what is merely of hearsay for Northumberland to obtain the news, if we were to attain the truth accurately on Hotspur’s death (146).

Nonetheless whether witness or ocular proof is the reliable vehicle remains contentious. I would like to argue that Falstaff, along with hearing, which rumor employs to be both a potential and doubtful vehicle to obtain truth, seems to subject both hearing and ocular proof to doubt altogether. Upon his meeting with Lord Chief Justice in *2 Henry IV*, Falstaff is Rumor himself when his speech acts like deafness to exclude whatever is “the voice of the law” (Wiegandt 151). Nevertheless I shall point out that it is equally crucial if we turn to the ways Falstaff addresses to excuse himself. Falstaff has for several times remarked that “I *heard* say your lordship was sick” (*2H4*. 1.2.95, emphasis added), “I *hear* his majesty is return’d with some discomfort from Wales” (*2H4*. 1.2.103-104, emphasis added) and “I *hear* moreover, his Highness is fall’n into this same whoreson apoplexy” (*2H4*. 1.2.107-108, emphasis added). The excess dependence on hearing and hearsay does echo Wiegandt’s characterization of the acoustic quality in rumor (144). Yet this repetition to hear, almost compulsively, is

also an example that manifests how Falstaff misuses hearing and hearsay as the evidence to support and justify his dubious claims, the sickness of Lord Chief Justice, and more importantly, the king.

Wiegandt rightly points out the link between Rumor in the Induction, and Northumberland's judgment upon which source, either from Lord Bardolph's hearing (2H4. 1.1.24-27) or from Morton's witnesses (2H4. 1.1.106-107), shall be more credible to verify Hotspur's death (146). On this point I would like to point out when Lord Chief Justice, in response to a series of Falstaff's hearsay on the disease of deafness (2H4. 1.2.116-117), his remark to describe Falstaff "fall'n into the disease" (2H4. 1.2.118) is significant. Unlike what the Justice depicts to be "you hear not what I told you" (2H4. 1.2.119), Falstaff is virtually capable of hearing. As Falstaff remarks, the only problem is his "disease of not list'ning, the malady of not marking" (2H4. 1.2.121-122). What Falstaff remarks thus differentiates hearing from listening. Far from what Lord Chief Justice requires to be truth-telling, "Be it as it is" (2H4. 1.2.114), the deafness Falstaff entails is an indifferent attitude akin to Frankfurt's bullshitters, of which their attitude minds neither attention nor awareness, as what requires us for listening and marking, for truth .

This reminds us of what Falstaff states, "I am not a double man" (1H4. 5.4.138), and more importantly, in response to what Hal exclaims, "I prithee speak, we will not trust our eyes/ Without our ears: thou art not what thou seem'st" (1H4. 5.4.135-137). These lines are indicative to underline the possibilities that both ocular, along with acoustic proofs, are subjected to be dubious when it comes to understand between the truth of what "thou art" and the ocular evidence of "what thou seem'st." More specifically, we have sufficient ground to believe that this is another case to challenge whether our verification is always intact when we turn to what happens just a few

lines earlier: Falstaff counterfeits his death to stay alive, and this counterfeit serves to be the ocular proof to justify, in turn, Hal's belief on Falstaff's death (*2H4*.

5.4.102-121).

The ocular proofs Falstaff counterfeits, one on his death and another for his honor to defeat Hotspur (*2H4*. 5.4.113-128), hence offer the basis on matters for more distinct focus. From thence various ocular proofs begin to implicate different justifications in terms of how each agent deduces his or her own conclusion. What Bardolph "meteors" indicate (*1H4*. 2.4.319) is either, from what Hal deduces, "hot livers and cold purses" (*1H4*. 2.4.323) or, as Bardolph reasons, "choler" (*1H4*. 2.4.324). What an earthquake signifies is either an indicator of, from Glendower's point of view, the birth of a personage, himself, or as Hotspur speculates, a coincidence haply occurs on Glendower's birthday (*1H4*. 3.1.13-33, 35-42). Moreover, it becomes even more discrepant between the feigned ocular evidence that Henry IV situates himself between "dress'd myself in such humility" (*1H4*. 3.2.51) to attain his popularity, and his self-justification to usurp the crown as if "I had no such intent/ But that necessity so bow'd the state/ That I and greatness were compell'd to kiss" (*2H4*. 3.1.72-74).

This discrepancy, between the ocular proofs and the claim to be justified, again, presents itself when Hotspur emphasizes Henry IV's hypocrisy to "seem to weep/ Over his [country's] wrongs" (*1H4*. 4.3.81-82) and, with "seeming brow of justice" (*1H4*. 4.3.83) that Henry IV does mislead the crowd, with these ocular proofs, to justify his innocence. Given Falstaff's rumorous nature as bullshitters, these lines also shadow skepticism to reinforce questions on the link between our verification system and truth. Moreover, because bullshitters and rumor share this feature to be the carrier for both potentially truthful and falsified information, Falstaff's indifference to be

neither aware of nor accord with truth and reality not only results in our doubt upon the possibility to attain truth, but detrimental to truth itself. Just as Frankfurt argues that indifference as such renders objective inquiries inconceivable (65), so does Falstaff's misuse of methodologies for verification subjects our ability to obtain and verify truth doubtful, particularly when this skepticism becomes substantive to reflect pertinent scenes other than Falstaff throughout *Henry IV 1* and *2*.

On the other hand, we might recall the examples when Hal complains how reports "have sway'd/Your Majesty's good thoughts away from me" (*IH4*. 3.2.130-131) even if those reports are false. When Hal saves his father from Douglas' attack, we shall notice how rumor appears in the speeches of Hal and the King. We might compare the King's recovery of Hal's "lost opinion" (*IH4*. 4.4.48) with Hal's complaint about rumor that "they did me too much injury/That ever said I heark'ned for your death" (*IH4*. 4.4.51-52). The word "heark'ned" reminds us of the acoustic quality of rumor. It seems obvious that the cause of Hal's lost opinion derives from the unverified general knowledge of the mob. Again, Hal's infamy appears largely out of the circulating, unverified, hearsay from the general public.

The problem of verification in this example also raises another issue about the way we could turn this general hearsay into the "definite knowledge" of truth and falsity. In addition to Morton's witness, Hal offers an alternative method to prove the rumorously infamy false via actions. Although the King once claims Hal has regained his "sovereign trust" (*IH4*. 3.2.161) after Hal promises to redeem himself with the defeat of Hotspur, this distrust remains still until Hal finally proves himself in Shrewsbury. When Hal defends his father from Douglas' assault, Hal's action serves as the soundest evidence to verify all those rumors against himself to be false. This alternative to verifying dubious information would turn rumor into definite

knowledge.

The idea that actions are proofs to verify dubious information also suggests why Falstaff's rejection is apt. We shall recall how the King displays his worry that Hal might be another Richard II if Hal remains "stale and cheap to vulgar company" (*IH4*. 3.2.41). Many of King's lines indicate that most of those rumors anticipate Hal's downfall when "the soul of every man/Prophetically do forethink thy fall" (*IH4*. 3.2.37-38). In order to "purge/Myself of many I am charg'd withal" (*IH4*. 3.2.20-21), Hal must take actions "in reproof of many tales devis'd" (*IH4*. 3.2.23) his father has heard. Both the reference of "tales devis'd" and opinion suggest that rumors are so prevalent that words alone can not be sufficient justification. Indeed, the only way to falsify that rumor about "vulgar company" is to reject Falstaff outright. If Hal aims at "breaking through the foul and ugly mists" of both rumor and vulgar companions, to reject Falstaff is necessary. Only through his own actions could Hal "falsify men's hopes" (*IH4*. 1.2.211). Only through rejection could Hal turn all that unverified hearsay against him into the definite knowledge of his reformation.

This issue therefore should offer the alternative trajectory to understand Falstaff, his rejection, and its controversy in relation to the construction for both plays. When Falstaff outcries "Is not the truth the truth?" (*IH4*. 2.4.229-230), we should not only take it to be solely comical. What is unsettling about Falstaff' is that Falstaff's frame of mind would be destructive to our understanding about truth, and shall thus be rejected.

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