

Henry v and the rover
reveal not only the
strategies of power
but also anxieties ...

[Business](#)



From the two texts, we are presented with two different strategies of power. In Henry V we focus of the strategies of power in view of war that King Henry rages on France. In contrast, The Rover's strategies of power look at the relationship between sexes during a period of time where males dominate the society and women are looked down upon. In view of these strategies, we will also look at anxieties that arise from the possession of these powers and how those with the power work around it.

Henry V is an English history play based on the life of King Henry the V. At the start of the play, we observe how King Henry looks for justification to his claim of the French crown. Although King Henry understands that a legitimate claim would mean war with France and would cost the lives of thousands of men, he seeks for more information about the "Salic law" that the French is using to challenge King Henry's claim. Being a righteous Christian king, King Henry forewarns The Archbishop of Canterbury to tell him the truth to his rightful claim to the French crown. He urges the Archbishop to speak with "your conscience washed / As pure as sin with baptism.

" (I. 2. 31-32) Here we see that the king is not just concerned with just matters of the state but with the conscience of the entire state as well. Despite the long explanation from the Archbishop, the king repeats his question "May I with right and conscience make this claim?" (I. 2. 96) The Archbishop realising the king's need to have a clear conscience in declaring war, relieves him of his responsibility as he proclaims "The sin upon my head, dread sovereign!" (I.

2. 97) Once the king's conscience is clear and that of the state as well, only then did he agree to stake his claim to the French crown. Here is the first instance where we see the king, despite his power, is afraid of the consequences of his actions if the intentions are wrong. In order to protect himself he manipulates the Archbishop into taking the blame if England wrongly wages war on France. However the king did not push the responsibilities of the war only onto the shoulders of the Archbishop, he also took the opportunity to push the responsibility onto the shoulders of the Dauphine, the son of the King of France. As the Dauphine was aware of the king's intentions to claim the French crown, he sent his ambassadors with a gift: tennis balls.

The king replies with self-control and courtesy that " we understand him well / How he comes o'er us with out wilder days / Not measuring what use we made of them." (l. 2. 266-8) The king views the gift as an insult thus allowing him to once again push the responsibilities of war, now to the Dauphine, " his soul / Shall stand sore charged for the wasteful vengeance / That shall fly with them:" " And some are yet ungotten and unborn / That shall have cause to curse the Dauphine's scorn" " and tell the Dauphine / His jest will savour but of shallow wit / When thousands weep more than did laugh at it." (l.

2. 283-5, 288-9, 295-7) Once again the king pushes the blame to clear his conscience, as he does not wish to worry of the consequences of war later in his afterlife. We further see the powers of the king as he ordered a man who had committed a minor offence the day before to be released from prison. However, three of his old companions, Scroop, Cambridge and Grey,

disagree with his decision and argue that the king must set an example and punish the criminal to the full extent of the law. The king however, explains that if one were to be punished severely for a petty crime, how would one be punished for major crimes? At this juncture, Henry confronts the three men with their plot to kill him. All three confess and asks Henry for mercy.

Henry was greatly taken aback by Scroop's who "knew'st the very bottom of [his] soul, / That almost mightst have coined mw into gold," (Il. 2. 97-98) and betrayed Henry for a price. Despite his disbelieve, he compassionately says "I will weep for thee; / For this revolt of thine, methinks, is like / Another fall of man." (Il. 2.

140-42) Henry even holds no grudges against them "Touching our person seek we no revenge." (Il. 2. 174) Despite being old friends, Henry had to rise above this personal tragedy and turns it to a political tragedy instead.

However much the tragedy was personal, he must transcend it for the sake of England and he had to send those he believed to be loyal friends to their deaths. Henry also then quickly turns his attention to the war with France as a means of letting his personal feelings to get in the way of his decision.

In comparison to the power that King Henry had, the characters in *The Rover* were struggling with a different kind of power. Here we see the relationship between sexes and how the women fight to have a say in deciding whom they wish to spend the rest of their lives with. In the opening scene, we see Helena and Florinda talking about love and marriage. The two of them believe that one should marry for love instead of someone whom their father chooses for them. Florinda firmly says "With indignation; and how near

<https://assignbuster.com/henry-v-and-the-rover-reveal-not-only-the-strategies-of-power-but-also-anxieties-informing-them/>

soever my father thinks I am to marrying that hated object, I shall let him see I understand better what's due to my beauty, birth and fortune, and more to my soul, than to obey those unjust commands.

" (l. 1. 17-20) It was uncommon at that time that a women had any voice in deciding their relationship, but here we have two women who are determined to break " the ill customs of [their] country." (l. 1.

57)Florinda points out to Pedro that a forced marriage would be to " make a salve of his sister." (l. 1. 57-58) Helena on the other hand would " rather be a nun than be obliged to marry as [Pedro] would have [her]." (l.

1. 122-123) The two women adamantly voice out their opinion on Florinda's arranged marriage to either Vincentio or Antonio. The former is the choice of the father and the latter the choice of Pedro. However if permitted, Florida would rather marry Belvile, an English Colonel, for love rather than to " increase her bags." (l. 1. 77) The two women were willing to do anything in their power to prevent them for being forced into an arranged marriage.