

## ANGLING FOR HEARTS: MANIPULATIVE ROYAL WEEPING IN THE HENRIAD

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### Abstract

In that apparently touching rapprochement scene (3.2) between King Henry IV and Hal in *1 Henry IV*, Henry cries as he levels accusations of betrayal against his estranged son. However, Shakespeare indirectly calls into question the authenticity of emotion in Henry's weeping. For example, just previously when Falstaff plays the role of King Henry in the play within the play, he calls for wine to make his eyes red so that it will appear as though he has been crying. Moreover, shortly after the actual reconciliation scene, Hotspur remarks that upon Henry's return from banishment, Henry 'Crie[d] out upon abuses, seem[ed] to weep over his country's wrongs; and by this face, this seeming brow of justice did he win/ The hearts of all that he did angle for' (4.3.83-86). Hotspur clearly feels that Henry's tears in this instance were a ploy to galvanize the support of others whom he hopes to control. Thus, Henry's tears in the rapprochement scene are bracketed before and after by references to Henry's falsifying his emotions. Likewise, there are many subtle indicators in *2 Henry IV* that Hal generates crocodile tears in 4.5 in order to mollify his father, who has awoken to discover that Hal has literally taken possession of the crown. And it is significant that in both reconciliation scenes the two royals discuss means of successfully manipulating public and political opinion through appearances and subterfuge.

Hal's use of references to tears as a political ploy continues into *Henry V* in his confrontation of the conspirators and before Agincourt.

**Keywords:** *Henriad, weeping, Henry IV, Henry V, Shakespeare, politics, manipulation*

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Early in *Hamlet*, the eponymous character, addressing his mother but no doubt with a sidelong glance at Claudius, comments on others' feigning sorrow while claiming that his own grief is genuine:

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,  
 Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
 Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,  
 No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
 Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,  
 Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,  
 That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,  
 For they are actions that a man might play;  
 But I have that within which passeth show-  
 These but the trappings and the suits of woe. (1.2.77-86)<sup>1</sup>

As this statement indicates, Hamlet as a rule seems to distrust the tears, the 'fruitful rivers in the eyes,' of others. He not only indirectly accuses Claudius of this type of hypocrisy in the passage above, but he implies just later that Gertrude's tears over her husband's death, which appeared at the time to be as genuine and plentiful as those of Niobe (1.2.149), were artificial.

Despite unfavorably comparing himself later to the actor who weeps over Hecuba, Hamlet nevertheless claims in Ophelia's burial scene that he can match Laertes tear for tear, as if the crying were a component of a competition between two actors:

Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear thyself?  
 Woo't drink up easel, eat a crocodile?

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<sup>1</sup> All Shakespeare quotations are taken from *The Wadsworth Shakespeare*, ed. by G. Blakemore Evans (1997).

I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?  
To outface me with leaping in her grave?  
.....Nay, an thou'lt mouth,  
I'll rant as well as thou. (5. 1. 275-284)

He later remarks to Horatio that it was Laertes's overdone mourning and the histrionics which accompanied it—'the bravery of his grief' (5.2.78)—which drove him to distraction at Ophelia's gravesite. In fact, male figures playing and displaying questionable sadness appear with some frequency in Shakespeare's works. In addition to other considerations, this presents the metatheatrical element of an actor's shedding false tears while playing a character who may well be shedding false tears.<sup>2</sup>

To quote Malcolm from *Macbeth*, 'To show an unfelt sorrow is an office/ Which the false man does easy' (2.3.136-37). Such figures as Richard III, who proudly brags to the audience about his ability to weep insincerely, spring to mind. This essay, though, focuses on the *Henriad*'s Henry IV and his son Hal, whom one might not immediately consider 'false men' but who nevertheless seem to weep easily and disingenuously to influence others. Both also, unlike Richard III, disguise this strategy from their offstage as well as their onstage audience.

King Henry IV proves to be adept in multiple ways at snaring others for political purposes, as he relates to his son Hal in their first interview in *1 Henry IV*:

By being seldom seen, I could not stir  
But like a comet I was wondered at,  
That men would tell their children, 'This is he.'  
Others would say, 'Where, which is Bolingbroke?'  
And then I stole all courtesy from heaven,  
And dressed myself in such humility  
That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts,  
Loud shouts and salutations from their mouths,  
Even in the presence of the crown'd king. (3.2.46-54)

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<sup>2</sup> Whether the actors are actually shedding tears onstage in the early modern period is thoroughly explored by Matthew Steggle, but that matter is not specifically germane to this essay.

Henry's very phrasing—'stole all courtesy,' 'dressed myself in such humility,' and 'did *pluck* allegiance from men's hearts,' and particularly those verbs which I've italicized—indicates the extent of his presentation as an active agent as well as an actor in usurping the crown. By contrast, Henry then compares Hal to the 'skipping king,' Richard II, who 'grew a companion to the common streets' so that when Richard was seen in public

He was but as the cuckoo is in June,  
 Heard, not regarded, seen but with such eyes  
 As, sick and blunted with community,  
 Afford no extraordinary gaze,  
 Such as is bent on sun-like majesty. (3.2.60-84)

Henry's perspective, then, suggests that one of Richard's major—by implication, fatal—defects is that he does not know how to act (in a number of senses of the term) as a politician. And Henry seems to fear—very mistakenly—that Hal suffers from the same flaw.

This King-Prince parlay occurs in 3.2 of *1 Henry*, which is the first time that we see father and son together, and they meet when it is absolutely necessary for the estranged pair to arrive at some sort of rapprochement. Henry IV, as a usurper, must have his firstborn present at the approaching battle—discussed at some length in this scene—which will determine whether the Lancastrian reign will continue. Henry's hold upon the throne is shaky at best, and his heir's remaining in the taverns while Henry is battling to defend his family's claim to the throne might call that dubious claim even further into question and thereby bolster the spirits and numbers of the rebel faction. Hal, for his part, must regain his father's trust and participate in the battle if he is one day to inherit the throne with any pretense to honor.

During this reunion scene, Henry IV weeps, apparently in anguish over Hal's seemingly wayward and debauched conduct:

..... Not an eye  
 But is a-weary of thy common sight,  
 Save mine, which hath desired to see thee more,  
 Which now doth that I would not have it do,  
 Make blind itself with foolish tenderness. (3.2. 87-91)

Henry IV's tears have sparked speculation. Robert B. Pierce articulates the more or less standard approach in stating that Henry's 'emotion gradually rises during the speech until he suddenly finds himself weeping as he complains of his son's neglect in what is no longer a king's reproof but the complaint of a lonely father' (184-85). This to some extent dovetails with Meghan C. Andrews's opinion that in Shakespeare's day men 'were expected to discipline themselves, closing and containing their bodies, so that 'a man's humoral reduction to tears' indicated 'a passive and feminized state.' During his confrontation with Hal, Henry enters this feminized state, as he finds that he cannot control his eyes' (380). Neema Parvini believes that 'when Hal shifts from the prose of the alehouse to the poetry of the royal court, he reflects Richard's image rather than Henry's. The thought is enough to make the King weep' (200).

Notwithstanding the variance among these views, all rest upon the conviction that Henry's tears are heartfelt. However, the play overall allows for—even encourages—the likelihood that Henry's tears are forged. Robert Ornstein touches tangentially upon this prospect, without actually committing to it, in observing that Henry 'is pitiless in his hectoring, and so deliberate in his attack on Hal that we can scarcely believe the tender emotion that suddenly fills his eyes with tears' (142). Ornstein adds a bit later that Henry's tears are not 'wholly above suspicion' (143).

Not only does the rather cold-blooded Henry's remarkably abrupt switch from cholera to sadness cause some misgiving about the sincerity of his weeping, but Shakespeare also frames this ostensibly tender moment of paternal concern with hints both before and after it of Henry's tears being contrived. In the play within the play in Act 2, Falstaff and Hal comically rehearse the reunion scene between Henry and Hal which will be presented shortly thereafter.<sup>3</sup> As part of his preparation for the role of King Henry, Falstaff states, 'Give me a cup of sack to make my eyes look red, that it may be thought I have wept, for I must speak in passion' (2.4.384-86). Moreover, once he assumes his pro tem role as King Henry, Falstaff—presciently like the real King Henry in 3.2—specifically calls attention to his crying, telling Hal 'now I do not speak to thee in drink, but in tears' (2.4.414-

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<sup>3</sup> Alison Findlay makes the intriguing point regarding court performances of 1 Henry IV that 'When [the play's] ceremonies are reproduced within the court walls . . . the King's Men offered the king (if he were present) and his courtiers the opportunity to re-view their actions . . . as though from the outside' (90).

15). Falstaff's engineered weeping thereby anticipates that King Henry's tears might also be concocted.

Hotspur's remarks just a few scenes after the reconciliation present a similar implication. In fact, Hotspur suggests that Henry has a history, and perhaps a habit, of deceitful weeping, although it is necessary to note that Hotspur's accusation originates in one who has become Henry's sworn enemy. Nonetheless, Hotspur maintains that when the banished Henry returned from France to Richard's England, he secretly wanted to be king but swore publicly that he 'came but to be Duke of Lancaster, / To sue his livery and beg his peace' (4.3.61-62). In Hotspur's account, Henry supported this assertion 'With *tears of innocency* and terms of zeal' (4.3.63, my emphasis), with the context clearly indicating that Hotspur considers the tears, the 'innocency,' and the zeal all to be bogus. He also further relates that Henry 'Crie[d] out upon abuses, *seem[ed] to weep*/ Over his country's wrongs; and by this face, / This seeming brow of justice, did he win / The hearts of all that he did angle for' (4.3.81-84, my emphasis). Apparently then, at least according to Hotspur, Henry more or less regularly resorts to weeping as a means of political and interpersonal persuasion, and this supports the notion that he likely employs this strategy while angling for Hal's heart in their interview. By contrast, in *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, Henry IV's tears (which occur in the equivalent of the appeasement scene in Shakespeare's *2 Henry*) are much more credible because he cries before Hal enters and then a number of times during their conversation.

Hal's conversion in *1 Henry IV* to dutiful chivalric son is as dubious as is his father's shift to weeping believer in Hal's transformation. Hal is almost certainly playing a role in his avowals of reformation in 3.1 in order to establish good relations with Henry before Shrewsbury. Just prior to that battle, Worcester remarks about the Percy rebellion, 'The quality and hair of our attempt/ Brooks no division' (4.1.61-62). Likewise the Lancastrians' behaviors, especially of course that of taking the throne, cannot withstand too close a scrutiny, as both Henry and Hal are well aware. Hotspur alludes to this situation when he argues to Blunt before the battle that the many wrongs (in his estimation) visited upon the Percies by Henry have 'drove us to seek out/ This head of safety, and withal to pry/ Into his title, the which we find/ Too indirect for long continuance' (4.3.102-105). So the Lancastrians must present a united front at Shrewsbury to avoid adding a further incentive to the inspection of their activities.

In the reconciliation scene, Hal receives his cue, literally and figuratively, at the start of the scene when his father refers to him in front of others as ‘the Prince of Wales’ (3.2.1). Taking this hint, after the others leave, Hal abandons the role of the reckless libertine, suddenly striking a submissive, apologetic, and chivalric pose as the devoted and decorous Prince of Wales. Hal in his bad-boy-turned-good pretense endeavors to finesse both us and his father. As Marjorie Garber observes, ‘We [in the audience] are not only [Hal’s] confidants and confederates but also the objects of his deception and manipulation’ (330). One indicator of Hal’s having ulterior motives in expressing his devotion to his father and the Lancastrian cause resides in a comment which Paul Yachnin characterizes as ‘radically destabilizing’ (122): in the scene immediately following the conciliation Hal tells Falstaff at the tavern, ‘I am [now] good friends with my father and may do anything’ (3.3.181).

Hal’s maneuvering of others continues in *2 Henry IV*. One of his tools of manipulation is false weeping—like father, like son, in that respect. The correlation between Henry and Hal in using sham tears in separate scenes to beguile one another is underscored by the fact that Hal’s tears in *2 Henry* occur in a scene which in several particulars resembles that in *1 Henry*. As many have noted, *1 Henry* and *2 Henry* in some respects mirror one another. According to Harold Toliver, ‘Throughout the *Henry IV* plays one improvised performance reflects another by analogy and thereby compounds it and calls attention to the style of enactment itself’ (53). It is also generally accepted, however, that as *2 Henry* proceeds, its parallels with *1 Henry* become fewer and fewer. This fact makes the similarities between the respective reconciliation scenes that much more striking, since the rapprochement in *2 Henry* occurs in 4.5, late in the play. In each scene, Henry dismisses his retinue to speak with his son in private; in each, an appeasement is achieved between Hal and Henry; in each, one of the two men cries; in each, at least arguably, the weeper does so in order to hoodwink the other; and in each, the mollification is urgently necessary because of pressing political exigencies. In *1 Henry*, as mentioned above, rebellion is afoot and Shrewsbury looms. In *2 Henry*, Henry IV is quite literally on—or rather just momentarily up from—his deathbed, and given his precarious political position, for the sake of the dynasty he can hardly have it bruited about that he wrangled with his heir just prior to dying.

Likewise Hal, as always aware of politics as performance, wants the succession to give the impression of occurring without a ripple. As Michael Hattaway notes, ‘Shakespeare was always alert to a variety of historical processes and his political characters often behave theatrically—at worst being guilty of dissimulation, at best as though they are conscious of taking part in a play’ (19). In order to play his role as dutiful son successfully, Hal has to think and dissemble quickly in his father’s final hours. Hal does not seem particularly concerned about his father’s ill-health before he enters his father’s room, half-jokingly saying to his genuinely upset and tearful brother Clarence, ‘How now, rain within doors and none abroad?’ His next question confirms that he knows the source of Clarence’s sorrow: ‘How doth the King?’ (4.5.9-10). His nonchalant attitude also appears in his comment, ‘If [the King] be sick with joy, he’ll recover without physic’ (4.5.15). Once Hal enters the room and after everyone else leaves, believing his unconscious father to be dead, Hal removes the crown from his father’s sickbed and places it on his own head. He then removes himself and the crown into a nearby room. The usually clever Hal thereby finds himself in a serious predicament after his father awakens. However, as we know from his interactions with Falstaff—and especially from that play extempore—Hal is exceptionally adroit at improv. As Stephen Greenblatt observes, ‘Hal’s characteristic activity is playing or, more precisely, theatrical improvisation’ (46).

Upon awaking and discovering that Hal took the crown, Henry is quite understandably distraught. He sends Warwick for Hal, and when Warwick re-enters he reports that Hal is in the next room, ‘Washing with kindly tears his gentle cheeks’ (4.5.83). However, when Hal is by himself in the bedchamber with his presumably dead father, he gives little evidence of mourning or even of sorrow. In fact, at Henry’s bedside Hal puns upon his father’s apparent death by saying, ‘This sleep is sound indeed’ (4.5.35). And throughout the time that he’s alone with his ‘recently deceased’ father, Hal apparently does not shed a single tear—not one—so his being taken by a sudden fit of weeping almost immediately after leaving the room, as Warwick maintains, stretches credibility.

It seems peculiar, too, that Hal does not re-enter the room at the same time as Warwick. After all, Warwick was sent by the King to find Hal and to bring him back to the bedroom (4.5.59-62). Warwick evidently positions himself so that he will be sent by Henry to retrieve Hal. Henry comments, ‘The Prince of Wales! Where is he?’ (4.5.53). Warwick responds, ‘This door is open, he is gone this way’

(4.5.55), no doubt heading in that same direction himself, as the use of ‘this’ suggests. So it makes sense that Henry commands, ‘Find him, my Lord of Warwick, chide him hither’ (4.5.62). However, Warwick’s ‘chiding hither’ the man who is on the brink of becoming King of England would certainly be ill-advised on his part. Rather, it would be much more politic for Warwick to lie to Henry about finding Hal crying, and by doing so curry favor with the prospective King just a bit before his accession.

And although we rarely see them interact with each other, Warwick appears to know Hal’s intentions and character better than anyone else does, including Henry IV and Falstaff. Falstaff tries to excuse his running away at Gadshill by saying to Hal, ‘I knew ye as well as he that made ye’ (*1 Henry IV*, 2 .4. 267-68). Assuming ‘he that made ye’ refers to Henry, if Falstaff knows Hal only as well as his father does, then Falstaff’s knowledge of Hal’s true personality is slight indeed. The primary example of their lack of acquaintance with the essential Hal (assuming that there is an ‘essential’ Hal) is that neither Henry IV nor Falstaff knows of Hal’s overarching scheme, articulated privately in the first scene in which he appears, of dumping his lower-class associates when he comes to the throne.

Somewhat oddly, though, especially since Warwick does not seem to be a major player on Shakespeare’s stage of kings, he appears to be aware of Hal’s plan. Earlier that same evening, after learning that Hal has returned to spending time ‘[w]ith Poin, and other his continual followers’ (4.4.53), Henry erroneously predicts Hal’s future behavior: ‘when his headstrong riot hath no curb . . . O, with what wings shall his affections fly/ Towards fronting peril and opposed decay!’ (4.4.62-66). Warwick, though, both corrects and consoles Henry, asserting that ‘The prince but studies his companions . . . [so that they may be] known and hated’ and that ‘The Prince will in the perfectness of time/ Cast off his followers . . . Turning past evils to advantages’ (4.4 68-78). The audience knows from Hal’s soliloquy in 1.2 of *1 Henry IV* that this is precisely his somewhat ruthless strategy—although his so-called friends, including Falstaff, are using him, too, as emerges from Falstaff’s saying to Hal ‘when thou art king’ no fewer than five times in the first scene in which we see them.<sup>4</sup> Until Warwick’s comment, though, no one in either *1 Henry IV* or *2 Henry IV* gives any indication of being

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<sup>4</sup> Harold Jenkins also records that Falstaff often uses this phrase, but in the context of arguing that *1 Henry IV* methodically anticipates *2 Henry IV* (104).

acquainted with the Prince's strategy. How Warwick comes by this information, other than the remote possibility of intuiting it (which, after all, no one else does), remains a mystery. Maybe we're to assume that the usually self-contained Hal uncharacteristically recruited an ally by unveiling his scheme to Warwick at some point not presented in the play.<sup>5</sup>

Along these same lines, shortly after Henry's death, Warwick is apparently employed by Hal to dupe the Chief Justice into expecting ill treatment from Hal as part of Hal's ploy to win the Chief Justice—and presumably through him many others—over to Hal's side. As 5.2 opens, Warwick and the Chief Justice meet, with Warwick remarking 'I think the young king loves you not' (5.2.9). Upon the entrance of Hal's three brothers, Warwick continues this stratagem by exclaiming to the Chief Justice, 'O that the living Harry had the temper/ Of he, the worst of these three gentlemen!' (5.2.15-16). His comments have the desired effect of distressing the Chief Justice, as indicated by his remark, 'O God, I fear all will be overturned' (5.2.19). The play allows for the probability that Hal plans all along to forgive the Chief Justice, his ruse of being convinced by the Chief Justice's arguments simply being part of his act and meant to enhance his newly burnished reputation. In this reading, Warwick may be seen as complicit in sustaining Hal's pretense.

Relatedly, there is much wordplay in *1 Henry* and *2 Henry* on the double meaning of the homophonic 'cousin' and 'cozen'—'O, the devil take such cozeners!' says Hotspur of his having been called 'kind cousin' by Henry (*1 Henry IV*, 1.3.254-55). Consequently, it is perhaps a hint from Shakespeare that Prince John, the notorious cozenor of the rebels in *2 Henry*, greets Warwick in the scene in which the Chief Justice is duped by saying, 'Good morrow, cousin Warwick, good morrow,' and that that sentiment is echoed immediately by Gloucester and Clarence's joint greeting of Warwick with 'Good morrow, cousin' (5.2.20-21). Likewise, in 3.1, the first scene in which Henry appears in *2 Henry*, he refers to Warwick as 'cousin Nevil' (66).<sup>6</sup> These references combine to intimate that Warwick acts as Hal's accomplice in the cozening of both the Chief Justice and, a bit earlier, of Henry after Hal is caught out by his father's 'resurrection.'

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<sup>5</sup> Peter Saccio notes that Warwick historically was a supporter of Hal's, particularly on the council in 1410-1411 (60).

<sup>6</sup> As Saccio mentions, 'Neville' is actually Westmoreland's surname (60).

In that ‘resurrection’ scene, after Warwick has no doubt brought Hal up to speed in the adjacent room regarding his father’s recovery and then has gone to stall Henry IV, Hal presumably takes a moment to produce some counterfeit tears before entering. In an earlier scene, Hal has a private discussion with Poins in which Hal suggests that he can cry by choice over his father’s affliction—or not cry, as the case may be. Having been mildly admonished by Poins for making jokes and living large while Henry is grievously ill, Hal says, ‘I tell thee it is not meet that I should be sad now my father is sick. Albeit . . . I could be sad, and sad indeed too’ (2.2.39-43). Hal asks Poins, ‘What wouldst thou think of me if I should weep?’ (2.2.52-53). After Poins replies, ‘I would think thee a most princely hypocrite’ (2.2.54-55), Hal states that ‘It would be every man’s thought . . . every man would think me an hypocrite indeed’ (2.2.56-60). Hal accordingly chooses not to cry at this moment with Poins, but it is worth noting that Hal says nothing here or at any other time about crying *privately* for his father. Hal’s facility to cry on command is, especially in this context, essentially theatrical—and while the ability to cry at will is desirable, to be sure, for an actor, it is considerably less so for a son whose father is seriously ill.<sup>7</sup>

However, Hal does choose to blubber like a most princely hypocrite in the 2 *Henry IV* interview with his father. Hal must be crying from the moment he enters, both because of what Warwick tells Henry just previously and because when Henry pauses in the lengthy reprimand which he starts immediately after Hal enters, Hal begins his response by stating, ‘But for my tears/ The moist impediments unto my speech,/ I had forestalled this dear and deep rebuke’ (4.5.138-140). Hal has let his tears do his talking up to this point, and he might say with Lancelot Gobbo from *The Merchant of Venice*, ‘[My] tears exhibit my tongue’ (2.3.10). Lancelot rather cruelly deceives Old Gobbo, and Hal less cruelly but just as deliberately hoodwinks Henry.

This is evident in Hal’s recitation to Henry of what the Prince said to the crown shortly after he first came upon the scene. His recounted and redacted version changes significantly in tone and substance from that which he delivered moments before and which the audience just heard. For example, Hal—probably sniffing audibly all the while—tells Henry that when he thought that his father

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<sup>7</sup> Steggle (39-56, *passim*) relays much information about how actors in Shakespeare’s day generated tears, including at least the possibility of the trusty onion (54-56), adding that ‘weeping is a very common phenomenon on the early modern stage’ (56).

had died, he almost died himself, which was not at all the case, and that when he took up the crown, he ‘upbraided’ it (4.5.158), which he didn’t. Hal also reports that he told the crown, ‘The care on thee depending/ Hath fed upon the body of my father./ Therefore, thou best of gold art worst of gold’ (4.5.158-160). Hal said no such thing; nor did he, as he claims to Henry, accuse the crown, nor did he ‘try with it, as with an enemy/ That had before my face murdered my father,/ The quarrel of a true inheritor’ (166-168). All of this is palpable nonsense for those of us who have just heard Hal’s actual comments to the crown. Although James C. Bulman seems a bit off the mark in saying that in this scene Hal ‘weeps at the rebuke and with apparently unfeigned emotion seeks to prove his loyalty and love’ (168),<sup>8</sup> he perceptively comments that Hal’s remarks when he thought his father dead ‘were sober and politically aware’ but that his account to his awakened father is ‘far more histrionic and self-justifying’ (168). Bulman continues, saying that this second version ‘is sufficient, however, to win his father’s trust’ (168). And it is true that Henry readily—almost eagerly—at least seems to accept Hal’s soggy explanations, stating ‘God put it in thy mind to take [the crown] hence,/ That thou mightst win the more thy father’s love,/ Pleading so wisely in excuse of it!’ (4.5.178-80). If Henry is being straight here and has indeed been won over, then Hal has already begun to succeed in ‘Turning past evils to advantages’ (4 4.78), to employ Warwick’s memorable phrase.

However, while Henry appears to buy into Hal’s performance, the King may be putting on an act himself (which of course the performer playing Henry unquestionably is), pretending to embrace his son’s highly unlikely account while in fact remaining skeptical the whole time, in which event his remark about Hal’s ‘pleading so wisely’ in his own exculpatory favor takes on another nuance. One might well expect Henry’s suspicions to be aroused, not just by Hal’s taking the crown in the first place but also by the fact that according to Hal’s own report he addressed most of his remarks, even in his edited and revised and constructed version, to the crown rather than to his apparently dead father . . . or to God on Henry’s behalf. Henry, though, really has no choice. Even if he still distrusts his son, and he certainly should for any number of reasons, Hal is also his immediate heir.

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<sup>8</sup> This positive outlook towards Hal’s attitude to Henry during their interview in 2 Henry IV is widespread; another example appears in Coppelia Kahn’s referring to the moment as Hal’s ‘moving confession of love and loyalty’ (76).

Throughout Henry's appearances in the two plays, and as he declares explicitly in this scene, he is much concerned that his line as embodied in Hal succeeds to and on the throne:

..... God knows, my son,  
By what by-paths and indirect crook'd ways  
I met this crown, and I myself know well  
How troublesome it sate upon my head.  
To thee it shall descend with better quiet,  
Better opinion, better confirmation,  
For all the soil of the achievement goes  
With me into the earth. (4. 5. 183-190)

Henry then tells Hal that the best strategy to hold the throne, given the circumstances, is to go and start a war somewhere or other, 'to busy giddy minds/ With foreign quarrels, that action, hence borne out,/ May waste the memory of the former days' (213-215). This strategy incidentally might also apply to the giddy minds of some in the audience for *Henry V*, who may well choose to forget or forego the memory of Hal's problematic claim to succession when presented with his astonishing victory at Agincourt.

Henry well understands that despite having quashed political opposition for the moment, Lancastrian political pre-eminence is hardly stable. As he advises Hal, there remain those in the kingdom who 'Have but their teeth and stings newly ta'en out' (4.5.205), whose 'griefs are green' (4.5.203), and who still want to unseat the Lancastrians. Serious discord between King and Prince at this crucial juncture, as at Shrewsbury, might well embolden those who still want to revolt. Hal no doubt shares this desire for a smooth and secure succession. So it seems that the professions of mutual devotion between father and son in Act 4 of *2 Henry*, as in Act 3 of *1 Henry*, may well partake at least as much of crafty political acumen as of familial warmth. Henry's tendency to control others through role-playing, and by extension even (or maybe especially) on his deathbed to manipulate Hal, might be suggested by Henry's use of acting terms in this scene to describe his defending the shady means by which he vaulted onto the throne: 'For all my reign hath been but as a *scene/ Acting that argument*' (4.5.197-98, my emphasis).

By the same token, Hal's conning of his father is intimated by this scene's following closely upon Prince John's having fooled Scroop and the other rebel leaders after promising to address their concerns and then having them arrested for capital treason. Hal's comments at Shrewsbury to John prove to be multi-layered when re-viewed from the perspective of John's duplicity in *2 Henry*:

By God, thou hast deceiv'd me, Lancaster,  
I did not think thee lord of such a spirit.  
Before, I lov'd thee as a brother, John,  
But now I do respect thee as my soul. (*1 Henry IV*, 5.4.17-20)

Hal's expressing the notion of being deceived by a 'Lancaster,' however happily he may have been to be deceived at the battle, suggests the family's stock-in-trade, even with one another. Also, Hal's referring to John as Hal's 'soul' takes on an ominous cast after John's morally questionable behavior with the rebels in *2 Henry IV*. This seems especially true when John vows to them 'upon [his] *soul*' that 'these griefs shall be with speed redress'd' (4.2.59-60, my emphasis), and Scroop responds, 'I take your *princely* word for these redresses' (4.2.66, my emphasis). Interestingly, Shakespeare departs from Holinshed in altering John 'from the mute bystander he was in the *Chronicles* ... to chief negotiator and official spokesman for Henry IV,' as James Calderwood puts it (36).

Hal's 'princely words' to his own father are certainly problematic, his lack of ardent feeling for Henry being revealed not only by his initial lack of emotion at Henry's sickbed but also by his continuing air of detachment after the King has died. When Hal comes upon his grieving brothers in 5.2, he seems considerably more composed than they do. Hal commends them for their sorrow not so much for the sake of Henry's memory, it seems, but because it looks appropriate: 'Yet be sad . . . it very well becomes you. Sorrow so royally in you appears/ That I will deeply put the fashion on/ And wear it in my heart' (5.2.49-53). All of this is as if the appearance of despondency over his father's death were primarily, at least for Hal, a matter of effective public relations, of royal performance, not of genuine emotion.

In *2 Henry* we see Hal weep *to* his father, but never *for* his father, including here with his brothers. This lack of visible remorse seems all the more egregious given that Hal had vowed in Act 4 to his presumably dead father that

‘Thy due from me/ Is tears and heavy sorrows of the blood,/ Which nature, love, and filial tenderness/ Shall, O dear father, pay thee plenteously’ (4.5.37-40). It resembles not just in its meaning but in its language of economic exchange Brutus’s claim in *Julius Caesar* that he will cry for the dead Cassius at some point. Brutus says, ‘Friends, I owe more tears/ To this dead man [Cassius] than you shall see me pay./ I shall find time, Cassius; I shall find time’ (5.3.101-103). However, so far as we know, Brutus never does so, although he weeps aplenty for himself before his suicide. Earlier, when confronting the Douglas, Hal brags that he is ‘the Prince of Wales that threatens thee,/ Who never promiseth but he means to pay’ (1 *Henry IV*, 5.4.42-43). Maybe he does indeed *mean* to pay to his father’s memory his ‘due’ of ‘tears and heavy sorrows,’ but we question whether Hal genuinely pays what even he admits is owed to his father. In 1 *Henry IV*, Hal also promises to pay Francis one thousand pounds, and Hal clearly never fulfills that promise. This pledge is evidently part of a jest, but Francis is not in on Hal’s essentially pointless and cruel joke, and so, as is evident in productions of 1 *Henry*, he takes Hal at his princely word.

Hal’s lack of affection for his father further appears in Henry’s hardly being in his grave before Hal adopts at least a nominal replacement. He tells the Chief Justice, ‘You shall be as a father to my youth’ (2 *Henry IV*, 5.2.118) and even addresses him as ‘father’ (5.2.140), an endearment he almost never uses when addressing Henry.<sup>9</sup> Hal also declares that ‘My voice shall sound as you do prompt mine ear, / And I will stoop and humble my intents,/ To your well-practic’d wise directions’ (5.2.119-121). To quote Falstaff’s sarcastic remarks following one of Hal’s pronouncements in 1 *Henry IV*, ‘Rare words! brave world!’ (3.3.204). Those who follow the fortunes of Hal into the next play in the Henriad might be a bit surprised when the Chief Justice not only does not appear in *Henry V*, but is not even mentioned.<sup>10</sup> The absence of the Chief Justice is particularly conspicuous early in that play as the bishops and then Hal discuss at mind-numbing length the intricate matter of whether Hal has the legal right to invade France. More

<sup>9</sup> Ornstein makes the valuable point that ‘Only once in both parts of *Henry IV* does Hal address Henry as “father,” and even then he thinks the King may be dead: “My gracious lord! my father!”’ (165).

<sup>10</sup> As Saccio notes, *Henry IV*’s Chief Justice, William Gascoigne, wasn’t retained in office by the historical *Henry V* (61).

than anywhere else in *Henry V* we would expect to see Hal conferring here with the Chief Justice. However, Hal apparently has discarded his adopted ‘father’ because Hal no longer needs the Chief Justice to aid him in his forged transformation from dissolute Prince to glorious King, nor does he need him in making a judgment on the Salic matter, since despite the lengthy discussion and justification the outcome is a foregone conclusion.

The Shakespeare devotee should not, however, be particularly surprised by Hal’s promising to weep in *Henry V* but there being very little likelihood that he will fulfill that promise. When Hal learns that three of his trusted confidants have plotted to assassinate him, Hal plumps them up before he lets the great axe fall, to paraphrase Claudius from *Hamlet*. Prior to condemning them to death, Hal engages in that overdone (and ahistorical) extended irony of baiting the three to profess their solicitude by enticing them to mandate a harsh punishment for the drunk who had insulted the King. Hal engages in this trickery not just out of a rather perverse desire for private amusement but also because he can then shift the blame for his severity onto them:

The mercy that was quick in us but late  
 By your own counsel is suppress’d and kill’d.  
 . . . . . I will weep for thee;  
 For this revolt of thine, methinks, is like  
 Another fall of man. Their faults are open,  
 Arrest them to the answer of the law,  
 And God acquit them of their practices! (2.2.79-144)

God might acquit them, but Hal has no intention of doing so. He also disclaims any motive of personal vengeance—‘Touching our person, seek we no revenge’ (2.2.174)—instead asserting that he’s acting on behalf of the country and that mercy is God’s business, not his. To agree that Hal is not vindictive in this episode, though, is to ignore the game he plays with the conspirators to get them essentially to condemn themselves. Hal’s feeling any genuine compassion for his fallen friends is further undermined by the zeal he expresses immediately after their arrest for the upcoming invasion of France.

The preceding scene in *Henry V* focuses in part on another of Hal’s former confidants, describing Falstaff’s rapidly deteriorating physical condition. Hostess Quickly, referring to Falstaff, says that the ‘King has kill’d his heart’

(2.1.88). The ambiguous antecedent to 'his,' though, might suggest that Hal has stifled his own heart, that he has suppressed any unadulterated emotion, however slight, which he might have felt. Certainly, his treatment of Falstaff, Henry, and virtually everyone else would suggest that Hal is no wellspring of warm affection. Derek Traversi feels that Hal's 'detachment' is 'his distinguishing quality, his most important inheritance from his father' (6), and it appears in all he does.

In his prayer before Agincourt, Hal tells God, 'I Richard's body have interred new,/ And on it have bestowed more contrite tears,/ Than from it issued forced drops of blood' (4.1.295-97). Historically, Hal did re-inter Richard's body in Westminster, but it seems unlikely that Shakespeare wants us to accept at face value Hal's protestation about his weeping. Certainly, judging from his previous behaviors, his comment about tears seems at best a gross exaggeration calculated to influence God to look favorably upon the English side, and it seems initially to work. He does triumph at Agincourt, of course, and he seems successful in his attempt to charm Princess Katherine, presenting himself as good-hearted, hard-working, homespun, and unsophisticated rather than as the supremely intelligent and consummately gifted actor/politician which he really is.

Hal's intelligence and talents, though, cannot save him from an untimely death. King Henry V's celebrated reign ends abruptly with his early death, and Hal's heir Henry VI loses not only France but also his crown and his life. Unlike his father Hal and his grandfather Henry IV, Henry VI seems never really to master the art of 'showing an unfelt sorrow' for surreptitious purposes. In this, he closely resembles Richard II, another ultimately deposed king given to outbursts of genuine crying. And perhaps their inability to play-act in this fashion is one indication that they are not sufficiently accomplished as political actors to sustain their respective roles as King. Conversely, the fake tears of Henry IV and Henry V help to consolidate their hold on political power.

In *King Lear*, Edgar is concerned that his sincere tears may 'mar [his] counterfeiting' (3.6.61). However, as presented in Shakespeare, artificial tears used cunningly can function as a potential political strategy which *makes* the character's counterfeiting, rather than mars it. The deceitful weeper can thereby gull those onstage and in the audience, who, like Leonato in *Much Ado about*

*Nothing*, innocently believe that 'There are no faces truer than those that are so wash'd' (1.1.26-27).

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## BIONOTE

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