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"Into a thousand parts divide one man": Henry V and the politics of identity
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Abstract

Old texts can encourage serious thinking about leadership. Shakespeare's 1598 play Henry V explores the complex issue of impression management from a variety of perspectives. It shows a young king who is a master of playing roles, deploying images, and speaking publicly to enhance his power. He is also shown to be skilled at watching others and plumbing the truth about their performances. In the drama Shakespeare explores the human dimensions and costs of impression management. The new king believes it necessary to reject his old friends. Shakespeare does not condemn him for this, but shows the impact of this on others, especially Falstaff. The king's mastery of impression management even enters into his wooing of the French princess, Catherine. Finally, Shakespeare also considers the ethics of impression management and leadership from the perspective of the king's followers, most notably a soldier who questions the morality of Henry's war. Shakespeare's play provides no easy answers about the nature of impression management and the ethics of leadership and followership, but it invites thoughtful readers and viewers to reflect on these issues-reflection that is no less important today than four centuries ago.

"Into a thousand parts divide one man": Henry V and the politics of identity

In popular imagination what endures about Shakespeare's Henry V is its young warrior-king's unaffected heroism and eloquence-"this homely honesty of nature," as one 19th-century critic put it (Dowden, quoted in Shakespeare, 1899, p. 16). At the battle of Agincourt it is only the power of Henry's plain words-"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers" (4.3.60)-that inspires his outnumbered army to defeat the French (never mind the historical "facts" about the 1415 battle-our subject is Shakespeare's play). The play is as close, it has been suggested, as Shakespeare ever came to a national epic. In it he was writing about the most celebrated of English kings, praised by chroniclers like Hall and Holinshed (Shakespeare's immediate textual sources), made the subject of at least two earlier Elizabethan plays, and held up by 16th-century historians like Daniel as a "mirror of Vertue, miracle of worth" (Daniel, 1594, Book 4). Many scholars have seen Shakespeare's play as part of this reverential

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tradition. His Henry, one scholar said, is "the ideal man of action, reasonable, just, . . . devoted to the service of his country, and aware of his grave responsibilities" (Bullough, quoted in Berman, 1968, p. 28). Alfred Harbage called Henry "the pattern of a Christian Prince" (Shakespeare, 1972, p. 20). "Throughout the whole play," opined the 19th-century Shakespeare enthusiast Gervinus, "sounds the key-note of a religious composure" (quoted in Shakespeare, 1899, 11).

But a great many critics have not been so convinced of Henry's virtues, or Shakespeare's intentions. Mark Van Doren calls Henry "groomed to be the ideal English King, all plumes and smiles and decorated courage" (quoted in Berman, 1958, p. 109); Van Doren's "praise" emphasizes Henry's mastery of appearances. Edmund Hazlitt was one of the first to question Henry's status as a hero: "He was a hero, that is, he was ready to sacrifice his own life for the pleasure of destroying thousands of other lives" (quoted in Shakespeare, 1982, p. 2). A leading contemporary Shakespearean, Gary Taylor, terms the play "a critical no man's land," with reactions sharply divided between "partisans of Henry and partisans of pacifism" (Shakespeare, 1982, p. 1).

It is not surprising that a play about war and a self-consciously Christian warrior should provoke diametrically opposed views among modern critics. But the divisions go beyond our wariness of nationalistic and religious icons, and reach to the heart of Shakespeare's text. While Shakespeare wrote about an almost medieval and mythic hero-king, he wrote within a Renaissance-and, more specifically, a Machiavellian-intellectual framework of intense interest in the theatricality of leadership, and especially in the sovereign as a kind of "actor-in-chief." The King has no dramatic rival, only a series of audiences. He appears in a dazzling variety of roles-Christian king, charismatic leader, national unifier, fierce soldier, lover, national hero-and in all of these roles he is aware of the power of image and impression. What seems to be his "homely honesty of nature" may turn out to be well-honed rhetoric- like the calculated brutality of his threats hurled at Harfleur ("your shrill-shrieking daughters; / Your fathers taken by the silver beards, / And their most reverend heads dashed to the walls; / Your naked infants spitted upon pikes," 3.3.112-15). (His terrifying words succeed where force had failed, and the town yields without bloodshed.)

Impression management, as the term is used by management scholars, refers to "the process by which people attempt to manipulate the reactions of others to images of themselves or their ideas" (Rao, Schmidt, & Murray, 1995, p. 147; see also Gardner, 1992). Impression management is the systematic deployment of words, images, symbols, actions, and settings to shape perceptions and thus behavior. Though the term is recent, awareness of impression management is old. Moses relied on Aaron to speak to the Israelites (Exodus 4:10-16), while in Greek thought Xenophon's *Cyropedia*, Plato's *Republic* (especially the passages on censorship and the noble lie) and Aristotle's *Politics* (Book V) are important texts in the history of impression management. But impression management as a key part of leadership is a quintessentially modern perspective, articulated most powerfully by the Florentine political thinker Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527). Machiavelli loomed over the thought and culture of the 16th century much as Freud loomed over the 20th. So great is Machiavelli's influence that it is common to divide political thought into two eras: a pre-modern and pre-Machiavellian era, and a modern, post-Machiavellian era. Henry V-and a great many Elizabethan and Jacobean plays-can be understood as a "post-Machiavellian" exploration of power. Shakespeare's king is a Machiavellian. That is not to say that he is a scheming villain. Rather, Shakespeare's Henry is a thoughtful and intelligent man who knows how uncertain his hold on power is, how to use force and appearance, and how to watch others while performing one's own role. Henry V can be read as a study of how a new king treats his identity as a crucial political resource. This "vain, giddy, shallow, humorous youth," as the French crown prince sees him (2.4.28), this "good shallow young fellow," as Falstaff has described him (2H4, 2.4.212), reinvents himself with ruthless discipline. The play itself is little more than a series of stages upon which the king exploits-and Shakespeare explores-the politics of identity.

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The first thing to notice is how many names Henry has. With Falstaff he is Hal; at court, Henry or the Prince of Wales; to his father and himself, Harry. The succession of names tracks his passage from idle youth to national icon. Shakespeare makes this transformation the central arc of the three Henry plays, 1 and 2 Henry IV and Henry V, as Henry himself says early in the first of these plays: "When this loose behavior I throw off / . . . / My reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault, / Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes / Than that which hath no foil to set it off" (1H4, 1.2.186-193).

Henry's keen regard for image management reminds us of his father, who was able to seize the throne from Richard II in large measure by assiduous cultivation of his image ("Wooing poor craftsmen with the craft of smiles," R2, 1.4.27). When the old King urges his son to avoid Falstaff, he's worried not about morals but image: "Not an eye / But is a-weary of thy common sight. . ." (1H4, 3.2.87-88). The King counsels his son to do as he did: "By being seldom seen, I could not stir / But, like a comet, I was wondered at." "Opinion," he says, "did help me to the crown" (1H4, 3.2.42-47).

And the management of "opinion" will be the pivot of the son's career. In his first appearance as king Henry V announces that the time has come "to raze out / Rotten opinion, who hath writ me down / After my seeming" (2H4, 5.2.126-28). Shakespeare uses Falstaff to dramatize the change. Relishing his prospects, the old knight happily greets the new king: "God save thy grace, King Hal, my royal Hal! . . . God save thee, my sweet boy!" Henry's icy response cuts him off: "I know thee not, old man. . . . I have long dreamed of such a kind of man, / . . . / But, being awaked, I do despise my dream" (2H4, 5.5.39-49). Henry's rejection of Falstaff is a key and responsible part of his "awakening." But Shakespeare also wants us to feel its human impact, on Falstaff. "The King has killed his heart," the Hostess says (2.1.79). "Ah, poor heart" (2.1.108). "His heart is fractured and corroborate," the malapropistic Pistol repeats; Nym's answer speaks directly to the question of Henry's roles: "The King is a good King, but it must be as it may. . ." (2.1.113-14). Soon afterward, in the most moving passage of the play, the Hostess tells of Falstaff's passing: "I saw him fumble with the sheets, and play with flowers, and smile upon his finger's end. . . . a babbled of green fields" (2.3.13-16). Her misunderstanding-Falstaff is reciting the Lord's Prayer on his deathbed-adds to the extraordinary emotional energy surrounding the offstage presence of Falstaff in the play. And, to show that this isn't just a sentimental interlude early in the play, Shakespeare will allude again to Falstaff's death near the end of the play, when Fluellen remembers that the king "turned away the fat knight with the great pelly doublet. He was full of jests, and gipes, and knaveries, and mocks" (4.7.37-41) Fluellen ends on a bathetic note: "I have forgot his name." His echo of Henry's "I know thee not, old man" suggests the king's power, through his words and actions, to shape memory itself. The clash of memory and forgetting, of old friends discarded for new roles, adds poignancy to the king's story.

In a text designed as a series of stages the first, of course, is the literal theatrical stage. The Chorus reminds the audience of the play's fictive quality: "Can this cockpit hold the vasty fields of France?" The Chorus's voice-official, windy, simplifying-is not Shakespeare's. Its view of history is narrowly patriotic and uncomplicated, with villains and heroes painted black and white. It ignores the Falstaff underplot or the human drama of Henry's rejection of his low friends. Most tellingly from my perspective, the Chorus is oblivious to Henry's transformation. It is content to regard the King simply as a hero, England's beloved Harry. Harry, the royal intimate name, is the only name by which the Chorus refers to him. It is an affectionate name, familiar yet respectful, and resonant with his human touch-"A little touch of Harry in the night"

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(4.0.47). The Chorus, in short, is the full-throated voice of conventional opinion, happily reporting the King's power to inflame the "youth of England" with the passion to fight (2.0.1-6, 3.0.22-24). Much later in the play Shakespeare will show the darker side to this Pied-Piper seduction, when all the boys who follow Henry to war are slaughtered.

The action of the play seems to begin in the same fulsome and patriotic vein as the Chorus. England's highest churchmen praise their King as "a true lover of the holy Church." But in fact the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely are scheming how to avoid a heavy tax on the church. To gain the King's support they plan to encourage his imperial ambitions. Immediately after the Chorus announces the primacy of chivalric values in this story, we are thrust jarringly into one of the most cynical and political scenes in all of Shakespeare, as the two churchmen muse over how to avoid a proposed heavy tax on the church. They decide to try to win the king's support.

As the two churchmen sweep in to see Henry in the next scene, Canterbury mantles himself in religious dignity and power: "God and his angels guard your sacred throne, / And make you long become it" (1.2.7-8). Developing the play's sensitivity to the morality of the coming war, Henry instructs the Archbishop to render his opinion on the king's claim to French possessions with strict impartiality:

*. . . God doth know how many now in health
Shall drop their blood in approbation
Of what your reverence shall incite us to.
Therefore take heed . . .
How you awake our sleeping sword of war. . . . (1.2.18-22)*

(Henry, it will be noted, says "God" a lot. The word appears more in this play, mainly in the King's lines, than in any other of Shakespeare's works.)

After the Archbishop's opaque answer in a comically long disquisition on Salic Law, Henry demands a soundbite more useful for selling his program: "May I with right and conscience make this claim?" He gets what he needs: "The sin upon my head, dread sovereign!" (1.2.86, 96-97). By pushing together the churchmen's concern for avoiding a tax, and their urging to go to war, Shakespeare pushes religion and political interest together so that they are impossible for us to separate. The war, the moral heart of the play, rests on an unstable foundation. Later, when the soldier Williams speculates that "if the cause be not good, the King himself hath a heavy reckoning to make," Henry has no good answer but indignation (4.1.128-29).

Like the churchmen, the French nobles are also trying to figure out who Henry is. The Dauphin, deceived by his wastrel past, sends a contemptuous gift of tennis balls in response to his challenge. The Constable, more perceptive, likens him to the Roman hero Lucius Junius Brutus. Junius Brutus, one of history's great leaders (and a hero to Machiavelli) was famous for feigning madness and overthrowing a tyrant, thus founding the Roman republic. The Constable warns the Dauphin that Henry's carousing days "Were but the outside of the Roman Brutus, / Covering discretion with a coat of folly" (2.4.37-38). The Dauphin still disagrees. He cannot see things even if they are placed before him.

Henry, unlike the dimwitted Dauphin, perceives that which is hidden. Machiavelli said the good prince must be a fox, not only to play roles but also to see the traps in one's path. Henry manifests his foxiness in a bravura one-man exposure of the three traitors, Scroop, Cambridge, and Grey. After giving the three men a chance to be merciful toward a petty drunk who'd railed against the king (they reject mercy), Henry exposes their crimes in a wonderfully

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theatrical moment, forcing them to read their own exposures while all eyes are on them. When the three ask for mercy Henry throws their own severity back at them: "The mercy that was quick in us but late / By your own counsel is suppressed and killed" (2.2.76-77). They shall be executed. Thus he manages within the same performance to present a winning blend of mercy and hard justice, and even to deflect some of the responsibility for the execution onto the three. Even more to the point, in this scene the King portrays himself as a kind of omniscient eye of heaven, able to look beneath "seems" and spy out the hidden hearts of his subjects.

Now the play turns to the war in France. The Archbishop had praised the King's astonishing rhetorical versatility, and now during the campaign he plays different roles as circumstances demand. At Harfleur he even tells his men that war means donning a new persona:

*In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility,
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger.
Stiffen up the sinews, conjure up the blood,
Disguise fair nature with hard-favoured rage. . . . (3.1.3-8)*

This is precisely, of course, what he proceeds to do at the gates of Harfleur, where he deploys astonishing brutality of language to achieve what his soldiers and guns have been failed to do, compel the town's submission. He employs one of his favorite rhetorical stratagems, telling the townsmen ("guilty in defence," 3.3.120) that the terrible choice is really theirs, not his. As soon as they submit he drops his assumed rage.

Another role Henry plays to the hilt is upholder of the law. In France another one of his old companions is found violating the king's command by robbing a church. It is Bardolph, Fluellen says, "if your majesty knows the man" (3.6.93). Henry is impassive: "We would have all such offenders so cut off." Like Falstaff, Bardolph passes out of the play-world without a flicker of emotion on Henry's part. (In both cases Shakespeare sets Henry's lofty coldness against the grief of more constant-and more humble-old friends.) Bardolph's transgression serves only to let Henry to trumpet his army's lawfulness:

And we give express charge that in our marches through the country there be nothing compelled from the villages, nothing taken but paid for; none of the French upbraided or abused in disdainful language; for when lenity and cruelty play for a Kingdom, the gentler gamester is the soonest winner. (3.6.98-103).

Consciously or not, Henry's preference for lenity over cruelty follows Machiavelli's advice in *The Prince* (chapter 17).

But of all the roles Henry plays, perhaps the most critical to his success is to portray himself as a friend and brother to his soldiers. Invoking God may make a ruler's cause just. Upholding the law may win the hearts and minds of French villagers. But these don't make a ruler beloved by his subjects, and Henry wants-needs-to be loved. Not as a matter of psychology, for Shakespeare gives us no useful glimpse of his inner life (except for a single soliloquy that is oddly impersonal and abstract), but as a matter of politics in the deepest sense. The real issue is leadership, and how leaders succeed. Henry believes in the power of love (backed by his eagle's eye in detecting threats). His easy rhetoric of friendship, his conscious modesty, is perhaps his most important resource. The Chorus reports that he calls his soldiers "brothers, friends, and countrymen" (4.0.35). His own most famous words from the play, uttered in battle, speak not of command or violence but friendship and brotherhood:

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more. . . . (3.1.1)

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We few, we happy few, we band of brothers. (4.3.60)

Machiavelli had said in *The Prince* that ideally a prince should be both loved and feared—only as a second-best should one sacrifice love. Henry supplied the fear in his exposure and easy control of the three traitors; Henry has the rare ability to win the love of his subjects without losing power over them; one thinks in recent days of GE's legendary CEO Jack Welch, feared for his withering demands for results, but on a first-name basis with thousands of his employees, and writing countless personal notes. When Harry speaks to his men as a comrade, it is not from on high but among them, with his head bare and his manner of address familiar. He wants his men to look at him, to talk with him, to "feel a little touch of Harry in the night."

The hardest test of Henry's ability to kindle love among his common soldiers comes in the astonishing scene with Williams, Bates, and Court. These men have doubts about why they are in France, and about how much to trust a King's utterance. If Henry is a post-Machiavellian King, Williams is a post-Machiavellian subject. When Henry, disguised as a commoner, says that they can take comfort from the King's "cause being just and his quarrel honourable" (ideas he has striven mightily to broadcast), Williams answers with acerbic simplicity, "That's more than we know" (4.1.119-21). Shakespeare puts into Williams' mouth a radical assault on the official message of a splendid chivalric war:

But if the cause be not good, the King himself hath a heavy reckoning to make, when all those legs and arms and heads chopped off in a battle shall join together at the latter day, and cry all, "We died at such a place"—some swearing, some crying for a surgeon, some upon their wives left poor behind them, some upon the debts they owe, some upon their children rawly left. (4.1.128-35)

The image of these body parts crying, swearing, scuttling about at the judgment day is searing. We are forced suddenly, in the middle of a kind of patriotic reverie, to confront questions about the morality of the war that we likely thought had been settled early on (1.2.18-28, in lines by Henry that now serve as a kind of foreshadowing of Williams). "I am afraid," Williams concludes with stunning moral clarity, "there are few die well that die in a battle; for how can they charitably dispose of anything, when blood is their argument? Now, if these men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the King that led them to it. . ." (4.1.135-37). From the beginning Henry has labored to establish the official story, of a legitimate Christian war virtually forced on England and its humble King by the obdurate resistance of France's corrupt and scheming leaders. (Winding through the play, however, has been a counter-story, driven by the deathbed advice of Henry's father, "to busy giddy minds / With foreign quarrels" (2H4, 4.3.341-42). That advice hangs over this play.) As a measure of Henry's success in shaping history, the Chorus, the voice of Elizabethan orthodoxy, echoes him. But now a common soldier threatens to overturn everything. Williams cuts to the heart of the matter: if the war is unjust, the King is guilty of a great crime.

Henry had ordered the execution of the common thief Bardolph for stealing a pax from a French church. Now he stands all but accused of stealing the pax, or peace, from all of France—"naked, poor, and mangled peace," that "hath from France too long been chased," as the Duke of Burgundy will later put it (5.2.34-38). Peace will be much spoken of in the play's last scene, with Henry offering to return it to the French in exchange for their submission to all his demands. Williams, were he educated, might be tempted to quote an old French proverb: "Little thieves are hanged but great ones escape." (Hall and Holinshed, Shakespeare's sources, reported that Bardolph stole a pix, a small box. Why Shakespeare changed pix to pax, an image of the crucifix on a small disk, has never been well explained.)

The disguised Henry gives a long, indignant, but beside-the-point reply that fails to win Williams over, for when Henry speaks cheerily about the King's vow never to be ransomed

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(meaning he will never abandon his men), Williams repeats his skepticism about the gulf between what the King may say and what common soldiers can know: "Ay, he said so, to make us fight cheerfully, but when our throats are cut he may be ransomed, and we ne'er the wiser" (4.1.179-81, emphasis added). Perhaps it is a clue to how Henry's character that he can't take rejection, or more likely it's a measure of how seriously he works at politics, that he tries one more trick to win over this crusty soldier. Henry's comically cumbersome scheme, involving exchanged gloves, a promise to fight, and an arranged squabble between Williams and Fluellen, gives him a chance to swoop down on Williams with sudden exposure (a favorite trick of his, as we've seen) and all the majesty of his office. Williams can only beg for mercy. Henry, finally in a position where he can one-up Williams in front of an audience, forgives him with ostentatious magnanimity and returns the glove to him, stuffed with money. Critics who don't much like Henry in the play see this as motiveless bullying, like a cat worrying a mouse, but it's not motiveless: Henry's most critical political resource is the allegiance and devotion of the English people, and were Williams' disaffected cynicism to spread it would undermine the King's power. True impression management means never being able to say I don't care what you think of me. Indeed those of Shakespeare's rulers, like Richard II and Coriolanus, who dare to let such disdain for commoners show, are studies in failure.

After Agincourt the French sue for peace and Henry seals his ascendancy with a dynastic marriage to the French King's daughter. The wooing scene, with political calculation lying uncomfortably close to "real" emotion, is the ideal way to close this play about a master of impression management. Henry's hyperactive efforts to win Catherine's love neatly sums up his determination to base power on love rather than fear or force alone (any thoughtful reader of *The Prince* would agree). Henry, who has never before shown a hint of awareness of this woman, or interest in love, suddenly becomes an ardent lover. And in the midst of his fervent courtship he retains a laserlike focus on his demands, telling the Duke of Burgundy that if he wants peace, "you must buy that peace" by meeting all the English demands (5.2.70). And yet while we may see the English king following a cold-blooded strategy with shameless virtuosity, it is virtually impossible not be charmed by him, so winning is his energy in pursuing Catherine. ("We like him in the play," Hazlitt had said wonderingly after excoriating him.) No sooner is Catherine alone with Henry (along with her attendant Alice) than he introduces an unexpected note—a profession of sincerity. Her reluctance to trust him allows Shakespeare to remind us three times (once in French) of the saying, "the tongues of men are full of deceits" (5.2.115-20). Henry pleads his "plain soldier" manner of with gorgeous language that might recall the Archbishop's wonder at his unforeseen eloquence (1.1.39-53). Henry claims to have no words to speak in the longest speech in the play (5.2.131-62). As Alfred Harbage noted, "never has anyone advertised his inarticulateness with such loquacity" (Shakespeare, 1972, p. 22). At the end of his volley of words Catherine agrees to love him, not just marry him. There is an echo here of Henry's determination to win Williams' heart—and also of his volley of words at Harfleur (as he tells Catherine, "I love France so well that I will not part with a village of it," 5.2.166-67).

When King Charles agrees to the marriage, Henry says he is content—as long as every demand been met. Exeter reports one remaining point of contention: the French King has not consented to refer Henry as his heir, in Latin and in French, in all formal correspondence with the English King. He asks Henry if this is really necessary. Doesn't he already know the answer? The French finish submitting, and the marriage festivities can begin. For a moment it seems like a happy ending—until the Chorus's disquieting epilogue, which reminds us that all this will soon come crashing down in more civil war. In the long run, the war and Henry's valor achieve nothing.

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At the end of the battle of Agincourt Shakespeare invites us to take the easy path toward reflexive adulation for the King. Our misguided guides are the most attractive of the soldiers, Fluellen and Gower. They are officers who take their duty seriously, who admire the King, and who take pride in their clear thinking. Now they are trying to make sense of a fresh outrage. In the war's last desperate spasm the French slaughter the English boys-those very boys who'd chased honor and Henry to France. The French prisoners are also now dead, executed at the king's command. Fluellen and Gower try to put these deaths into some kind of moral order:

FLUELLEN Kill the poys and the luggage? 'Tis expressly against the law of arms. 'Tis as arrant a piece of knavery, mark you now, as can be offert. In your conscience now, is it not?

GOWER 'Tis certain there's not a boy left alive. And the cowardly rascals that ran from the battle ha' done this slaughter. Besides, they have burned and carried away all that was in the King's tent; wherefore the King most worthily hath caused every soldier to cut his prisoner's throat. O 'tis a gallant King. (4.7.1-8)

When Henry appears afterwards he affirms this official story of crime and punishment: "I was not angry since I came to France / Until this instant. . . . / . . . / . . . we'll cut the throats of those we have, / And not a man of them that we shall take / Shall taste our mercy. Go and tell them so" (4.7.47-57). The grievous episode comes off as somehow reassuring: even in the violence of war there are still rules ("the law of arms"), and right and wrong, and men like Henry who can tell the difference.

But Gower's satisfaction with Henry's gallantry is based on his misunderstanding of the sequence of events. Before Fluellen and Gower report the death of the boys, Henry orders the French prisoners killed-not out of gallantry or outrage, but as a ruthless necessity: "The French have reinforced their scattered men. / Then every soldier kill his prisoners. / Give the word through" (4.6.35-38).

Now we need not condemn Henry for this act; he seems to deem it necessary to victory. But it is vital to navigating our way through the text-and using it to think about leadership and impression management-that Shakespeare in a sense sets a trap for the unwary here. If one doesn't pay attention, one gets pulled into the same sentimental misunderstanding of the king that Fluellen and Gower have. Even as the admirable Fluellen upholds the "law of arms," we see in the king's actions that these laws may quietly bend to necessity, as the leader judges. (Shakespeare's deepest debt to Machiavelli may not be the foxlike figure of Henry, or any textual borrowing, but this invitation to his audience to think carefully, and not take a story or a text for granted.) As for the play itself: Why does Henry, afterward, express a more respectable pretext for killing the prisoners? Perhaps this is a defect in the text. Or it may be a rare moment when the process of self-invention and impression management can be glimpsed. In any event, Shakespeare gives us the opportunity to choose between seeing things as they are, and as we wish they were (following ch. 15 of *The Prince*)-between a "gallant" or a calculating king. It's a basic test of clear-eyed leadership-or followership, for that matter.

Henry invents himself so thoroughly as a king that it is hard to see the real man beneath the role. More than fifty years ago, Una Ellis-Fermor reflected on Henry's persona:

Henry V has indeed transformed himself into a public figure; the most forbidding thing about him is the completeness with which this has been done. He is solid and flawless. There is no attribute in him that is not part of this figure, no desire, no interest, no habit even that is not harmonized with it. He is never off the platform. . . . There is no Henry, only a king. (1958, pp. 56-7)

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"Into a thousand parts divide one man," the Chorus had bidden the audience at the beginning of the play (1.0.24), asking us to use our imagination to turn a few actors into the armies and nations they represent. But it is also a demand, inexorable in its working, laid on those who choose to live at the heights, carving themselves into all the roles they must play. Henry's one soliloquy in the play, as many critics have noted, is singularly impersonal and unilluminating about his inner life. But if we really get no satisfactory answer as to who Henry is or how he understands himself, perhaps that is the answer. There is no Henry, and no Hal, only "the warlike Harry, like himself" (1.0.5), in an endless hall of mirrors of princes. It is not clear which are the reflections and which the "real" man.

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