

THE FAMILY VALUES IN THE CONSTELLATION OF THE REBELS IN SHAKESPEARE'S *HENRY IV (PART I)*

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Abstract: It is hard to say that all of Shakespeare's plays exclude the issues of parents, children and politics of power. Those issues are to a certain degree intertwined. As a case in point, Henry IV (part one) embodies such a mingled concept. It is quite appealing to highlight the complexity of the familial relationships among the characters and their vested interests which enhance the plot of the play. Shakespeare, in this case, proves to be very intelligent in moulding the issues.

Key words: Family values, Shakespeare, Henry IV

INTRODUCTION

When we talk about family values among the rebels, we should previously identify the constellation of the rebellious forces in the play. In Shakespeare's *Henry IV (part I)* we find out some names of the rebels (at least, on the basis of who take part in the dialogue, not to mention soldiers as supporting figures on the stage), namely: Henry Percy (Northumberland's son – also known as Hotspur), Percy (Earl of Northumberland – Hotspur's father), Earl of Worcester (Hotspur's uncle), Kate (Lady Percy – Hotspur's wife), Lord Edmund Mortimer (Earl of March – Hotspur's brother-in-law), Lady Mortimer (wife of Lord Edmund Mortimer – daughter of Owain Glyndwr), Owain Glyndwr (Lady Mortimer's father), Earl of Douglas, Sir Richard Vernon, Scrope (Archbishop of York), and Sir Michael (a member of the Archbishop's household). The above identification is primarily based on the family relationships of some of them, on one hand. There is also a

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marriage bound between The Percy and The Glyndwr, on the other hand. The remaining characters have no family relationships, but friends or master-subordinate relationship.

After identifying the family relationships, the next step we are about to do is identifying the constellation of the rebels based on "factions". The term "factions" here has no direct reference to modern political meaning (although it is indeed a modern term) but merely a word used to clarify their very reasons to take a serious challenge to King Henry IV. When we try to observe the forces of the rebels, it can be said that there are three different factions. First, the faction of "the unsatisfied English noblemen" that includes important names such as Hotspur, Worcester, Northumberland, Mortimer, and Scope (the Archbishop of York). The following characters such as Kate, Vernon, and Michael can also be added to the list though they do not exactly the ones who have direct problems or disputes with the king.

NOBLEMEN IN *HENRY IV*

When we textually search for the reasons or sources why the unsatisfied English noblemen (primarily the important leading figures) rebels against the king, then we can find several important reasons begun with the king's accusation and expulsion upon Worcester to which he takes an opposition. It is depicted when he, Northumberland, Hotspur, and other lords are summoned by the King in the court, like that shown in the quotation overleaf:

KING HENRY Worcester, get thee gone, for I do see
Danger and disobedience in thine eye.
O sir, your presence is too bold and peremptory,
And majesty might never yet endure
The moody frontier of a servant brow.
You have good leave to leave us. When we need
Your use and counsel we shall send for you. *Exit WORCESTER*
(Greenblatt, 1997:1165, scene 1.3)

Further, at the battle of Shrewsbury Worcester warns Henry IV that he should not forget the history when he becomes a king. Of what he ever took an oath not to claim the throne from Richard II, he broke it. That is what Worcester thinks of him; a man of no word.

WORCESTER [*to the KING*] You swore to us,
And you did swear that oath at Doncaster,
That you did nothing purpose 'gainst the state,
Nor claim no further than your new-fall'n right
The seat of Gaunt, dukedom of Lancaster.

.....
You took occasion to be quickly wooed
To grip the general sway into your hand,
Forgot your oath to us at Doncaster,
And being fed by us, you use used us so
As the ungentle gull, the cuckoo's bird,
Useth the sparrow –did oppress our nest,
Grew by our feeding to so great a bulk
That even our love durst not come near your sight
For fear of swallowing. But with nimble wing
We were enforced for safety' sake to fly
Out of your sight, and raise this present head,
Whereby we stand opposed by such means
As you yourself has forged against yourself,
By unkind usage, dangerous countenance,
And violation of all faith and troth
Sworn to us in your younger enterprise.
(Greenblatt, 1997:1212, scene 5.1)

From the point of view of Henry IV, what Worcester says can be interpreted as extremely rude to the king. The way he directly addresses his frankness indicates his disobedience to the king. Obedience is the basic political doctrine during Tudor dynasty. Any single threat manifested in various ways will be considered rebellious. Historically, the doctrine roots from the religious teaching, under the theological argument in William Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man* as cited by Ribner in his *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare*.

State had to claim a divine origin as the embodiment of God's will on earth; rebellion against the king had to be treated as rebellion against God (Irving, 1965:306).

Moreover, in Tudor times what is demanded from all subjects including the noblemen is simply "passive obedience" (Irving, 1965:305). What happens to Worcester and other rebels, later on, is not passive obedience. It is definitely a rebellion as what the play in the sense of historical background deals with.

Unlike Worcester, Hotspur and Northumberland rebellion is based on several facts that one of them may be 'provoked' by Worcester. From Hotspur's view point, having realised that Mortimer has been captured by Glyndwr of Welsh, he demands a ransom for his release, Yet the king firmly rejects it. After being expelled by the king, Hotspur and Northumberland are provoked by Worcester to release the Scottish in order to get their sympathy and in return, they will support them against the Bolingbroke.

WORCESTER Then once more to your Scottish prisoners.
 Deliver them up without their ransom straight;
 And make your Douglas son your only mean
 For powers in Scotland, which for divers reasons
 Which I shall send you written, be assured
 Will be easily be granted. [To NORTHUMBERLAND] you,
 my lord,
 Your son in Scotland being thus employed,
 Shall secretly into the bosson creep
 Of that same noble prelate wee-beloved,
 The Archbishop.
 (Greenblatt, 1997:1170, scene 1.3)

Prior to the fact, the king has been informed that The Percys (Northumberland and Hotspur) have imprisoned the Douglas and some of Scots rebels but they reject to hand them over to the king. This very fact is considered a challenge for Henry IV. And once again, from the king's view point, another internal disobedience, which means rebellion, occurs. Yet, from The Percy's view point, they take an opposition to the Bolingbroke as he cannot fulfil what they demand in return for the freedom of Mortimer. That is the source of their conflict. Nevertheless, as stated in Ornstein's *A KINGDOM FOR A STAGE* the very motive of The Percy's Rebellion is mainly to restore their dignities by reminding the King on their meritorious service using the events of Mortimer's capture and the Scottish imprisonment as their "bargaining position" (Ornstein, 1972:130).

For the source of the Archbishop's rebellion, we do not have a more convincing evidence but what Worcester tells to Northumberland and Hotspur. He tells them that Archbishop's disobedience to the king is caused by his brother's death, Lord Scrope. As touched upon, the remaining figures of "the English faction" run no important role in the rebellious constellation but merely assisting. Vernon may, to some extent, be involved in Shrewsbury's lie, and Michael is taking part as a messenger of the Archbishop. Yet, it is not



even clear to Kate for she runs more in comical part of the play as Hotspur's wife. The second party is "the Welsh faction" with its notorious leading figure, Owain Glyndwr. The cause of his rebellion, or his motif, is not even clear in the play. What we have is initially, a mere description of Owain Glyndwr in Westmorland's report.

WESTMORLAND

A post from Wales, loaden with heavy news,
Whose worst was that the noble Mortimer,
Leading the men of Herefordshire to fight
Against the irregular and wild Glyndwr,
Was by the rude hands of that Welshman taken,
A thousand of his people butchered,.....

(Greenblatt, 1997:1158, scene 1.1)

Further, when Glyndwr meets Hotspur in his Welsh Castle (at least according to Shakespeare's scene in the text), the only information we have about him is merely based on his own story. Yet, it still does not tell the reason why he takes challenge to Henry IV. On the dialogue telling about how "extraordinary happenings" came along his birth, he thinks those special phenomena signify that he is a special man. Definitely, we are also not sure about it since he does it in order to give certain impression to Hotspur, at least according to Hotspur himself. One thing that we can interpret from Glyndwr (based on Mortimer) is his irregularity and wildness that 'make' him a threat for England although in the introductory part of the play, Welsh (not Glyndwr) is said to have a threat of "effeminization and seduction" (Greenblatt, 1997:1149).

The third faction is the Douglas, or "Scottish faction". This last party obviously plays its role in the battle field of Shrewsbury. Yet, textually, they do not explicitly reveal why they rebel against the king. However, we (and Shakespeare) know that historically Scotland always becomes the real threat for England. The fact that Hotspur releases them from the prison, to some extent, can be interpreted as "reason" why they want to join "the English faction". It is a sort of "gratitude".

FAMILY VALUES OF THE REBELS

Having identified the constellation of the rebels, we now move to the core of this essay, the family values of the rebels. First of all, it has to be

understood that the family values here primarily lie in the relationships between parents and children as well as husband and wife. The judgements upon their relations may vary. Thus it is not as single-mindedly as distinguishing black or white but also to what extent their relationships give colour to their rebellious constellation.

First, let us focus on the relationships between Hotspur and Northumberland. It is definitely a relation between a son and a father. When we observe their relation, we are faced with the fact that to some extent, Hotspur may feel "cheated". He may feel so because when he really needs direct support from his father and his army, neither Northumberland and his army is there. Nevertheless, as he is a very impulsive one, Hotspur still tries to assume that his father's absence will even raise their prestige to daringly challenge the king. This is well-described on the dialogue among the rebels in their camp for the final preparation of Shrewsbury battle.

HOTSPUR Sick now? Droop now? This sickness doth infect

The very life-blood of our enterprise.

'Tis carching hither, even to our camp.

He writes me here that inward sickness stays him,

And that his friends by deputation

Could not so soon be drawn; nor did he think it meet

To lay so dangerous and dear a trust

On any soul removed but on his own.

Yet doth he give us bold advertisement

That with our small conjunction we should on,

To see how fortune is disposed to us;

For, as he writes, there is no quailing now,

Because the king is certainly possessed

Of all our purposes.....

WORCESTER Your father's sickness is a maim to us.

HOTSPUR A perilous gash, a very limb lopped off.

And yeth, in faith, it is not. His present want

Seems more than we shall find it.....

WORCESTER

This absence of your father's draws a curtain

That shows the ignorant a kind of fear

Before not dreamt of.

HOTSPUR You strain too far.

I rather of his absence make this use:

It lends a lustre, and more great opinion,

A larger dare to our great enterprise,

Than if the Earl were here; for men must think
If we without his help can make a head
To push against a kingdom, with his help
We shall o'ertum it topsy-turvy down.
Yet all goes well, yet all our joints are whole.
(Greenblatt, 1997:1203-1204, scene 4.1)

For the relationship between Northumberland and Hotspur, the above dialogue indicates that Northumberland has already ignored his own son facing a great danger. He has already calculated that even their joint forces will no longer match with the king's forces. It is interesting to see how a father tries to make a fool on his own son by using the excuse "sick". We don't have any clue indicating Hotspur's discovery on this matter. What we have, as shown in the above dialogue, is the fact that he is initially disappointed but it is overcome by his impulsiveness.

Further interpretation may come to the indication that Northumberland tries to keep his own safety. He knows that based on his own "strategy" such a challenge is dangerous. The indications can actually be traced back to the time when he, Worcester, and Hotspur are summoned by the king in the court, and also after they are all expelled. Unlike Hotspur who is so impulsive, eager to directly challenge the king, or Worcester who is so cunning and tactical, Northumberland seems to be more "careful". It can be seen in the court where he tries to deny his son's fault before the king.

NORTHUMBERLAND Yea, my good lord.
Those prisoner in your highness' name demanded,
Which Harry Percy here at Holmedon took,
Were, as he says, not with such strength denied
As was delivered to your majesty,
Who either through envy or misprison
Was guilty of this fault, and not my son.
(ibid, 1997:1165, scene 1.3)

Seemingly, Northumberland tries to protect his son from the accusation. Yet, when we draw it to his "sickness", from the beginning he tries to avoid any trouble but he fails since he does not have any chance explaining the matter. Hotspur keeps on arguing with the king, and then they are expelled. As a result, in one hand he joins the rebels, but on the other hand he also wants to find the right moment not to risk his own life. Northumberland does

betray his son who has trusted and counted on him not only as a father but also as a comrade.

OWAIN, GLYNDWR AND MORTIMER

Now, we move to the relationship between Owain Glyndwr and his daughter as well as Glyndwr and Mortimer. Textually, we hardly find any dialogue of Glyndwr and his daughter. Their parts are mostly placed in the stage direction. However, we can interpret such a kind of relationship through the dialogue between Glyndwr and his son-in-law, Mortimer, as shown in the following.

GLYNDWR Nay, if you melt, then she will run mad.
The lady [sits on the rushes and] speaks again in Welsh
MORTIMER O, I am ignorance itself in this!
GLYNDWR She bids you on the wanton rushes lay you down
And rest your gentle head upon her lap,
And she will sing the song that pleaseth you,
And on your eyelids crown the god of sleep,
Charming your blood with pleasing heaviness,
Making such difference 'twixt wake and sleep
As is the difference betwixt day and night
The hour before the heavenly-harnessed team
Begins his golden progress in the east.
(Greenblatt, 1997:1194, scene 3.1)

The above dialogue occurs as Mortimer cannot speak Welsh while his wife cannot speak English. This is a comical story actually. Glyndwr has to translate his daughter's Welsh into English so that Mortimer understands it. Referring to the above dialogue, Glyndwr does not merely function as a translator for his daughter, but he also suggests Mortimer what to do in respond to her. We, then, may come to conclude that being in a such position reflects Glyndwr's own concern to the happiness of his daughter. In other word, their relationship is indeed a good one. A father who cares to the happiness of his own daughter, and even entrusts her to the hand of his former enemy, Mortimer.

Mortimer has a good relationship with his father-in-law. We can identify from the way he speaks with and about him. When Mortimer asks something, he always greets him "Good father" (Greenblatt, 1997:1193, line 192). We

can also find his own opinion about Glyndwr when he tries to calm Hotspur down. Mortimer does respects his father-in-law.

MORTIMER In faith, he is a worthy gentleman,
Exceedingly well read, and profited
In strange concealment, valiant as a lion,
And wondrous affable, and as bountiful
As mines of India. Shall I tell you, cousin?
He holds your temper in high respect,
And curbs himself even in his natural scope
When you come 'cross' his humour; faith, he does.
I warrant you, that man is not alive
Might so have tempted him as you have done
Without the taste of danger and reproof.
But do not use it oft, let me entreat you.
(ibid, 1997:1193, scene 3.1)

HOTSPUR AND KATE

Having looked at Glyndwr-his daughter and Glyndwr-Mortimer, we, now, observe the relationship between Hotspur and Kate as a husband and a wife. Their relation within the play runs not only as a comical part in a frame of rebellion but also as an indication that generally Shakespeare wants to present the rebellious situation in different angle, as he does in Tavern. Shakespeare intends to show the vulnerability of the rebels by presenting women in the play as well as to depict that they have their own private lives (ibid, 1997:1152). Hotspur and Kate relation is indeed loving and jolly. This comical relations can be shown in the following.

LADY PERCY But hear you, my lord.
HOTSPUR What says thou, my lady?
LADY PERCY What is it carries you away?
HOTSPUR Why, my horse, my love, my horse
LADY PERCY Out you mad-headed ape!
A weasel hath not such a deal of spelen
As you are tossed with.
In faith, I'll know your business, Harry, that I will.
I fear my brother Mortimer doth stir
About his title, and hath sent for you
To line his enterprise; but if you go-
HOTSPUR So far afoot? I shall be weary, love.
LADY PERCY Come, come, you paraquito, answer me

Directly to this question that I ask.
In faith, I'll break thy little finger, Harry.
An if thou wilt not tell me all things true
(Greenblatt, 1997:117, scene 2.4).

From the dialogue, we find out how comical they are. Hotspur misaddress his wife as “my love” and “my horse” respectively. How Kate is annoyed by Hotspur’s ignorance of her presence. And how she uses “threat” on sexual joke about breaking his penis if he does not tell what he has in mind. It all shows the comical part on their relationship. Yet, we are also faced with the fact of the man-dominated world situation when in the following dialogue Hotspur firmly tells Kate what to do.

HOTSPUR Come wilt thou see me ride?
And when I am a-horseback, I will swear
I love thee infinitely. But hark you, Kate.
I must not have you henceforth question me
Whither I go, nor reason whereabouts.
Whither I must, I must; and to conclude,
This evening must I leave you, gentle Kate.
I know you wise, but yet no farther wise
Than Harry Percy's wife; constant you are,
But yet a woman; and for secrecy
No lady closer, for I well believe
Thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know.
And so far will I trust thee, gentle Kate.
LADY PERCY How, so far?
HOTSPUR Not an inch further. But Hark you, Kate,
Whither I go, Thither shall you go too.
Today I will set forth, tomorrow you. Will this content you, Kate?
LADY PERCY It must, of force
(ibid, 1997:1177-1178).

The relationship between Mortimer and his wife can be said unique. The reason is merely based on the inability of each of them to speak on a single-set of language they both understand. As touched upon, Mortimer cannot speak Welsh and his wife cannot speak English. Yet, having observed on their interaction in which one wants to understand the other, then their relation is the “most romantic” in the play. That might be the reason why the introduction part 1 of *Henry IV* tends to use the word “effeminate and

seductive” to describe their relationship. The following quotation describes the fact.

MORTIMER I understand thy looks. That pretty Welsh
Which thou down pourest from these swelling heavens
I am too perfect in, and but for shame
In such a parley should I answer thee
The lady [kisses him, and speaks] again in Welsh
MORTIMER I understand thy kisses, and thou mine,
And that’s a feeling disputation;
But I will never be a truant, love,
Till I have learnt thy language, for thy tongue
Makes Welsh as sweet as ditties highly penned,
Sung by a fair queen in a summer’s bower
With ravishing division, to her lute.
(Greenblatt, 1997:1193-1194, scene 3.1)

CONCLUSION

Having looked at all their relationship, now we can point out that the most affecting relationship in the constellation of the rebels is between Hotspur and Northumberland. It does affect other rebels, as most of them rely on Northumberland’s forces. Yet, he breaks their trust as well as fails their hope. It is described by Worcester in single sentence “Your father’s sickness is amaim to us” (Greenblatt, 1997:1204, line42). It can be said that apart from the impulsiveness of Hotspur, Worcester’s lie, and the King’s forces, Northumberland’s absence is one of the causes of their defeat. Glyndwr and his “Welsh faction” comes late; Mortimer does not join either (probably he is “tamed” by his wife); and the Archbishop remains in York. All complicates the situation and even worsen it . Thus, having analysed the role of the family values in the constellation of the rebels, it can be stated that they can give direct or indirect influences on the course of the rebellion.

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