

MACHIAVELLIANISM REAL AND ROMANTIC ON THE ELIZABETHAN STAGE.

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS
in the Department
of
English

We accept this thesis as conforming to the
standard required from candidates for the
degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

Members of the Department of
English.....

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

1953

NOTE

Two "Abstracts" are sent with the first copy of this thesis, the four-page one apparently the earlier, the single-page one (lacking for the second copy) an insert.

Considering them to be, as it were, Leonora and Fidelio overtures, we are retaining both.

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ABSTRACT

An examination of the works of Machiavelli makes clear that the sinister figure bearing his name in the drama of Elizabethan England is a caricature or romanticized version of the politician discussed in The Prince. Further, a review of English history from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries reveals that the Tudor monarchs and their ministers were governed in their policies by the precepts for rulers outlined by Machiavelli and that initially the works of Machiavelli were read with interest and retained for reference by many of the leading scholars and statesmen. Denunciations of the Machiavellian thesis early arose, however, from the ranks of the Catholic reformers. The concept of the devil-possessed figure that played so prominent a part in the drama derives, it therefore appears, not from English innocence of craft in politics, but from the misrepresentation of Machiavelli's thesis by the spokesmen of the Catholic counter-reformation. Picked up by political pamphleteers, this perverse and fascinating character was seized upon by the playwrights and became the prototype of political villainy. Marlowe, the first playwright to reflect the influence of Machiavelli, explicitly offers Barabas in the Jew of Malta as a Machiavellian and a diabolical villain; and in Tamburlane, Faustus and Edward II gives other evidence of reaction to the prevalent interest in the theories of the Italian thinker.

The understanding of princely power as Machiavelli actually conceived it is demonstrated by Ben Jonson in Sejanus and in Catiline, but pre-eminently by Shakespeare in his historical plays and in Coriolanus. Of the true Machiavellians on the Elizabethan stage, Richard, Duke of York, portrays him who by his own abilities overcomes great odds to win power; Henry IV fulfils the demands laid upon the prince who achieves power by the aid of others and retains it by force and cunning; and Henry V epitomizes the astute and popular prince who skilfully enhances the power and prestige of himself and his country by his virtues both as a warrior and as a statesman. In the dialogue of Volturnus in Coriolanus is paraphrased the essence of the famous eighteenth chapter of The Prince.

A B S T R A C T

The Machiavellian villain has long been the subject of discussion among critics of the Elizabethan drama. This essay attempts to analyse with some precision evidence from history and the drama of the relationship of the literary to the real political figure. It attempts to indicate the answer to the questions: In what way does the sinister stage personality symbolize the real experience of the Elizabethans ? What is the relationship of this character to that of the prince delineated by Machiavelli ?

Niccolo Machiavelli, whose name has been attached to the typical sixteenth century unscrupulous and diabolically cunning cloak and dagger murderer and politician was in fact the founder of modern political science. He was a responsible and esteemed servant of the foremost city state of his time in Italy, and his theses on princely rule and on the principles underlying republican government have established themselves as texts in the courses of

universities. It would appear, then, that the Machiavellian of the Elizabethan stage requires some explaining.

An examination of the history of English government during the late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries reveals that the practice of the kings and chief ministers of England was governed by the precepts on power that Machiavelli so brilliantly set forth in his writings; and investigation of the popular reaction to the practices he exposed makes clear that it took a sharp turn toward the close of the sixteenth century, when the bogey of Machiavellian villainy asserted itself in England, appearing in its most spectacular form in the plays of the last two decades of that century and the first decade of the seventeenth.

It becomes apparent from a consideration of the facts of history and of the record of public opinion that the Machiavellian villain epitomized the fear of the ambitious individual experienced by a despotism faced on two sides by a threat to its claim to absolute power; and that the menace that threatened the Tudors from the reactionary nobility on the one hand and from the upstart merchant aristocracy on

the other found dramatic expression in the extravagant, ruthless, self-seeking villain who inevitably was characterized by the name of the theoretician of that absolute princely rule by which alone the confusions of the end of the medieval era could be resolved into a new and more advanced order of society. Such paradoxes are not unknown in history.

The great dramas of Elizabethan England present not only the Machiavellian Barabas, the prototype for all subsequent villains in the cloak and dagger tradition, they present also such figures as Richard, Duke of York, Henry IV, Henry V and the brilliant dialogue of Volumnia in Coriolanus, proofs, every one of them, that the sound political science of Machiavelli upon which the Tudor monarchs built their institutions and formulated their laws also reached the people through the stage, although these latter characterizations were not associated with the name of Machiavelli.

The conclusion arrived at from a careful examination of a selected number of plays by Marlowe, Jonson and Shakespeare is that the true Machiavellian prince was most effectively represented in drama by the great

princes in the historical plays of Shakespeare, and particularly in the figure of Henry V in the play of that name; and that the essence of the Machiavellian thesis on The Prince was poetically most succinctly and explicitly phrased in the dialogue of Volumnia in Coriolanus.

F O R E W O R D

The author wishes to make clear to the reader that this thesis is presented as an introductory discussion of one point of view on the subject of Machiavellianism and the Elizabethan Drama. To establish the argument pursued in a final manner would require a much more exhaustive examination of the plays and history of Elizabethan England than is offered here. The author hopes, however, that the reasoning is sufficiently sound and the evidence both from history and from drama pertinent enough to justify their being placed before the reader for thoughtful consideration.

Perhaps it would be wise at this point also to emphasize that the writer recognizes that the estimation of the political content of a play is but one of many lines along which this form of literary art may be evaluated. The writer does not intend to imply that other values are not present, or that many incidents discussed for their significance in relation to the thought of Machiavelli could not be evaluated in other terms. One of the features of any great work of art is the many angles from which it may be discussed.

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Chapter I.

Machiavellianism.

In a critical study of the influence of the thought of Machiavelli on Elizabethan drama, the distinction must be noted between the reactions of the Elizabethans who gave expression to their understanding of Machiavelli, and the point of view of the twentieth century commentator. The study must embody the writer's criticism both of the thought of Machiavelli and of the criticism revealed in the drama of the sixteenth century. For this reason, a brief summary of the point of view of Machiavelli opens the discussion, and some space is devoted to an outline of the politics of the English monarchs and chief ministers of sixteenth century England, and to an examination of the opinions expressed about Machiavelli by Elizabethan writers. Thus the reader may pursue the subject in possession of the writer's understanding of the background against which the dramas under review were written.

Machiavelli lived from 1469 to 1527. He was the son of an impoverished Tuscan nobleman of ancient lineage, whose

family had for several generations been living in Florence. Members of the family had held positions of importance and influence in the government of the ^Urepublic of Florence; and over the years, the family had become identified with the circles of the nobility who had abandoned the claims of heredity to take up common cause with the commercial aristocracy now in effective control of Florence and the Tuscan hinterland.

According to Machiavelli, the struggle of the landed aristocracy to share power in Florence was abandoned as early as 1378; since when the conflict for power had raged among the contending merchant nobility, and between the nobility and the people. The issue of hereditary right to power had therefore ceased to be a vital one in Florence when Machiavelli wrote; and the problem of the ancient nobility was to find a means of adapting themselves to the conditions of a new age without too great loss of wealth and dignity. The agonies of pride suffering restraint, and the subtleties of the noble endeavouring to conceal the necessity for active participation in the struggle for survival underlay much of the political manoeuvring

of the time and the concepts and formulations of Machiavelli.

What strikes this reader of Machiavelli most forcibly is his intelligence and objectivity. A mind alert, self-conscious, intensely aware and, critically, as active as a terrier is expressing itself with frankness and dignity. As the dedications and introductions to The Prince¹ and The Discourses² indicate, Machiavelli offers his work, not as an achievement, but as a tentative effort to disclose truth, as knowledge that, culled from contemporary experience, and checked against the past, may guide a prince, and serve the common good; as the findings of an explorer and a scientist in the field of human behaviour, public and private. Although his theses are directed to the attention chiefly of those who do or could rule, the principles they expound are frequently referred to as applicable to the generality of men; and the work is defended on the ground that

"...it is the duty of an honest man to teach others that good which the malignity of the times and of fortune has prevented his doing himself; so that amongst the many capable ones whom he has instructed, some one perhaps, more favored by Heaven, may perform it."³

1) Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, ed. Hardin Craig, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1944, pp. xxxv-xxxvii

2) Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince and The Discourses, New York The Modern Library, Inc., 1940, Bk. I, pp. 103 - 105; Bk. II, pp. 271 - 275.

3) Ibid., Bk. II, pp. 274 - 275.

The style, as one would expect, is clear, pointed and refreshing. Balance and restraint mark the thinking and the mode of expressions; as a matter of fact, the constant reminders that in the discussion of some one particular princely career or generalized statement of policy, one must not forget that certain other modifying factors might alter the case, caution the reader that all generalizations are dangerous, and that the lessons of particular experiences must be applied with judgment and an eye to immediate realities.

In the light of the moderate tone in which Machiavelli writes, it is difficult for a modern Canadian to imagine how he became the prototype for the devil-possessed figure of the Elizabethan stage. The problem can be solved, however, by our understanding that the people to whom Machiavelli first exposed his thoughts were very unlike ourselves in experience and philosophy; and that Machiavelli was one of the most daring and prophetic innovators of thought of the Renaissance period in western Europe. As Lord Acton remarks in the preface to Burd's edition of The Prince, we are favored by having at our disposal "The authentic interpreter of Machiavelli"-

"the whole of later history".

The works of Machiavelli relevant to this discussion comprise The Prince, The Discourses on the Ten Books of Titus Livius, ~~living~~ the History of Florence, The Art of War, the letters and plays, particularly the Mandragola. These treatises, letters and plays together reveal a man of wit and singular independence of mind, but of remarkable subservience in deed. They disclose a mind that ranged critically over every person, event, institution and point of view that came to its notice; and they establish Machiavelli, secretary of Florence, as a loyal and deferential servant and fervent patriot. They make clear that, although Machiavelli was an explorer and innovator, and was fond of giving advice, he followed his own precepts and sought to please the rulers of his time, while he attempted to persuade them to modify their practice.

Humble and ill-paid as the practical work of his life was, Machiavelli, as history has shown, was more than a competent civil servant. The problem of government was circling in his brain incessantly as he diligently carried out the orders of The Ten at home or in foreign courts; supervised the provisioning of armed camps with scrupulous regard to

4) Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, ed. L. A. Burd, Introduction by Lord Acton, London, The Clarendon Press, 1891, pp. xix - xx.

detail; or, as a delegate from Florence to the court of Cesare Borgia, watched and set his wits against that awe-inspiring duke. What he was looking for was the secret of stable government, and a champion who would unify Italy and set her on the road to ^{sound} ~~stable~~ government, security and prosperity by erecting the institutions and laws that would perpetuate order. The originality of his thought for that time lay in his strict adherence to material reality, history and experience for his explanations and his judgments, his suave and untroubled acceptance of the imperfections of man and the arbitrary ways of fortune: his complete abandonment, in short, of the assumption, common in his day in most of western Europe, that the origin of government was divine will, and that its character was hierarchical. Like a craftsman, his thought accepted the limits his material set him, and devised a code of political behaviour that would serve humanity as it was.

The evil and shifting manners of men, and the arbitrary ways of fortune, Machiavelli argued, ^{were} ~~was~~ responsible for the fact that government itself tended to fluctuate, to rise and decline; stability of government, therefore, required constant

vigilance on the part of the ruler, and a readiness to change with the time. He offered, therefore, not a blue-print, but a series of principles as guides to action for the ruler who would meet all possible eventualities; and he was concerned less with an ultimate - except in terms of security and prosperity for the ruler and the people - than with a *modus vivendi* for the ruler with a vision of empire, than with the means by which order might be spread at the expense of chaos. His practical and sanguine approach was summed up in his remark⁵, that men should follow

"...the example of cunninge Archers, whoe intending to shoette att a marke that is beyonde their reache knowinge the strength of their bowe, & howe farr it will carrye, doe take a higher compasse then otherwise woulde serve, not that they meane by that proportion to overshoot the marke, but knowinge the weakness of their bowe make shewe to shoote over, that att least they maye shoote home".⁵

The core of what Machiavelli strives to express can be grasped only by a reading of all of his chief works, each of which contributes a portion of the definition he was trying to evolve from his experiences and study of government. His conclusions are made clear in the recurrence of basic ideas and observations, most of which are first expressed in his

5) Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, ed. Hardin Craig, Ch. vi, pp. 20 - 21.

letters, and later are expanded and illustrated in a variety of ways in The Prince, The Discourses, and the History of Florence.

This characteristic of his work is the logical consequence of the circumstance in which he developed his ideas, the source of his materials and the purpose for which he wrote. He was trained as a writer of intelligences, or reports to The Ten of Florence, the body charged with military and foreign affairs for the city. His responsibility was to give exact records of events, and to offer opinions only after he had clearly set forth the facts. This he did most conscientiously, as evidence in his own letters testifies. From the court of Cesare Borgia he wrote:

" Your Excellencies must hold me excused, remembering that matters cannot be guessed, and that we have to do with a prince who governs for himself, and that he who would not write dreams and vagaries, has to make sure of things, and in making sure of them time goes, and I try to use time and not throw it away".⁶

Further, from the same court at Urbino he writes, patiently

6) Pasquale Villari, The Life and Times of Machiavelli, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929, p. 292.

explaining -

"...this lord never reveals anything excepting when doing it, and he does it under pressure of necessity, on the moment and not otherwise; wherefore I pray your Excellencies to excuse me and not charge me with negligence, when I cannot satisfy your Excellencies with news, for at most times I fail to satisfy even myself!" 7

Exact adherence to fact was compulsory in his work, and appears to have been native to his intellect. As the excerpts given here indicate Machiavelli's comments on the significant practices of Cesare Borgia and the approach to events later regarded as typical of Machiavelli found their first formulations in the reports upon which the government of Florence depended for its policies.

Of his powers of observation and the quality which has distinguished them from those of preceding and contemporary Italian observers, Pasquale Villari in his Life and Times of Machiavelli notes that they enabled Machiavelli "to define the elements of the political force of France, or of Germany, of the King or of the Emperor" ⁸ and "to discern the cohesion of social facts in a marvellous organic

7) Pasquale Villari, The Life and Times of Machiavelli, New York, Charles Scribners' Sons, 1929, p. 299.

^{ibid.}
8) Vol. I, p. 440

unity".⁹ Machiavelli supplemented this ability with the qualities of a student, and subjected his knowledge of practical politics to an exacting comparison with that accumulated in the records of ancient Rome, the government of which recommended itself to him for the length of time it endured and for the extent of empire over which it asserted power; and the conclusion he drew from this comparison he organized into a system, or science, of politics. Machiavelli's genius, in short, was one with that of the great men of the Renaissance in other fields of thought, who were notable for their preoccupation with practical affairs and their tendency to look to man and nature for example and to the ancients for guidance.

Machiavelli concluded from his studies that the chief attribute of the great prince was knowledge of and skill in the art of war. He departed, however, from the medieval attitude toward the warrior as a sort of knight errant, and thought of him as inseparable from the statesman. The idea of the ruler as a fighter and law-giver was, of course, not new with Machiavelli, but he fused the ^{old) concept} ~~two ideas~~ in a new

^{ibid.}
9) Vol. I, p. 440

way. To him the warlike attributes of the prince were useful against internal as well as external enemies, for reputation at home as well as abroad. In other words, the prince's capacity for military leadership was, to Machiavelli, primarily a political asset, for it enabled him to command the loyalty of his people in both peace and war.

As F. L. Taylor says, Machiavelli's outlook

"...was political rather than military, but....he recognized no opposition between those two terms. He conceived the civilian and the soldier...as the same man in two different aspects. It was the duty of the citizen to be also the soldier; soldiering was a branch of citizenship and warfare...a branch of politics. An army was a highly specialized department of the civil service. The direction of an army in the field was a part of the wider business of statecraft". 10

Taylor estimates the significance of this approach in the following way:

"With Machiavelli war ceases to be accepted as an isolated phenomenon recurring at intervals throughout human history...He was the first of a long line of writers who take a philosophical survey of the art of war, who study it with a view not

10) F. L. Taylor, The Art of War in Italy, 1494 - 1529, Cambridge University Press, 1921, p. 167.

so much to surprising the secret of victory as to assessing the possibilities and the limitations of armed force". 11

The great prince with whom Machiavelli is mainly concerned is the single man through whom an order of government is to be founded. Taking Romulus, founder of Rome, as his example, Machiavelli points out that

"A sagacious legislator of a republic, therefore, whose object is to promote the public good, and not his private interests, and who prefers his country to his own successors, should concentrate all authority in himself; and a wise mind will never censure any one for having employed any extraordinary means for the purpose of establishing a kingdom or constituting a republic. It is well that, when the act accuses him, the result should excuse him; and when the result is good, as in the case of Romulus, it will always absolve him from the blame." 12

Such a prince must be resolute; he must be resourceful, active and decisive, irrevocable in decree, vigilant and fearless in the face of attack. The resolute prince, however, must temper severity with prudence, so that he may not alienate the support of the people, for without the support

11) F. L. Taylor, The Art of War in Italy, p. 157.

12) Niccolo Machiavelli, The Discourses, Bk. I, pp. 138-139

of the people, the prince is at the mercy of the nobles whose ambition is a constant threat to him, or he is exposed to the attack of powerful rivals from outside. The prince, as Machiavelli sees him, then, is a single-handed champion holding in check two mutually hostile forces within the state, the nobility and the people. He is obliged to be careful not to drive the nobility to desperation by his restrictions, and at the same time he must keep the population contented. That prince, therefore, is most secure - provided he acts with prudence - who rules through ministers and agents appointed by him and dependent upon his favor, for the prince then has merely to be concerned with satisfying the populace by his policies, and that, in Machiavelli's view, is easily done, since the people generally want only not to be oppressed.

That the ideal prince of Machiavelli looked to the people rather than to the nobility for his strength is proven by the frequency with which the favor of the people is stressed in both The Prince and The Discourses.¹³ The fewness of the nobility, their ambition, unreliability, self-

13) Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, Ch. II, pp. 4-5; Ch. III, p. 5; Ch. IX, pp. 40-41 & 42; Ch. X, pp. 45 & 46; Ch. XVII, pp. 73 & 74; Ch. XIX, pp. 80 & 82; Ch. XX, p. 97; The Discourses, Bk. I, Ch. XVI,

seeking, desire to command, and tendency to live by doing injury is contrasted sharply with the basically peaceful and reasonable intents of the people. Further, Machiavelli notes, the prince must always live with the same people, but he may change the nobility with which he associates, and therefore must meet the needs and expectations of the people. The resolute and prudent prince, therefore, according to Machiavelli, governed his actions primarily by the knowledge that without the support of the people his position was never secure.

The relationship the wise prince will maintain with his people is well summed up by Machiavelli in Chapter XXI of The Prince. ¹⁴

"...a prince should encourage his Citizens and other subjectes, that they maye hope peaceably and quietlie to followe their trade, whether it be in merchandize ~~/f42/~~ or in tillage, or in any other trade, least the one sorte for feare of spoylinge should leave the grownde untilled and the the other in dowbte of newe exact-ions and customes, shoulde bringe in noe newe wares: But rather a good prince shoulde propose rewardes to those that dilligentlie followe these trades, or anie other, whereby

the Cittyes or contry may be enriched. Alsoe att the appointed tymes of the yeare lett him keape the peoples heades occupyed with playes, and shewes. And whereas the Cittyes are devided into certeine Companies accordinge to their trades, and ocupacions, the prince shoulde haue those companies in estimation and rekoninge, that shoulde soomtyme be conversante emonge them, and shewe them soome token of his Courtesy and favour. Pro^ovided alwayes that he preserve and still mayntaine the maiestie of his estate, which in noe wise, or anie cause ought to be omitted or neglected". ~~14~~ 14

Finally, the great prince must be a man of foresight; he must look not merely to the present, but to the future; for, in Machiavelli's view, the prince is not a mere adventurer, not one seeking power for the sake of temporary glory, or private gain. He is the architect of law and order in the community. Machiavelli argues

"The welfare, then, of a republic or a kingdom does not consist in having a prince who governs it wisely during his lifetime, but in having one who will give it such laws that it will maintain itself after his death". 15

The question, therefore, of the foundations upon which the power of the prince is laid, is discussed in terms of the establishment of a principality that will stand, prevail and expand, not only for the lifetime of the prince who

14) The Prince, XXI, pp. 102-103.

15) The Discourses, Bk. I, Ch. xi, p. 148

initiates it, but indefinitely.

The instruments of the great prince, in this conception, are religion, armed forces, laws and a judiciary, and the organized support of the people. The source of the armed forces of the Machiavellian great prince, is, as has been indicated, the citizens of his own principality, who by being entrusted with arms, are, by this proof of the prince's confidence, encouraged in their loyalty. It is clear that only a man who can command the admiration of the people as a warrior can act in this manner with assurance. The laws of the wise prince are designed to safeguard his own estate and benefit the people; and the judiciary must be appointed and dependent for their position upon the prince's favor. Religion, the importance of which Machiavelli frequently emphasized¹⁶ as indispensable to order and good government, is discussed as a creation of man's ingenuity, and the founders of religions are extolled as the first amongst great men. ¹⁶ Religion is indispensable, and the appearance of religious faith in a ruler is invaluable because without its appeal to superstition the obedience of

16) The Discourses, Bk. I, Ch. X, p. 141

the people might not always be assured, or their readiness to sacrifice aroused as occasion required. Machiavelli, therefore, discussed religion in a tone of deep respect, but at all times as a political expedient.

On the question of the hereditary right to rule Machiavelli was realistic and rational. While he recognised the advantages of a prince's being able to present title by birth to reinforce his claim to power and observed that a prince who has secured power by his own ability will be wise if he "shall seeme as though he came by the estate by anciente inheritaunce..." ¹⁷, he nevertheless points out that men

"...observe with greater regarde the proceedinges of such princes", i.e. those who assert power by ability, "than of those that succede their parentes in their kingdomes, and yf they haue as good skill to governe, as to gett, they may winne the heartes of the People sooner by desertes and pleasure, then the other by discentes and pedigrees, and continue their loves longer by the authoritie of their lawes, then the other can doe by the antiquitie of their lynes, for men are carried away rather with thinges that are presente, then with those that are paste, and fyndinge in it a commoditie, they content themselves and seeke noe farther, but will under-

17) The Prince, XXIV, 108

take anie daynger in defence of their
princes safetie..." 18

The concept of the great ruler in action is then summed up in the famous metaphor of the lion and the fox. Having conceded the value of legal institutions and the trappings of power such as religion and spectacle as means of exercising control over men, Machiavelli sees as the decisive asset of a ruler the possession of the qualities of beasts, courage and cunning, a capacity to wield force and perpetrate fraud;

"...for seinge there is twoe kyndes of contention or stryffe, the one by lawe the other by force, the first proper to men, the later to beastes, men must haue recourse for redresse to the later, yf they cannot recover their righte by the first. Therefore itt is verie necessarie for a prince to knowe as well howe to use the force and subtilty of beastes, as the faythe and sincerenes of men,...." 19

Within this general understanding of the character and function of political power Machiavelli examined the problems of princes weak and strong, new and hereditary, great and inglorious. Political power, he noted, may be personal, corporate or communal; it may, that is, be princely, oligarchic or democratic; but if it is to be effective, if it

18) The Prince, XXIV, 108

19) The Prince, Ch. XVIII, pp. 74 - 75.

is to bring security and greatness to the ruler and the ruled, it must be able to seize or outwit where it meets denial, and win by art or intimidation where it encounters reluctance.

The individual princes whom Machiavelli cited as examples were put forward as persons who fulfilled or failed to fulfil the requirements for greatness in a prince, or as illustrations of how a prince should or should not act in given circumstances. Romulus, Moses, Cyrus and Theseus demonstrated, according to Machiavelli, the careers of men of outstanding merit. By virtue of their own greatness and the opportunity which alone fortune gave them, they succeeded, after overcoming tremendous obstacles, in winning power and establishing principalities in which they made themselves secure and rich, and in which they enjoyed the favor of their people. Agathocles and Oliverotto da Fermo represented, on the other hand, those who attain power by villainy and who, therefore, cannot, in spite of their great abilities, be numbered among the most famous men. Cesare Borgia, erroneously seized upon by many as the typical Machiavellian prince, was cited by Machiavelli as a prince, who, having been raised to power by the favor and influence of others, did everything

that should or could have been done, to consolidate power in most difficult circumstances. In Machiavelli's understanding only a man of rare genius could be expected to take hold upon a principality that was contrived for him by others, he having had little to do with achieving it, and being, therefore, without previous plans for government, without the experience in commanding and ordering that comes with winning power oneself, and without prior support either of an army or of people whose loyalty had been won by reputation already established. ²⁰ Once set upon his career, however, Borgia demonstrated those qualities of quick action, ruthlessness, cunning and daring, and intelligent concern for the common welfare, which Machiavelli regarded as indispensable to a good ruler. Francesco Sforza, by contrast, Machiavelli brought forward as a private man who won his principality with great difficulty but retained it with ease; as one who

"usinge meanes requisite for soe greate
an enterprise, by singular vertue ad-
vanced him self to be duke of Millaine,
and was hable to defende that with smalle
coste, which he had gotten with great
care." ²¹

20) The Prince, VII, p. 26

21) The Prince, VII, p. 26

Altogether, the arguments of The Prince, The Discourses and the History of Florence make clear the distinctive roles of the prince, the laws and customs, the armed forces and the citizens in a sixteenth century community. The Prince, even carelessly read, could not lead one to believe that Machiavelli's principles of power were composed by one who was indifferent to the reaction of the subject to the ruler, or conqueror; much less can The Prince be seen as the inspiration for the perverse villainy which motivates the characters of the English drama that have been classed as Machiavellian.²² The evil-intentioned, headstrong, murderous and useless individual of the English stage, preoccupied exclusively with revenge and personal aggrandizement to the detriment of all, has nothing in common with the prince of Machiavelli's treatise, except that he kills and acquires as occasion demands in order to achieve his ends. The ends of the prince of the treatises of Machiavelli, however, who is dubbed wise or great, and who is held up as an example, must at least appear to be acceptable to the majority of the people, conform to, or at least not be obviously subversive of law and custom, and advance the power

22) Edward Meyer, Machiavelli and the Elizabethan Drama, Weimar, Verlag Von Emil Felber, 1897, discusses these in detail; and Jeannette Fellheimer, The Englishman's Conception of the Italian in the Age of Shakespeare, University of London, M.A. Thesis 1935 devotes considerable space to a discussion of the stage Machiavellian.

and wealth of the community as well as the private estate of the prince.

The true prince of Machiavelli, in short, is a warrior and a man of talent. He is resolute, self-reliant, objective and restrained. He manages judiciously the vices and virtues to which all men, including princes, are heir, so that he may secure himself and his possessions against open or concealed attack; and may enlist the support of the majority of the people about him, through either fear or gratitude.

The man, however, Machiavelli pointed out, cannot be separated from his environment, which must offer opportunity for his talents. Because of this close interdependence of man and environment, Machiavelli noted, a prince may, after enjoying initial success, succumb to disaster, because of his inability to change his nature when conditions change. The wise prince, therefore, enacts laws and establishes institutions devised to cope with the vagaries of men and the alterations of fortune; and he rules, not arbitrarily, but in conformity to the law thus established. Since, however, amongst men, there are always a few who aspire to command, the prince is faced with the problem of steering a middle course between

the mutual hatred of the common people, who want only to avoid oppression, and the few nobility, who desire to oppress. In the complexity of this reality, Machiavelli despaired of perfect government, and concluded:

" I say, then, that all kinds of government are defective... Thus sagacious legislators, knowing the vices of each of these systems of government by (monarchy, oligarchy, democracy) have chosen one that should partake of all of them.... In fact, when there is combined under the same constitution a prince, a nobility, and the power of the people, then these three powers will watch and keep each other reciprocally in check". 23

Because Machiavelli believed that all men, including princes, were evil, ²⁴ that "this maybe boldlie sayde of men, that they are ungratefull, inconstante, discemblers, fearfull of dayngers, covetous of gayne,"²⁵ he was regretfully compelled, in the interests of truth and the needs of practice, to state that deceit, cruelty, bad faith have their place in the ordering of a state. He admits:

"Surelie yf men were good this precepte were naught, yf they were honest this were hatefull. But seinge they are wicked and deceitfull, it behoves a prince by discemblinge to meete with their malice, and by cunnigne to overthrowe their Crafte. And nowe a prince can never wante occasions to collour

23) The Discourses, I, pp. 114 - 115.

24) Ibid. pp. 117 - 118.

25) Ibid. XVIII, p. 75

The Prince,

the breache of his promise". 26

The precise weighing of the amount of goodness and badness, of cruelty and kindness, of sincerity and deceitfulness, of virtue and vice generally to which a prince must give himself is, in Machiavelli's view, then, a necessity which springs from the innate evil in the nature of men, including princes. This, together with the uncertainties of fortune, fills the life of men with danger, and confronts those who would establish any kind of order with endless difficulties, and may baffle even the wisest counsel. Machiavelli, therefore warns

"...lett noe man be perswaded that he can take soe sure counsell....., that he cannot be controlled, but rather thincke that he may be deceived, for soe variable is the coorse of worldlie affaires, that the more a man seekes to escape one dainger, the lykker he is to fall into an other, but herein is a mans wisdome seene, yf he be able of twoe evilles to choose the least, and can reape some commodity owt of anie inconvenience". 27

According to Machiavelli, all men desire glory and riches, or "renowme royalties and the lyke" 28, as the sixteenth century manuscript edition of The Prince phrases it. All men desire to acquire and to possess, though some by

26) The Prince, XVIII, P. 75

27) Ibid. XXI, p. 102

28) Ibid. XXV, p. 112

their abilities and resolution are more successful than others. A man distinguishes himself from the common man, therefore, Machiavelli believes, by his vision and energy: his capacity is greater; his achievement, therefore, is greater, and his renown, or nobility varies as the extent of his estate and the security with which he holds it.

The contemplative life, ^{and} ~~or~~ preoccupation with the arts, according to Machiavelli, are alternatives to a life of action, and are forced upon an individual by the malignity of fortune. He himself wrote out his theories of government only when exile forced him out of active political life. In justification, for example, of his own writings he declared that one should teach others what by bad fortune one had not been able to undertake oneself, in the hope that among one's pupils might be he who would accomplish that which fortune and the times made impossible to oneself. That he did not despise the arts or learning is clear from his own studies and his own careful expositions of the arts of war and politics; from his composition of plays and poetry, and from his exhortations to the princes to study and to learn from the examples of the great. His standards, however, were inevitably the

standards of his time; and in the field of public life with which he was chiefly concerned these standards were those of the construction of the modern national state, and the opening of the era of individual enterprise, empire-building and conquest.

Concerned with men, small and great, in their struggle for survival, Machiavelli was preoccupied with actions and their effects. To him, the prince was simply the natural man endowed with virtue, that is, with uncommon energy, initiative, resourcefulness and clarity of aim. Glory and fame, reputation and honour were sought by his prince as reinforcements of his power, as props to his estate. Such a man as his prince, desiring to be listed among the great and the famous, would indulge his energy in a manner that would win aggrandizement without alienating the community, without doing more harm to others than was necessary to guarantee his own wealth and security.

In this conception it is not surprising that the mark of the weak prince should be incapacity to make war, indecision, irresolution, mildness and pity, and a tendency to defer to the opinions of others; or that the corrupt prince should

be he who sacrificed public welfare to his own private advancement, or, in other words, failed to link his own fortunes to those of the community; while the tyrant should be one who ignored the demands of all but himself, and who, earning the hatred of the people, was doomed himself.

The emphasis which Machiavelli placed on native ability as the mark of the great man led him to a critical attitude toward hereditary monarchy. He valued virtue, and he observed that virtue seldom continued in a family by descent. He was therefore, an advocate of republicanism, rather than of monarchy; and his prince was the founder of a state the continued existence of which presupposed that its initiator organized it along lines that would enable it to select for leadership a man worthy of the post. Time and again Machiavelli expressed his lack of faith in hereditary monarchy as a means of guaranteeing good rulers. ²⁹ He saw, indeed, in the prince the architect of state power, and the single man who alone could restore a corrupt state to order and good government through his seizure of absolute power; but for the perpetuation of greatness in a state, for national aggrandizement, he advocated re-

29) The Discourses, I, X, 144; I, XVII, 165; I, XX, 174

publicanism.

The ruthlessness and cold-bloodedness of which Machiavelli has frequently been accused are the ruthlessness and cold-bloodedness of the practice of his times. No one can read the Intelligences and histories of the renaissance without being impressed by the violence and implacable self-seeking of the nobility, old and new, and of the privateering adventurers both on land and sea, who flourished in those turbulent times. Nor can one fail to be impressed by the frequency with which princely rulers brought disaster upon themselves and the people of their land by their malevolence or irrational self-will. A warning and a call to judgment, such as Machiavelli voiced was timely; but in Italy it was not heeded.

This little man, this clerk, who presumed to advise the great could not have been less typical of the acquisitive man. He could appreciate but he did not possess any of the qualities he regarded as essential to the ruler. Shrewd as was his summing up of the techniques of acquiring position and power, he resorted, when he himself was in want, to the naive appeals for help from his friends; or he wrote, humbly

offering his services, to princes, from whom he hoped to receive recognition for his abilities and promotion to employment. He seems never to have been bribed or corrupted in any way in his public life. He appears in his own person, indeed, to have been an example and the prophet of the patriotic civil servant who is more than a servant and less than a ruler, and is wholly loyal to his native state. His forerunners were the modestly paid ambassadors of merchant princes, who presented themselves at the courts of all principalities and republics, and whose minutely detailed and objective reports of all that went on provided the raw material from which he organized his political science. The quality peculiar to Machiavelli and his predecessors and contemporaries, the Italian envoys, was the ability to treat themselves as persons apart from the realities in which they moved; and, in the midst of violence, to remain suave and unruffled, incorruptible in commerce with the corrupt, and loyal to the prosperity of the state they served.

Such were Machiavelli and the prince and science he conceived.

Chapter II

The Machiavellian in English Life.

Looking back on sixteenth century England one is led to ask what it was in the life of England at that time that inspired certain poets to conceive of the Machiavellian prince as a perverse villain, and if, as the stage characters suggest, Machiavellianism was wholly foreign to ^{English} ~~their own~~ experience and standards of practice. This enquirer would also ask if there might not be in the plays of Elizabethan England characters which demonstrate the qualities of the true prince, according to Machiavelli, but which for some reason have not been labelled Machiavellian.

Machiavellianism, as defined in Chapter I of this thesis, it is submitted, not only was not alien to English experience, but was the very substance of the policies of the Tudor monarchs and of many of the ministers who served them. Its interpretation of the prince as innovator, for

example, was typified by Henry VII and Henry VIII; and its conception of the triumphant and sagacious prince found its fulfilment in Elizabeth.

These Tudor monarchs|successfully organized the transition of political power in England from the hands of the ancient feudal nobility to those of the merchant aristocracy who arose to prominence as England's commerce and sea power advanced. They effected the change not as a conscious objective but as a by-product of their own pursuit of power and wealth; and the power they wielded was that of popular despots, or Machiavellian princes.

The opportunity for the Tudors came with the exhaustion of the patience and endurance of the English people by the persistent, petty battles of the English nobility over the crown, known as the Wars of the Roses. Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond brought these wars to an end by his victory at Bosworth in 1485. Many of the former great nobility of England were dead and the remainder were demoralized and disunited. The people were anxious for peace and for relief from the financial demands of war; and they rallied to the new king hopefully. Henry VII did not disappoint them.

As a young prince with a slim claim to the throne of England by blood, Henry VII had spent his youth in constant peril of being seized and destroyed by rival families. Suspicion, treachery and deeds of blood had surrounded him; so that he had learned young to be alert, wary and self-reliant, to trust himself and to act with caution. Taken from Wales to Brittany for safety when Henry VI of Lancaster was hard-pressed by the contending Yorkists, under Edward IV, Henry Tudor waited there until the violence and excesses of the usurper, Richard III, so alienated the people of England from the Yorkist line^d that a new claimant for the throne might hope for success.

Henry's first attempt to land in England was a failure in which Machiavelli would have seen fortune playing a major part. Henry's ship was isolated from its fleet, and floods and storms cut off the advance of the chief force of English supporters under Buckingham, sent out to greet and aid his landing. But Henry's astuteness would have recommended itself to Machiavelli when he refused to be beguiled by a band of Englishmen apparently welcoming him as his ship sighted shore a second time. He would not risk going ashore, and returned safely to Brittany.

In this first attempt Henry had proven himself willing and able to lead an army overseas in an effort to make a difficult landing in territory ruled by a hostile power. He had demonstrated judgment and caution, a readiness to face realities, and a spirit undismayed by heavy reverses. On the occasion of his second attempt, he displayed further qualities that would have recommended him to Machiavelli. Convinced of his danger, and at the same time confident of support in England, he kept his own counsel and slipped away from Brittany without public knowledge, leaving three hundred Englishmen in Vannes ignorant of his departure. He landed at Milford Haven in his native Wales with a small force, and advanced into England to Bosworth, winning new adherents to his ranks as he went along. He made a solemn pageant of his landing, kneeling and kissing the ground, making the sign of the cross and causing the Judica me, Deus, to be sung. At Bosworth he himself chose the ground for battle; it lay between a rivulet and a morass where inferior members could fight to advantage.

This courageous and astute young man appeared to be one of those of whom Machiavelli might have said:

"...examininge their noble actes with The
wholle coorse of their lives, it will
appere that they had nothinge given
them by the favour of fortune, but
only occasion which yelded them fitt
matter whereby they might bringe in
what manner of government they thought
conveniente". 1

The immediacy with which Henry had turned to his second attempt, and the independence of his action showed that he was not a man to wait on time to improve things for him, but was one who could use his own resources to meet the difficulties of the present. 2

Thus as Henry took the throne of England, he was a man who had shown himself a good soldier and able commander, learned in the art of war. He clearly relied upon the general populace for support; and he made every profession of religious devotion and did not communicate his plans more than was necessary for their execution. In all this he would have won the admiration of the founder of political science.

Henry, thanks mostly to his own ability, entered upon the tasks of government with great advantages. A prince by birth, with claim to the throne, he won his kingdom in war, and was crowned on the field of battle. He was a hero to his men-at-arms and a dispenser of favors

1) The Prince, VI, 21-22

2) Ibid. III, 11.

to his loyal supporters. It remained for him to demonstrate his capacities as a ruler.

The steps he took to consolidate his rule were carefully chosen to take advantage of existing laws and customs which could be turned to his purpose, to confirm his legitimate claim to the throne and to subordinate the administration of the realm directly to his authority.

First he set about the securing of his title by law and hereditary right; and he pursued this aim in such a manner that each civilian confirmation strengthened his claim made in the name of heredity. Never was his legitimacy subordinated to a right conceded from any other quarter or on any other condition. In this he was adhering with scrupulous exactitude to the principle, emphasized by Machiavelli, that a new prince should as much as possible conform, at least in appearance, to the laws and customs of the people of his new principality.³ Even the ultimate confirmation of Henry's claim, that of the Act of Parliament of November 7th, 1485, recognized his reign as dating from the twenty-first of August, the day before the battle of

3) The Discourses, I XXV, 182

Bosworth. Further to bind his power to descent, the new prince proposed to marry into the family of the contending house of York, and thus, by uniting the blood of the two claimants to end the danger of conflict arising from a rival claim. He therefore imprisoned the sole heir of the Yorkists, Clarence, for life; and announced his intended marriage to Elizabeth of York.

Seeking to impress and win the favor of the populace, he now proceeded in easy stages to London, The City and very heart of England, where he rode in triumph through the streets. His progress through the country and his reception in London were applauded by the people with greatest enthusiasm.

Shortly after his arrival in London he called a council of the nobles and formally proclaimed his intended marriage; and then, in spite of an outbreak of plague, held his coronation as scheduled, before his wedding. As he advanced in security, he rewarded his immediate followers, out of the spoils of his adversaries,⁴ he instituted a body-guard of fifty men, archers and others, constantly to

4) The Prince, XVI, 70

attend him. He then called parliament and had his title confirmed in him and in the heirs of his body. In these actions Henry observed a ^{number} ~~member~~ of maxims that Machiavelli would have applauded. His insistence upon recognition of power as centering in and flowing from himself,⁵ and his use of established institutions and laws to this end, the organization of the nucleus of an armed force of his own subjects, identified with all his movements, his deliberate encouragement of public display of the people's favor toward him as he travelled slowly through his new territories meeting the people, would all have won the approbation of Machiavelli. Later, in an even more precise conformity to the princely behaviour advocated by Machiavelli, he went through those counties where uprisings against him had either taken place or were threatening; and whenever he encountered hostility, he made a great show of force; where outbreaks had taken place he had the leaders only summarily executed, and where the people were humble he was graciousness itself to all. Nor did he over-

5) The Discourses, I IX, 138 and 140-141.

look paying special attention to the guildsmen of the chief trades. ⁶ Of this trip it is told that he showed great interest in and promised practical aid to the Bristol ship-builders.

While he showed clemency to the common people, and ruthless justice to their misleaders against himself, he systematically impoverished his opponents among the nobility by land seizures. In this way, he maintained himself, was in a position to reward his supporters, and was not required to burden his new subjects with taxation and imposts. ⁷ He further made a scrupulous point of establishing his credit with Parliament and the merchant leaders of London, by persuading them on several occasions to loan him money, which each time he paid back promptly, according to agreement.

Parliament, which he had used skilfully as a means of confirming his royal power, he now employed, with an insight worthy of Machiavelli, as the instrument for punishment of the leaders of rebellion sponsored by the Yorkist Queen-dowager and led by the impostor, Lambert Simnel. Upon

6) The Prince, XXI, 85

7) Ibid. XVI, 69 - 70

Henry's summons Parliament met and attainted the leaders, and passed measures designed to provide special organs for the punishment of crimes and misdemeanors against the king, one of which was the Court of Star Chamber. By these means Henry set up institutions and persons other than himself as the media of punishment, reserving to himself the power of bestowing benefits, as Machiavelli recommends.⁸

Henry exercised his power ruthlessly, but with prudence. When the revolt fanned by the Yorkists and led by Lambert Simnel was reaching the proportions of civil war, he acted with despatch. He deprived the Queen-dowager of her lands; paraded the real Warwick publicly, issued a pardon to all who would submit to him; set guards throughout the coast, and himself made a progress through the insurrectionary counties. When he learned that the Earl of Dorset, one of his most powerful opponents, was coming in to surrender, he sent out forces and had him seized. In the course of these activities he made public and ceremonious show of his religion, had the Church officially curse all who opposed him, and as

8) The Prince, XIX, 82 - 83.

the civil war gathered head

"...issued a very stringent proclamation against robbing churches, ravishing women, or even taking victuals without paying for them at the prices 'assized by the clerk of the market', on pain of death. Nor was any man to venture to take a lodging for himself not assigned to him by the king's harbingers, on pain of imprisonment and further punishment at the king's discretion. The strictest discipline was enforced throughout the army..." 9

In all this he honored the maxim which is summed up in chapter seventeen of The Prince in the quotation from Virgil -

Res dura, et regni novitas me talia
cogunt Moliri, et late fines custode
tueri.

The warrior prince showed himself as statesman resolute and decisive in action, a good executive served by efficient military agents, and a leader ready to appear personally in the areas of danger. In his handling of the Earl of Dorset, he showed himself the prince of the eighteenth chapter of The Prince, who keeps his word only insofar as it serves his own interest, and as long as the occasion for which he made

9) James Gairdner, Henry VII, London, MacMillan and Co., 1892

the agreement remains. He ostentatiously identified his rule with religion, ¹⁰ showed that he understood that to retain or win the allegiance of the people he must guarantee them against loss of their property or harm to their women, ¹¹ and centered authority in himself, making his name the symbol of power and justice. ¹² And as a commander he had shown himself ready and able to enforce discipline.

Machiavelli in discussing the methods a prince should use to retain control of a principality annexed to his own, but different in language and custom, argued that the prince should, if possible, reside there himself; but that if he could not he should plant colonies and organize a government there of his own subjects or of such native people as he could make dependent upon himself for benefits and position. ¹³

In Ireland, following the attempt of Simnel to gain the crown, Henry VII undertook to make the whole administration directly responsible to himself, and predominantly English in personnel. He therefore arranged that all the principal castles in Ireland should be placed in the hands of the English, and

10) The Prince, XVIII, 77

11) Ibid. XVII, 73

12) G. M. Trevelyan, History of England, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1929, pp. 273 - 275 gives a good summary of Henry VII's measures directed toward centralizing power in England in the monarch.

13) The Prince, III, 7 - 8.

that the country should no longer be a refuge for English outcasts and malcontents. He allowed the Irish chief, Kildare, to return to Ireland as the King's Deputy, but he held his son in England as a hostage.

In his Irish policy Henry was the master politician, as Machiavelli would have esteemed him: skilful, affable, resolute, achieving by his own agencies ^o what he could not win with the consent of the subordinate people, yet contriving, by the judicious treatment of difficult but indispensable persons, to render them useful to him in spite of themselves; clement, as circumstances required, cruel, when necessity dictated.

The objectivity and clarity of purpose that underlay Henry's policies produced an effectiveness in action which would have delighted Machiavelli. Clearly, it was Henry's object to unify and rule England as an absolute monarch, as it was Machiavelli's dream that the Medici should unify and rule Italy. To do this, as Machiavelli would have seen it, Henry had to crush his opposition among the nobility, and win the people to his side. To rule, also, he needed revenue; and he wished to raise this needed revenue for his own treasury without appeal to the people, as Machiavelli would have advised. ¹⁴

14) The Prince, XVI, 69 - 70

Henry therefore appealed not to the people for revenue, but to the Great Council of the nobles, who, indeed, were now in no position to resist his demands; and through them he secured a revival of Benevolences, or forced loans, equivalent to donations. In instructing his commissioners, he urged them, as Bacon, in his life of Henry VII reports:

"... 'that if they met any that were sparing they should tell them that they must needs have, because they laid up; and if they were spenders they must needs have, because it was seen in their port and manner of living; so neither kind came amiss' ". 15

Trapped by the king's subtlety, the nobles were fleeced.

Henry, however, was careful, as Machiavelli would have advised, not to drive any one section of his diverse population too far. Though his two chief commissioners, Sir Richard Empson and Lord Dudley might make his rule hated for their extortions, Henry eased the mind of many a noble by promoting in parliament an act to protect from impeachment or attainder any one who fought for a de facto king; and thus he exonerated all who had fought for Richard III before Bosworth. His mastery of compromise is illustrated in his legislation on enclosures, which required that no dwellings be born down, but said nothing

15) Quoted in Gairdner, Henry VII, p. 151

about the necessity for cultivation of the land; the owners, therefore, could turn sheep on the land, and the peasants could not complain that they were rendered homeless.

By policies, then, that would have found full favor with Machiavelli, Henry VII of England, within ten years of his acquisition of the throne, established himself as the most powerful individual in the land, and was rapidly becoming the wealthiest. This he had achieved by combining force and a subtle manipulation of law and custom. He respected tradition as long as it served his purpose, and timed his changes to take advantage of the conflict between the nobles and the people in a manner that suppressed the former and conciliated the latter; and he pursued a careful financial policy which strengthened his own treasury and won the favor of the people.

In foreign policy also, Henry's career honored the principles enunciated by Machiavelli. Early in his reign, in 1492, he undertook a war with France both to win reputation with the English and to compel fear and respect from a rival power.¹⁶ He launched the war, therefore, on a limited scale and with no

16) The Prince, XXI, 98 - 100

intention of conquering France; and, having impressed France, benefitted the Emperor Maximilian, and freed English commerce with the Low Countries from molestation by Spain, he enriched himself by exacting the largest tribute from France that any English king had ever received. The conduct and timing of this war revealed Henry's appreciation of the value of military reputation and of the principle of the balance of power, emphasized by Machiavelli.¹⁷

In the course of his long reign (1485 - 1509) Henry was confronted on more than one occasion by conspiracies against him, and took a hand himself in promoting conspiracies in the courts of other princes. His handling of the major conspiracy of the Yorkists in aid of the claim of the imposter, Perkin Warbeck, followed the course Machiavelli advocated.¹⁸ He pretended to take no notice of the conspiracy and allowed it to ripen before he appeared to act. Then he showed himself to be so well informed that he was able to expose the foremost leaders, including his own chamberlain, Lord Stanley, a relative. He was ruthless in his punishment, even executing Lord Stanley, and

17) The Prince, III, 9; and XXI, 102.

18) The Prince, XIX; The Discourses, Bk III, vi.

causing anyone who libelled him for the act to be punished. In this way Henry strengthened his prestige and won many Yorkists away from further thought of intrigue.

Meanwhile Henry had his hand in conspiracies of his own. In Scotland the Earl of Angus and Lord Bothwell, the latter a favorite minister of James III, were his agents. He had himself arranged a plot to kidnap Warbeck. He relied not upon rumor or treachery, but upon paid spies and informers for his information; he contrived to place directly under obligation to him, all people on whom he depended; and he was so continuously watchful that all who had anything to lose by a misstep were careful to support his government. His foreign allies, also, commonly found themselves ^{so} ~~to~~ skilfully hemmed in by circumstances created by Henry that they had little alternative but to do as his policy dictated. He used hostages to keep men like Lord Kildare of Ireland in line, and to rein the activities of monarchs like Ferdinand of Spain, whose daughter, Katherine, Henry held in England after her first husband, Arthur, Prince of Wales, died. The fortified^{ed} castles which he maintained as outposts, and centres of intelligence, in the remoter parts of his kingdom he placed in

the hands of nobles directly responsible to himself and dependent upon him for their position. This system of spies and personal supervision of affairs, active and aggressive, which was not merely watchful but went out to forestall possible danger and to create opportunity, ^{were} ~~was~~ wholly in the spirit of the Machiavellian true prince.

James Gairdner, historian and biographer of Henry VII summed up his qualities in a paragraph as follows:

"His taste in building was magnificent. The wealth he had amassed and left behind him, locked up in various secret places, was reported to have amounted to nearly 1,800,000 pounds (value of that day)...He valued money only for money's worth; and to him a large reserve was a great guarantee for peace and security. He made, moreover, a princely use of his wealth, encouraged scholarship and music as well as architecture, and dazzled the eyes of foreign ambassadors with the splendour of his receptions.....Few indeed were the councillors that shared his confidence, but the wise men....had but one opinion of his consummate wisdom. Foreigners were greatly struck with the success that attended his policy. Ambassadors were astonished at the intimate knowledge he displayed of the affairs of their own countries. From the most unpropitious beginnings, a proscribed man and an exile, he had won his way in evil times to a throne beset with dangers; he had pacified his own country, cherished

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commerce, formed strong alliances over Europe, and made his personal influence felt by the rulers of France, Spain, Italy, and the Netherlands as that of a man who could turn the scale in matters of the highest importance to their own domestic welfare...." 19

Surely the career and character of Henry VII fulfils the declaration of Machiavelli who stated that the prince should

"...endeavour in his governmente and administration of Justice to shewe continewallie a certeine Maiestie mixed with a bolde currage, not withoute gravity & constancye, in soe much that the better sorte maie esteem his woorde for a lawe, and his sentence in iudgmente irrevocable, and also to rayse and continewe that opinion of him in the hartes of his subiectes, that they maie imagine he can neither be abused by frawde, nor altered by flatterie.

The prince that hath once woonn to himself reputacion and accompte emonge his subiectes, neede not feare neither the conspiracies or coniurations of his subiectes at home nor the assaults or invasions of his Enemyes abroad; for a prince indeede shoulde soe behaue himself in the wholle coorse of his lyffe, that he maybe feared and had in awe of twoe sortes, the one domesticall, the other foreine, the one subiectes, the other straingers, the owtward enemies wilbe kepte vnder yf they perceave that he is well provided of Armes and well beloved of his frendes, and frendes he shall not wante to take his

parte, yf he obserue good discipline
emonge his people, and thinges beinge
sure abroad, there is noe dowbte of
his safty att home vnlesse he be
disturbed by some rebellion or con-
spiracie.

And though his foreine Enemies
shoulde enterprise anie matter
against him, soe longe as his pro-
vision for the Warrs were sufficiente
and his reputacion emonge his people
not impayred, (yf he were not wanting
to himself,) he shoulde be hable to
beare of the brunte and rage of their
furie, & withstande their malice to
their owne gayne and glorie,..." 20

In conclusion, it should be remembered that Henry VII was
a contemporay of Machiavelli, and that he died four years be-
fore The Prince was written, twenty-three years before it
was printed. Henry VII lived the policy that Machiavelli ob-
served, analysed and formulated. The policy of Henry VII then
was not derived from any theorist, but was that recommended by
his own character, his own experience and his own aims. He,
however, was closely in touch with events not only in England
but outside of England, and particularly with the events in
Italy. As a Milanese envoy at London is reported to have re-
marked in 1494, " '...the merchants, most especially the
Florentines, never cease giving the King of England advices.'" 21

20) The Prince, XIX, 79.

21) James Gairdner, Henry VII, 111.

This same envoy further emphasized that the king of England

" ' is most thoroughly acquainted with the affairs of Italy, and receives special information of every event... when the King of France went into Italy the King of England sent with him a herald of his own called Richmond, a sage man who saw everything....' " 22

Machiavellianism, therefore, was as native to Henry VII and England as it was to Italy and Machiavelli; Henry VII expounded it in deeds, Machiavelli in words. This is important to note; for some commentators upon the reaction to Machiavelli in the drama of England have assumed that the representation of the Machiavellian as a desperate villain sprang from the difference in national character and political experience of the Englishman and the Italian. ²³ Obviously, history denies this. Henry VII's achievements as those of one of the great monarchs of England, the initiator of the modern English state upon which the national distinction and imperial power of the English was built, confirm the accuracy of Machiavelli's estimation of what was taking place in Western Europe and of what measures were needed to guide society at that time to its next

22) James Gairdner, Henry VII, P. 111

23) Fellheimer, op. cit. ^{p. 327 ~~has~~ and 339 ~~for~~} the claim by Fellheimer that the national spirit and temper of English politics ^{was} contradictory to ~~that~~ of the Italian's as outlined by Machiavelli. ^{those}

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stage of development. They prove the positive, constructive purpose that underlay some at least of the turmoil of those times.

How far the Elizabethans were from scorning Henry VII for a villain may be deduced from the manner in which Shakespeare introduces him as a young earl:

King Henry: Come hither, England's hope.--If secret powers
(Laying his hand on his head)
Suggest but truth to my divining thoughts,
This pretty lad will prove our country's bliss.
His looks are full of peaceful majesty;
His head by nature framed to wear a crown,
His hand to wear a sceptre; and himself
Likely in time to bless a regal throne.
Make much of him, my lords, for this is he
Must help you more than you are hurt by me.
(III Henry VI, IV, ~~VI~~^{VI}, 64 - 76) 24

The scene of the play took place years before the Battle of Bosworth, but it presented the future Henry VII to the people of Elizabeth's day as the man destined to be the first Tudor monarch and as the one who would bring peace and order to distressed England.

The popularity of Henry VII's accession to power is alleged also by Holinshed in his Chronicles:

"At the close of his (Earl of Richmond's) second speech
to his army.....
'the people reioised, and clapped their hands,
crying vp to heauen, 'King Henrie, king Henrie!'

24) William Shakespeare, "Henry VI, Part III, " The Works of William Shakespeare, Oxford, The Shakespeare Head Press, 1938.

' When the lord Stanleie saw the good will and gladnesse of the people, he tooke the crowne of king Richard, (which was found amongst the spoile in the field) and set it on the earles head; as though he had beene elected king by the voice of the people,....." (p. 420)

"....after the death of king Richard was knowne and published, euerie man, in manner vnarming himselfe, & casting awaie his abilliments of warre, meekelie submitted themselues to the obeisance and rule of the earle of Richmond: of the which more part had gladlie so doone in the beginning, if they might haue conuenientlie escaped from king Richards espials, which, hauing as cleere eies as Lynx, and open eares as Midas, ranged & searched in euerie quarter." (p. 421) 25

Henry VII was followed by Henry VIII, of whom Machiavelli wrote in The Discourses:

"...quite lately the king of England attacked the kingdom of France, and employed for that purpose no other soldiers except his own subjects; and although his own kingdom had been for over thirty years in profound peace, so that he had at first neither soldiers nor captains who had seen any active military service, yet he did not hesitate with such troops to assail a kingdom that had many experienced commanders and good soldiers, who had been continually under arms in the Italian wars. He was enabled to do this because he was a sagacious prince, and his kingdom was well ordered, so that in time of peace the military art had not been neglected". 25

This is high praise from Machiavelli who wrote so strongly in favor of relying on native troops, and who considered that

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- 25) Shakespeare's Holinshed, W.G. Boswell-Stone, ed., London, Chatto and Windus Publishers, 1907, p. 420 and p.421.
26) The Discourses, I, XXI, 175 - 176

capacity in war and the study of the art of war during peace were the first requisites of princely power.

If it is true, as Machiavelli claims, that wise councillors demonstrate the wisdom of the prince,²⁷ then Henry VIII was scarcely less able a ruler than his father, although his dissoluteness, self-indulgence and capriciousness make him easily appear lacking in greatness. The truth is that Henry had a succession of the ablest statesmen in England's history—Thomas Wolsey, Thomas Cromwell, Thomas Cranmer, Thomas More. Of these, two are notably types discussed by Machiavelli.

Although Henry VIII was himself not inactive in the foreign diplomacy of England, being particularly concerned with the intrigues to feel out the strength and intentions of the German Protestant forces, the foreign policy of the early part of his reign was chiefly guided by Wolsey, whose skill in manoeuvring for English influence as between France and Spain was Machiavellian. Wolsey's self-seeking, however betrayed him, and he suffered the fate of councillors who incline to sacrifice the interests of a sovereign both powerful and cunning. When his personal ambition rendered him useless and even dangerous to Henry, he was dismissed, disgraced and left to die in retirement. Henry's behaviour toward Wolsey

27) The Prince, XXIII, 103 & 108.

as later toward Cromwell was marked by the astuteness and ruthlessness that bespeaks the wise prince according to Machiavelli.²⁸

Thomas Cromwell, like Wolsey, ran a course from a position low in the social scale to that of the first statesman in the nation, next to the king. Son of a man who was in turn a brewer, smith and armourer, he had all the drive and arrogance of a Tumburlane. As a youth he ran away from home, served in arms in Italy and France, entered trade in the Low Countries and in Italy and returned to England in 1512, to enter the wool trade as a merchant and shearman. Later, he began to practice as an attorney, and became known to Wolsey in 1520 as a man of law.

Thomas Cromwell is described as irresistible and relentless, carrying out his tasks in a perfect disregard of human feeling. He was charged by Henry with the organization of the destruction of Papal power in England, and he did it with a thoroughness that made his work irrevocable. He is the first of England's statesmen to whom has been attributed a knowledge of Machiavelli's The Prince.²⁹

Whether or not Cromwell had ever seen or possessed a copy of The Prince, what his experiences were in Italy, how

28) The Prince, Chs. XXII & XXIII, pp. 103-108

29) Innes, A.D. Ten Tudor Statesmen, p. 98; Fellheimer, Jeannette, The Englishman's Conception of the Italian in the Age of Shakespeare, p. 173; Einstein, Lewis, The Italian Renaissance in England, p. 152; pp. 291 et seq.

much he was affected by the unorthodoxy of Italy or how much he was a product of the whole trend of western Europe toward absolutism in government and unorthodoxy in religion would be hard to say; but in character and career he is typical of one of the princes and councillors with whom Machiavelli dealt--the prince who failed properly to restrain his cruelties, who failed to keep himself from becoming generally hated, and who, in serving as a counsellor and agent of another prince was victimized when his end became necessary to his master.

In compassing his task of removing the power of the Catholic Church from England, Cromwell moved from the incidental to the basic, from the lower to the higher. First he attacked the clerical abuses which so outraged the masses of the people, and in doing so won popular support; then he assailed the privileges of churchmen, who were isolated by the envy of the other nobility; and then he confiscated the church and monastic properties, making them available to the new nobility, whose sympathies lay with the king's policies. In this he deprived the church of economic strength and enriched the followers of the king, creating a new secular power to replace the power of the Holy See in England. When Cromwell's work against the papal authority in England had been completed, however, his

master, Henry VIII, had him arrested and charged with treason; and he used Cromwell's laws, his concept of treason and his favorite process, attainder, against him. Cromwell was tried and beheaded. Like Cesare Borgia's, Remirro de Orco, he had fulfilled his task and could be disposed of.³⁰

Machiavellian policy, the principle of princely absolutism built upon the nice balancing of the claims of the nobility and of the people, but resting in the final analysis upon the favor of the people, had so triumphed in English government by the time of Henry VIII's death that the institutions and practices it had made traditional withstood the disintegrating influence of the weak and discordant rules of the too-partisan Edward VI and of the fanatically Catholic Mary; and Elizabeth came to the throne to exercise Machiavellian statecraft with renewed vigor. Thanks to the "politicke wisdom" of her grandfather and father, Elizabeth exercised her skill as a prince through a firmly established parliament and a system of councils, courts and commissions, lay and ecclesiastical, which fused tradition and novelty in government so precisely that the feudal forms that had reinforced local immunities had become

30) The Prince, VII, 29

the media of centralized control, and the new institutions such as the Star Chamber and the national church prevented the old order from being restored. The Machiavellian dream was here realized in fact.

Elizabeth's first task was to reinforce her new state with a religion that would prove intolerable to neither Puritan nor Catholic. She did this by means of the Act of Supremacy and the Act of Uniformity, which established her as "supreme governor", not as supreme head (a nice distinction that well illustrates Elizabeth's capacity for equivocation) of the Church of England in command of a corps of ecclesiastics; and she adopted the prayer book by Cranmer as the authoritative guide to faith. For enforcement of this reform, she characteristically relied on a combination of force and persuasion - the inquisitorial court of High Commission and the parish clergy, whose appointment depended on the queen's favor.

In the religious settlement, Elizabeth was rational and political. She sought to retain the episcopacy in the church, but to establish the laity, crown and parliament as masters in the realm as a whole. The church, she intended, should be an instrument of princely power. This rational attitude toward

religion, so typical of Machiavelli (who certainly was no atheist) was evident also in her foreign policy. She backed the Congregation of the Lord, a Protestant body with strong democratic features, in Scotland, in its efforts to oust Catholic French influence from the country, and she gave aid to the Protestant Netherlands and to the French Huguenots against the Catholics and Spain; but her aid was doled out cautiously so that it might do no more than keep any one force from becoming too powerful. In this she aimed at checking her religious and commercial rivals who threatened her possession of the throne and England's independence.


Her foreign policy she regarded as a continuation of that of Henry VII and Henry VIII, who played off one rival against another, and judiciously aided the less strong against the powerful, on the lines advocated by Machiavelli. Nor was she above using her own person as a pawn in the game in order to keep the rival powers guessing whom she might marry.

In her fight for a national church subservient to the crown, Elizabeth tended to be tolerant, and to limit punishment for recusancy to fines; but when the political and commercial power of Spain, joined with a revived Catholic movement spear-headed by the fanatical Jesuits, launched a determined campaign

to conquer England for Spain and Catholicism, her policy changed. From 1564, after the Council of Trent, and particularly after the Pope excommunicated Elizabeth in 1570, Catholic non-conformity became identified with treason, and executions mounted, as the plots against Elizabeth multiplied and Spain's preparations for invasion became more open.

Elizabeth's capacity to retain her popularity with the great majority of her subjects never failed her. Like her father and grandfather, she never broke the link of her interests with those of the people; for while her skill in diplomacy served her well, it was the promotion of England as a trading and industrial nation, unified against all rivals, that gave the Tudors their security and power. Without their economic policy of protection and promotion of the merchant adventurers and artisan classes, and also the squirearchy that blossomed with the reduction of the great feudal estates and the growing importance of trade, the Tudors, for all their other princely qualities would not have conformed to the times, and would not have won the glory and renown of being the architects of Britain's unity and empire.

Elizabeth refused to be bound by the old nobility. She chose her own ministers, and filled her council and court with new men.



She treated the parliament as her chief support, but also as her child, and flattered its members without scruple; but she dared not try loyalty too harshly by taxation, and she herself became a merchant and a promoter of merchant enterprises in order to maintain her treasury.

She was sceptical, dishonest, coquettish and hard-headed. She kept her ministers guessing and her court favorites in a constant disquiet. Because of the sanity of the policy that emerged from the carryings-on of this woman, who exasperated more than one ambassador and harried minister, because of the success of her rule in solving the domestic and foreign problems of her country, one can only conclude that her moods and passions were at least half calculated to keep the enemies with which she was surrounded guessing, and unsure of how to accomplish their ends; and to try to stave off the inevitable hour of decision, when the new world being ushered in by Tudor policy would rise up and supersede both the old order and the transitional despotism. As one reviews the situations that confronted Elizabeth, both as a ruler and as a person, and examines the solutions she arrived at and the processes by which she arrived at those solutions, one is constantly reminded of the arguments in The Prince and in The Discourses.

Elizabeth was physically and mentally vigorous; she was courageous and learned; and although she was not a Joan of Arc she kept a strict watch over her military commanders. She had her own notions of state policy and conveyed them to her advisers when it suited her convenience. She was sensitive to her standing as a prince and of her authority. She trusted no one, it appears, not even her most loyal ministers; but retained those whom she knew to be indispensable to the success of her government and whose position rested with her; and by such she allowed herself to be cautioned and checked. She knew how to favor and how to execute. Often peevish, vacillating or obstinate, she has been characterized as one of the keenest political minds of her time. She had a vast experience of statecraft, and remarkable power to judge character. As a renaissance prince she illustrated the truth of Machiavelli's conclusion that

"Itt is unpossible for a prince, and specialle
such a one as is newlie raysted to that estate,
dulie to observe those thinges which causeth
men to be esteemed vertuous, for he shall be
constrayned spyte of his harte to transgres
the bondes of pyttie, faythe honestie courtesie
and religion: and therefore it is behooffull
for him to carrie a mynde & disposition readie
to alter with all weathers, as the variation
of fortune shall minister occasion, as to
followe the best, and to be vertuous yf he

maye, but yf that will not serve, not to be scripulous to followe the contrarie. A prince shoulde observe with all dilligence and care that noe woorde sholde passe his mouthe that did not savour of one of these five quallities before mencioned, and wheresoever he were seene or hearde, he should seeme with great reverence to extoll and imbrase Pittie Fayth Honestie courtesie & Religion and speciallie the laste, for men generallie are carried away with the shewe of thinges, not with the substance, everie man can see but fewe can judge, there is noe man but seeth what thow seemest to bee, but fewe can deserne what thow arte indeede. Which fewe dar not gainesay the opinion of the multitude, which haue the maiestie of the prince for theire defence. In the Actions of men, & especiallie in princes causes (which are not determinable by lawe nor called in question before judges) the lookers on for the most parte marke the evente not the causes, the ende not the maner of their proceedinges. Lett a prince therefore provide for the safetie of his person and securitie of his estate and never dowbte but what meanes soever it be doon (see it cary a shewe of honestie) it shalbe construed to the best, and be thought woorthy of great prayse and commendacion, for the common people are carried away with the semblance of honestie and good eventes of Actions, and trulie the wholle worlde it is but a commugaltie, for the wiser sorte that can judge of thinges aright are placed in such roomes where the multitude cannot come unto". 31

Elizabeth's volatile personality, her bravery and energy recommended her to the populace, who witnessed the graciousness of her manner during pageants, experienced the prosperity with

which her rule endowed England on the whole, and were impressed by the number and severity of her proclamations.

As will be shown later in greater detail, by the time of Elizabeth the writings of Machiavelli were circulating in England in published as well as manuscript form. That the Machiavellian qualities of the policies of the Tudors were appreciated by some Englishmen would seem to be undoubted.³² That these policies were generally approved and applauded is testified to by the relative ease with which the Tudors retained their throne, and the tremendous support they received while effecting radical reforms,³³ the growth of national consciousness and the patriotic fervour shown under their rule.

The identity of England's increasing greatness as a nation with the person of the monarch becomes most notable under Elizabeth. It is precisely under Elizabeth, however, that the devil-possessed Machiavellian appears upon the English stage, clearly labelled and loudly denounced. At the same time, however, as will be shown, the true prince as Machiavelli defined him is also paraded on the stage, but untagged, and, apparently, unrecognised.

Why true Machiavellians could emerge upon the stage

32) Jeannette Fellheimer, The Englishman's Conception of the Italian in the Age of Shakespeare, Chapter IV cites evidence of libraries, letters and anecdotes.

33) The Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts, 1589 - 1600, ed. J.S. Brewer, M.A. and Wm. Bullen, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1869, gives evidence of the overwhelming support extended to Elizabeth in her church reforms, from clergy as well as laity, pp. xxx-xxx1

without being so labelled must now be clear to readers. It is, surely, that the characterization of the prince in terms reflecting those of Machiavelli must have struck the audience with the force of truth, and impressed it with the accuracy and fullness with which the character defined contemporary political practice. It is, surely, that Machiavelli's selection of princely characteristics essential to successful renaissance government was discriminating and exact, and that the appearance on the stage of a truly Machiavellian representation of a successful renaissance monarch would be received by the audience with recognition and approval. It is, surely, that the qualities cited as distinguishing the true Machiavellian prince - as resolution, valor, resourcefulness, self-assurance, cunning, subtlety, dissimulation and shrewdness, an affectation of piety, dignity, the identification of the pursuit of his own advantage with the promotion of public welfare, general tolerance and a capacity for ruthlessness - epitomized the qualities called forth by the problems of the age. In other words, the principles of renaissance political power, as expounded in the works of Machiavelli and demonstrated in the plays designed to extenuate the practice of the Tudors, fell upon the theatre audiences of Elizabeth's time with the impact of reality, and reinforced the confidence of the people in their leaders. The romantic Machiavellian, however was an extravagance, a bogey.

Chapter III

Anti - Machiavellianism

The story is told that in 1527 Thomas Cromwell, minister to Henry VIII and pupil of Cardinal Wolsey in statecraft, advised Reginald Pole, later Cardinal Pole, counsellor to the Catholic Queen Mary, "....to drop highflown ideas, and learn the practical business of a politician by studying Machiavelli's Prince...."¹ Whether or not the story is historically well founded in fact, it presents accurately the division between those who embraced the theses of Machiavelli, and those who clung to the medieval-Catholic concept of political power.

Cromwell was one of the chief architects of the religious independence of England and of that indispensable buttress of absolute monarchy, a national church; Pole, on the other hand was a ceaseless fighter for the restoration of papal authority and the rights of the ancient nobility in England. To Pole and to those who looked out on life with his eyes, the Machiavellian thesis was impious, atheistic and implicit with disorder. Out of the conflict between these opposing points of

1) A.D. Innes, Ten Tudor Statesmen, London, Grayson & Grayson, 1934, p. 98. 5

view the Machiavellian bogey evolved.

There is plenty of evidence, as has been noted for example by Edward Meyer,² Jeannette Fellheimer³ and Hardin Craig,⁴ in their respective works, that Machiavelli was originally favorably accepted in England. In 1549, William Thomas, an historian undertaking to write of Italy, decided to base his work on Machiavelli's History of Florence, as the one on which all authors agreed best,⁵ indicating that the then novel materialistic approach of Machiavelli to the practice of princes and to the origins of society and of power was not outrageous to the Elizabethan students of history. In 1562, when the first edition of Machiavelli's Art of War was published in English, the epistle dedicatory, addressed to Queen Elizabeth, showed only respect and admiration for Machiavelli⁶. In 1573 Gabriel Harvey then a student at Cambridge, wrote to M. Remington, a friend, asking for the loan of Machiavelli's book. In his letter he referred to Machiavelli as " 'ye greate founder and master of pollicies' "; and he stated, " 'I purpose to peruse him only, not misuse him; and superficially to surveie

2) Edward Meyer, Machiavelli and the Elizabethan Drama, Weimar, Verlag Von Emil Felber, 1897.

3) Jeannette Fellheimer, The Englishman's Conception of the Italian in the Age of Shakespeare, University of London M.A. Thesis, 1935.

4) Hardin Craig, Machiavelli's The Prince, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1944. Introduction.

5) Fellheimer, op. cit. p. 180.

6) Ibid. p. 182.

his forrests of pollicie, not guilefully to conveie awaie his interest in them: " 7. Later, in 1579, Harvey remarked upon the popularity of Machiavelli's writings at Cambridge and noted that the extent to which they were read was remarkable. He described " ' an odd crewe or tooe as cunninge ' " in Machiavelli and in " 'certayne gallant Turkish Discourses' ", which, he claimed, were replacing logic and moral and natural philosophy in student interest. ⁸ In 1574, Sir Philip Sidney, writing from Padua to Hugh Languet, stated that he " ' never could be induced to believe that Machiavelli was right about avoiding excess of clemency until (he) learned from (his) own experience what (Machiavelli) has endeavoured with many arguments to prove: ". ⁹ Languet, replying, referred to Sidney as Machiavelli's friend.

These references to Machiavelli, voiced by English scholars, indicate at least interest in Machiavelli, and in some instances, approval. Government records further reveal that familiarity with Machiavelli extended to the court nobility. A note in Queen Elizabeth's Common-Place Book for the years 1596 - 1603

7) Fellheimer, op. cit. p. 185

8) Meyer, Machiavelli and the Elizabethan Drama, p. 25

9) Fellheimer, The Englishmen's Conception, p. 186

refers to "'Certein selected chapters selected out of Nicholas Machiavel his 3 books of discourses upon the first decade of Livie' ".¹⁰ A letter from John Blount in 1602 makes mention of Cecil, Lord Burleigh, as a Machiavellian; and earlier, in 1551, Sir W. Pickering, ambassador to France, writing to Burleigh, spoke of the Discourses of Machiavelli which he had ordered bound, but which he had burned because they were bungled.¹¹ Further, the Cecil papers at Hatfield House, containing 'Certayne selected chapters translated out of Nicholas Machiavell his 3 books of Discourses upon the first decade of Livie' ", offer evidence that Burleigh did indeed consult Machiavelli's work. When Thomas Bedingfield dedicated his History of Florence (1595) to Sir Christopher Hatton, he defended his doing so by the hope he had that his lordship, although he had read the original, would " ' for vanities' sake.....again vouchsafe to read it in our English.' "¹² This, and a good deal more evidence like it, gathered together in Chapter Four of Miss Fellheimer's work and in the work of Edward Meyer, already referred to, fortifies the impression that not only Burleigh, but Leicester, Walsingham, Sir Thomas Smith, Lord Rutland, the Earl of Northumberland, Lord John Lumley and others, could have and likely had read

10) Fellheimer, The Englishman's Conception, p. 226

11) Ibid. p. 227

12) Fellheimer, op.cit. p. 228

Machiavelli either in English manuscript translation or in French, Italian or Latin printed editions.

In addition to scholars, courtiers and men high in the government of Elizabeth, men of religion were also giving attention to Machiavelli's theses. An early expression of the church's criticism is given in a sermon by Rev. Edwin Sandys:

" 'There is no policy, no wisdom like the Wisdom of God. The Commonwealth which Aristotle and Plato have framed in their books, otherwise full of wisdom, yet compared with that city for whose sake and benefit the Lord doth watch, what are they but fancies of foolish men? As for Machiavel's inventions, they are but the dreams of a brain-sick person, founded upon the craft of man, and not godly wisdom, which only hath good effect. Godly princes have no need to seek for counsel at these men's hands; the mouth of the Lord is sufficient for them' " 13

By the 1580's however, the name of Machiavelli was becoming the synonym for evil ambition. The widely disseminated and much discussed pamphlet attributed to the notorious Jesuit plotter, Father Parsons, had a large share in developing this reaction. In this pamphlet, entitled Leycester's Commonwealth (1584), Leicester^{is} warned against advancing Huntington too far, as, the pamphlet notes, history has shown that those

13) Fellheimer, op.cit. p. 186.

advanced sometimes turn on those who aided them, as, for example, Henry VII turned upon and executed Lord Stanley, and Richard III turned upon and executed Buckingham: Leicester, therefore, the pamphlet argues, should be wary, and that " 'not without reason, as Seignior Machavel my Lords Councillour affirmeth ' ". The pamphlet further comments upon " 'a settled rule of Machivel, which the Dudlies do observe: That where you have once done a great injury, there you must never forgive' ". 14

Thus from the recommendation of Thomas Cromwell to the warning to Lord Leicester, the evidence is ample that the thesis of Machiavelli had the attention of persons of various ranks and interests; and that people were divided in their reaction to it. As the century advanced opinion hostile to Machiavelli grew sharper and more vociferous, until in the last decade the name of Machiavelli became a synonym for the devil, and the epithet applied to the most diabolical stage villains. In 1553, Roger Ascham defined Machiavelli's doctrine as " 'to thincke say and do what sooner may best serve for profite or pleasure ' "; 15 and, while he may not have approved then, he does not exhibit the feeling which

14) Meyer, op.cit. p. 29

15) Fellheimer, op.cit.p. 180

he expresses in 1570 in his claim that all are Machiavellians who

"...allie themselves with the worst Papistes, to whom they be wedded and do well agree in three proper opinions: In open contempte of Goddes worde: in a secrete securitie of sinne: and in a bloodie desire to have all taken away, by sword and burning, that be not of their faction ' ". 16

Gabriel Harvey, who in 1573 had been a student of Machiavelli and had recognized in him a master of policy, in 1578 wrote a Latin poem in which he listed the four crimes that were to become increasingly associated with Machiavellian villains: poison, murder, fraud, and violence.¹⁷ In 1579, in a letter to Spenser, he expressed fear of the harmful effects the study of Machiavelli might have on the Cambridge students.¹⁸ He, who in 1573 had called Machiavelli " ' unicus in politicis ' ", in 1578, called him " ' Deus Rigidi Tyranni ' ".¹⁹ After 1576 the denunciation of Machiavelli becomes a chorus in which Robert Greene, Thomas Lodge, Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Howell, Gabriel Harvey, Richard Harvey, Thomas Nashe and others raised their voices, pronouncing him a "poysoner", a "waiverer", a "master of hell", a "corrupter", a "lawgiver to those striving to excell in tyrannie", a "brocher of Diabollicall Atheisme". They link him with treachery, apostasy, uncleanness; and

16) Meyer, op.cit. p. 17

17) Ibid. p. 22

18) Fellheimer, op.cit. p. 199

19) Ibid. p. 198

they define his principles as "pestilient Machiavellian policy".

This attitude of outrage toward Machiavelli, which emerged into literature during the 1570's and into the drama a little more than a decade later, continued into the first quarter of the seventeenth century. It was at its height when the great tragedies and historical dramas were produced for which the Elizabethan age is famous. By the end of the reign of James I, however, ridicule, caricature and parody were superseding the portrait of Machiavelli as Satan, and prominent personalities, like Sir Francis Bacon had written their considered approval of Machiavelli's thought. The bogey had come and gone; but the character and intent of Machiavelli's work had been effectively distorted.

Machiavelli's spectacular rise to prominence in the theatre and in controversial literature as the synonym for satanic villainy, particularly after 1576, need not surprise ^{us if} ~~us if~~ we bear in mind the history of the time. Even ^{as} ~~as~~ Machiavelli wrote his Prince, the conflict over supremacy raging between the church and the secular state, which was in essence the conflict between the medieval Christian and the renaissance national concept of the nature of power was under way in all

western Europe. By the time of Elizabeth this conflict had reached its peak in England. The crisis was resolved, as we know, during the last decade of the sixteenth century with the successful defence of English national independence under a sovereign king and national church. It was precisely during these years of crisis that the stage Machiavellian flourished; for the Tudor abandonment of the traditional Catholic-feudal outlook and their vigorous pursuit of national despotic power was proof to believing Catholics that Elizabeth and her council were dominated by "politicke atheisme"; whereas the partisans of Elizabeth found the activities of those who promoted Catholic claimants to the throne equally guilty of wickedness, irreligion, and sedition.

Behind the Machiavellian villain lay history; and the term "politicke atheiste" had a very specific meaning. According to the discussion of Elizabethan atheism in chapter three of Ernest A. Strathmann's Sir Walter Raleigh,²⁰ inward or secret atheism had its roots in schism and heresy; that is, because of the nature of power as the direct and visible evidence of God's rule on earth, the break-up of western Christendom into secular national states bred both wickedness and dis-

20) Ernest A. Strathmann, Sir Walter Raleigh, A Study in Elizabethan Skepticism, New York, Columbia University Press, 1951.

loyalty. This wickedness and disloyalty was a creeping thing that infected people while they remained scarcely aware of its growth; and its most virulent expression was the activity of the "politicke atheiste" who with affected piety, smooth words, subtlety and secret crime wrested power from those appointed by god to rule. The "politicke atheiste" in other words, was one who, while professing faith, secretly in his heart or by his deeds challenged the hierarchy established by God and the interpretation of life in his Word. As Catholics and Protestants both claimed to represent truth and divine order, each charged the other with atheism once the cry was raised; and neither necessarily implied a disbelief in God in his opponent. Thus, as Mr. Strathmann notes in the opening of his chapter on the question, atheism became what he calls a "snarl word", which any one might use against whoever disagreed with them in religious or political opinion. Elizabeth was a "politicke atheiste" to the supporters of the papacy, and also to the Puritans within the Anglican Church; Burleigh, Leicester, Hatton, Essex might be "politicke atheistes" to the earls of the North and their Catholic supporters. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that Machiavelli, he who most succinctly

and most boldly stated the materialist view of state power, should have become the symbol of Satanic power and apostasy.

By 1560 the originally Catholic-inspired denunciation of Machiavelli began to find reflection in popular literature. In 1568, the Sempill Ballads were published in Scotland. These were satiric verses, written, not by Catholics but by Protestants, against Mary Queen of Scots, whose advisers were called "false Machivilians".²¹ The Catholic supporters of the Queen replied by charging that her Protestant opponents were Machiavellians. But the book which placed in the hands of the reading public the complete vocabulary of hatred and prejudice against Machiavelli was the Contre-Machiavel of Innocent Gentillet.²² Published in France in 1576 and translated into English in 1577 by Simon Patricke, this Huguenot diatribe established Machiavelli in the mind of those participating in the controversy as the equivalent of the devil himself. Today, commentators generally agree that Gentillet's work is libellous, unjust and false in its representation of the principles enunciated by Machiavelli.

21) Fellheimer, op.cit. p. 183

22) Innocent Gentillet, A Discourse upon the meanes of well governing and maintaining in good peace, a kingdome, or other principalities, Translated into the English by Simon Patricke, London, Printed by Adam Islip, 1602.

Gentillet was a French Protestant, a lawyer, who in 1576 was elected president of the Grenoble Parlement. Favoring the party of Evangelical reform, he held that all the ills of France stemmed from the corruption of French politics by mean upstarts, particularly Italians, whose lack of religion and whose admiration for Machiavelli were destroying Christian government. Gentillet, in the most unrestrained terms declared Machiavelli to be the very devil himself; and he called on France to abandon his wicked doctrines and return to the true French government. Believing in kings as divinely guided rulers, and thoroughly medieval in his views of monarchy, he was outraged by the practical and scientific approach of Machiavelli to problems of political power. To him Machiavelli mocked at all things holy in his pursuit of perfect villainy; to him the right of the landed noble over both land and peoples was holy, and therefore any other order was villainy. He therefore accused Machiavelli of tyranny, atheism and immorality, and warned that his policies destroyed all good order and honesty. He characterized Machiavelli as a "most pernicious writer". 23

23) Innocent Gentillet, op.cit. p. 2

The dedication to Queen Elizabeth in the English edition of Gentillet's book reads in part:*

"But O how happy are yee because you have so gracious a Queene, and also for that the infestious Machiavellian doctrine, hath not breathed nor penetrated in the intrails of most happy England". 24

The writer of the dedication was wrong, as has been seen, in believing that Machiavelli's writings, or that Machiavellian policy had not yet appeared in England; but his work must have been a welcome handbook of vituperation to the political and religious polemicists of the time, and of particular value to those whose minds leaned toward the medieval view of order and good government.

A quotation or two from Gentillet may help to define the bias of his mind and the mood in which he wrote:

"...we see it by the practise of the Machiavellistes, which never shoot at other marke, than to ruinate in France all the Nobilitie, the better to establish their tyrannie, at ease without contradictions....and for this effect have cassed, violated and overthrowne all the good lawes of the kingdome, by the meanes of which it has alwaies hitherto been maintained..." 25

"...all his (Machiavelli's) doctrine shootes at no other marke, but to

24) Innocent Gentillet, op.cit. p. 3

25) Ibid. p. 371

"instruct a prince to governe himself after his owne fancie, not to deliver his eare to such as would shew him the truth, and to despoile himself of all piety, conscience, and religion." 26

"For faith and promise, or of right and reason, men may not speak in Machiavels schoole, unless it be to mock at them.." 27

"...this wicked Atheist hath no other purpose....than to persuade a prince to become a tyrant, and most wicked, embracing all vices, and chasing away all virtues...." 28

The distortion of Machiavelli of which Gentillet was guilty is that of a person carried beyond reason and justice by moral indignation. Undoubtedly Machiavelli's proposals implied the overthrow of feudal forms and customs, and to Gentillet, therefore, a champion of the past, they were tyrannous.

Gentillet's concern was for traditional France; and his call was to the French to rally to the standards of their ancestors, and against the innovators in their land.

"....let us not leave off, for a sort of degenerate Frenchmen, adherents to the pernicious purposes of that race (Italians) to maintain and conserve the honors...of

26) Innocent Gentillet, op.cit. p. 142

27) Ibid. p. 224

28) Ibid. p.

"our French nation, which these bastardlie
Italians have contaminated and soiled by
their cruelties, massacres and perfidies". 29

The violence and color of his language, which abounds in terms such as "murderer", "bastard", "stinking atheist", "winders" and "deceivers", "murderers who call themselves abbreviators of justice", and the like, mark his work as the source book of the terminology for the stage Machiavellian. To him Machiavelli is "a very Atheist and contemner of God". His concern is not with meeting the maxims of Machiavelli with reason (for he could not accept the premise of Machiavelli's works even for discussion: that stable government rests upon the ability of the ruler to win the favor of the people and to change with the times). His book, therefore, is merely an exhortation to the people to remain loyal to the past, and to uphold the good as it had been known.

The views expressed in the works of Machiavelli and Gentillet epitomized for the literary world of renaissance England the basic conflict that was rocking the whole of western Europe; but the superior scope of the work of Machiavelli as that of the man who was looking to the future, and

29) Gentillet, op.cit.

whose thinking lay with the movement of his time, made him not only the object of attack of those who lacked his insight or rejected his conclusions, but the preceptor of both his friends and his enemies; for even those who desired to cling to the past had to function in the present, and grapple with reality; and no one in sixteenth century Europe showed a greater talent for recognizing political reality than did Machiavelli.

Machiavelli had warned that the establishment of a wholly new state was a most dangerous and difficult task; and he had advised rulers of new principalities that they must expect to be beset by snares and ambushes on every side, and to be exiles from the full favor of all. Gentillet's attack would not have surprised him, since it was he who had said:

"The difficulties which are incident^e to the keepinge and continewance of a newe gotten principallitie doe rise partlie from the Lawes Statutes and ordinances which the Prince shalbe forced to make for the saftie of his owne estate. Ffore this is to be noted that there is nothinge soe harde to enterprise nor soe dowbtefull to ende, nor soe daungerous to prosecute as to make a mans self Author of newe lawes or customes. For he that is the first bringer in of them shalbe

"sure to haue all those his Enemyes
that reaped any commoditye by the
olde and those but his colde frendes
that hope for any proffitte by the
newe which coldnes dothe springe
partlie for feare of their aduer-
saries to whom the olde lawes were
beneficiall, and partlie throughe
mens incredulitie, which will never
certainly beleue any thinge to come
unlesse they see it confirmed by
manifest experience". 30

The stage Machiavellian, then, was the crystallization of the spectre of disorder and godlessness that haunted a people changing from one order of society to another. Inspired by the conservative's dreadful warning against the breakdown of morality and human restraint under God's law, he dramatized a danger that was illusory; and he was in his perversity and excess fundamentally inhuman, a nightmare; for, in fact, as Machiavelli had noted, "Men cannot be either wholly good or wholly bad". 31

Further, on the stage, he dealt his blows against the noble whose fears had first evoked his image, and was used, as will be seen in an ^aexamination of the drama, by progress against reaction.

30) The Prince, VI, pp. 22-23

31) The Discourses, I, xxvi, p. 184 and xxvii, p. 186

Chapter IV

The Romantic Interpretation.

When reality is so treated that the truth expressed is only partial; when the artist leaves ill-defined or out of focus the relationship of the part to the whole, then the hand of romance is at work. The medieval romance, for example, made an extravagance of love, nature and adventure, and was in essence fantastic, that is, built upon illusion. Romance is often accepted by the uninitiated as truth, and indulged in by the ignorant as fact. It can be conscious, and designed not to convince but to entertain; or it can be unintentional, or evoked by a reluctance or incapacity to face facts. A quick or passionate reaction to something as either good or bad, can produce a biased, extravagant or romantic interpretation. As the definition in the Oxford Dictionary indicates, ¹

1) Romance - prose or rarely verse tale with scene and incidents remote from everyday life, class of literature consisting of such tales: set of facts, episode, love affair, etc., suggesting such tales by its strangeness or moving nature; atmosphere characterizing such tales, mental tendency to be influenced by it, sympathetic imaginativeness; an exaggeration, picturesque falsehood.

wild or
wanton

the core of the term romance is the idea of deviation from the norm, the conception of effect heightened by abstraction from the full or precise truth.

In the portrayal of the character presented by certain Elizabethan dramatists as Machiavellian, romance ruled the minds of the poets. Whether or not the romancing was deliberate, the poets alone could say, and it is not necessary to this discussion that this be known; for the concern here is to distinguish between the romantic and the real Machiavellian on the Elizabethan stage, not to attempt to analyze the intent of the writers.

Edward Meyer in his work, Machiavelli and the Elizabethan Drama, has discovered 39 $\frac{1}{4}$ references to Machiavelli, almost all of which reflect bias in the interpretation of the meaning of Machiavellianism. Jeannette Fellheimer, in her thesis, referred to previously, devoted a chapter to a discussion of the reaction to Machiavelli in England in the age of Shakespeare, and noted that the Stage Machiavellian typified a hostility that was inspired chiefly by a religious prejudice, having its root in the contradiction between the moral idea of medieval Christendom as an empire ordained and

guided by God and the pragmatic practice of the rulers of the renaissance states. The present writer does not entirely agree with Miss Fellheimer, feeling that the conflict of the time was in essence political, although it expressed itself in religious terms.

Miss Fellheimer's stage Machiavellian is distinguished by characteristics noted also by Meyer. They are: egotism; a willingness to commit any crime; a disregard of the interests of all but those whose aid is indispensable to the realization of a desired aim; a use of violence and craft; a skill in the art of deception; a readiness to victimize the innocent; a tendency to soliloquize upon his own vindictiveness and murderous thoughts; a habit of telling his bloody thoughts to accomplices who are then silenced; a light-heartedness in the performance of crime and a complacent acceptance of the efficacy of wickedness; a persistence in misdeed and no repentance at death; an enmity to God and a consequent atheism; motivation by expediency, and contempt for moral scruple; and a pleased appreciation of the advantage enjoyed by being free of all principle.

This summing up by Miss Fellheimer of the stage Machia-

vellian is, in this writer's opinion, excellent. The stage Machiavellian was, indeed, all the things she declared he was, and each characteristic she attributes to him could be inferred from the discussion of the ^pPrince by Machiavelli; but the stage character remains a falsification, a distortion, a romanticized version of the prince approved by Machiavelli because he is presented both outside the context of history (Barabbas, Lightborn) and devoid of the constructive social and political aims (Mortimer, Tamburlane) without which he cannot be termed truly Machiavellian; for the object of Machiavelli's discussion of the prince was not instruction in villainy, it was the resolution into order of social and political chaos. The stage Machiavellian is in origin, therefore, the product of observers whose imperfect vision saw in the thesis of Machiavelli, not ultimate liberation, peace and a new order but repression and disaster; and not merely disaster but a deliberate disruption of order.

Thus Tamburlane declares:

I will persist a terror to the world.
II(IV, i, 200) ²

Barabas screams in frenzied hate:

.....so I live, perish may all the world.
(V,v,10) ³

2) Christopher Marlowe, Tamburlane the Great, London, Methuen & Co., 1930.

3) Marlowe, The Jew of Malta, London, Methuen & Co., 1931.

Dr. Faustus voices the wish to defy universal law:

To do whatever Faustus shall command,
Be it to make the moon drop from her sphere,
Or the ocean to overwhelm the world.
(I, iii, 39 - 41) 4

Macbeth invokes universal destruction:

Though you untie the winds and let them fight
Against the churches; though yesty waves
Confound and swallow navigation up:
Though bladed corn be lodg'd, and trees blown down,
Though castles topple on their warders' heads,
Though palaces, and pyramids do slope
Their heads to their foundations: though the
treasure
Of Nature's germen, tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken: answer me
To what I ask you.

(IV, i, 51 - 60) ⁵

Chief among the dramatisers of the romantic Machiavellian is Christopher Marlowe - the originator of the notorious stage Machiavellian, Barabas - whose plays, from Tamburlane to Edward II are coloured by the author's preoccupation with the struggle for power. If it is correct that Marlowe's plays came out in the order - Tamburlane, The Jew of Malta, Doctor Faustus, Edward II - it is possible to trace in the attitude toward ambition a transition from youthful enthusiasm for its spectacular achievements to a revulsion from its excesses

4) Marlowe, The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus, London, Methuen & Co., 1932.

5) William Shakespeare, "Macbeth", The Works of Shakespeare,
Oxford, The Shakespeare Head Press, 1938.

and sinister implications. In the course of these plays, Marlowe's approach settles into that originated by the opponents of the "new men"; ^{it and becomes} more like that of those who denounced realists in politics as "politicke atheistes". His attack in his one political play, Edward II, is directed, however, against the insurgent nobility; against, indeed, that section of society from which the interpretation of Machiavelli as a villain first was heard.

In Tamburlane, his first play, Marlowe created in heroic proportions the man of war, unconquerable except by Fortune and Death. In his exaltation of Tamburlane's force of character, resolution and skill in war, and his passionate devotion to nothing but war, Marlowe seems to be in sympathy with Machiavelli. Many of the scenes in both parts of the play portray the kind of conflict, demonstration of wit and daring, cunning and shrewdness, with which one meets in the discussions of the prince in the pages of Machiavelli. At the conclusion of Part II, however, Tamburlane has become merely an artist in bloodshed and conquest; his arrogance and impatience have isolated him from his officers who formerly enjoyed a kind of intimacy with him as companions-in-arms; he rejoices in nothing but conquest and destruction; and measures the extent of his

greatness by the height of the heaps of skulls his prowess creates. The whole community, princes, people and priests, is in arms against him. But he is insatiable and unconquerable:

Tamburlane: Techelles, let us march,
 And weary death with bearing souls to hell,
 II (V,iii, 76 - 77)

This is not the aim that Machiavelli set his prince, either explicitly or by implication; It is, rather, one of the errors into which, Machiavelli warned, a prince may fall. Nevertheless, the details of the situations Tamburlane faces, and the working out of the conflicts among the generals and nobility suggest an appreciation of event not unlike that of Machiavelli; and, it is clear, Marlowe never abandons his intention to rouse sympathy for the vigor and the grand scale of Tamburlane's actions.

The qualities of Tamburlane, one might argue, are, except for craftiness and ruthlessness, those ascribed to any romantic of hero^{of} legendary fame. This hero is the fox, however, as well as the lion; and he is certainly no knight-errant pursuing the honor accorded the good and the brave. He has wit and eloquence which he uses cunningly to his own advantage. He laughs at authority; and commits perfidy with aplomb. Further, he is of lowly origin, and takes pride in it. A mere shepherd,

he sets himself up against emperors and kings, innocent of any feeling of guilt in doing so; for he sees in his own ability the justification for his deeds. He wins Theridamas and Teschelles, military commanders of the Persians, to his camp; and then forms an alliance with the unwary and overconfident Cosroe, against Cosroe's own brother, Mycetes, the king of Persia. He then adds to his glory in the eyes of his supporters by outwitting this prince, his ally. In all this Machiavelli's concept of the prince, his principles of realistic politics and his analysis of the processes of power are honored. Marlowe indeed in his presentation of Tamburlane seems to

"...esteem rather those who are than those who can be generous; and those who would know how to govern states, rather than those who have the right to govern, but lack the knowledge". 6

The deliberate calculation, resolution and pride, ambition and daring of the deception of Cosroe are typical of the prince as Machiavelli conceived him; and, defending his action, Tamburlane points to nature as would the prince of Machiavelli:

Tamburlane: Nature, that framed us of four elements,
Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:
Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
The wondrous architecture of the world,
And measure every wandering planet's course,

6) Niccolo Machiavelli, The Discourses, I, Dedication, p. 102

Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
And always moving as the restless spheres,
Will us to wear ourselves, and never rest,
Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,
That perfect bliss and sole felicity,
The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.

(I Tamburlane, II, vii, 18-29)

Machiavelli had said:

"For when men are no longer obliged to fight from necessity, they fight from ambition, which passion is so powerful in the hearts of men that it never leaves them, no matter to what heights they may rise". 7

Tamburlane, having realized "the sweet fruition of an earthly crown" later, goes on to defy the gods and to aspire to a throne in heaven.

Ambition is natural, says Tamburlane, even as Machiavelli; but in his lack of any constructive political purpose, he fails to measure up to the true Machiavellian prince who, the creature of sound, practical thought, is concerned realistically with the founding of a stable state, based on popular favor as the guarantee of his own wealth and power.

The tempo of the play mounts throughout the first part, with glory gathering about Tamburlane; but the turn away from admirable health, vigor and appealing self-assurance, the

7) Niccolo Machiavelli, op. cit., I, xxxvii, p. 208.

growth of the perverse and therefore non-Machiavellian characteristics, begins to make itself felt even before the conclusion of part one. Tamburlane is, from the beginning, quite naturally, denounced by the kings he defeats; but criticism later is heard from a captain of his own forces, and Zenocrate, his ^cloving wife, grows anxious, though she continues to defend him.

The evidence of a growing and habitual violence in Tamburlane and the reaction to it within his camp is significant of the non-Machiavellian in his character; for the increasing brutality of his campaigns tends to justify his enemies' denunciations and to undermine the love and admiration of his own following; The epithets hurled against him can no longer be attributed solely to the prejudice of the great by birth. He encamps now only three days before a city, which is ^{razed} ~~raised~~ to the ground if it resists. He has become indeed a scourge and terror.

The original bright ambition to advance himself and his followers is ~~dimming~~. Nothing can now soften Tamburlane, beset by an insane drive to exceed the achievements of all conquerors. The pleas of Zenocrate^f for the lives of her father, her townsfolk and countrymen fail, as Tamburlane fights down all "thoughts effeminate and faint", fiercely setting aside love and beauty,

which torment him. He is unmoved by the appeal of the twenty virgins of Demascus; and is represented as turning women over for execution ~~to~~ his soldiery. Now, like a man possessed, seized by a passion for war alone, he consecrates himself solely to conquest:

Tamburlane: I thus conceiving, and subduing both
(love and beauty)

... ..
Shall give the world to note, for all my birth,
That virtue solely is the sum of glory,
And fashions men with true nobility.

I (V, ii, 120; 125-127)

The use of virtue here, as in Tamburlane's assurance to Techelles and others of his commanders whom he has made kings--

Tamburlane: Your births shall be no blemish to your fame,
For virtue is the fount whence honor springs.

I (IV, iv, 130-131)

is certainly that of Machiavelli; it implies inherent power, health and vigor of mind and body, exceptional capacity, particularly the attributes of the warrior in extraordinary degree.

The play was tremendously popular with the Elizabethans. It apparently struck a note to which they were singularly sensitive, singularly responsive. Undoubtedly that note was the liberation of the lowly from the oppressions of the great; the assertion of the right of the base-born to the riches of the earth; the declaration of independence of the national group from the control of imperial and papal power, of the individual

in short from the restrictions of feudalism. It was the trumpet blast of the renaissance. Tamburlane was the de facto prince holding his position by virtue of his ability, and relying on his own counsel and skill in warfare, and the voluntary allegiance of the people. He appears, challenging a divided and incompetent group of rulers whose realm is shot through with discontent and insubordination, and is ravaged by invaders, even as Italy was when Machiavelli wrote, and as England was when Henry VII¹ landed at Milford Haven.

Tamburlane, however, holds out no perspective of a new and better order; power alone interests him, as it does all the romantic Machiavellians. Apparently indifferent to the growing opposition, he persists in his violence, and indulges more and more in self-admiration. He rants about himself and speaks of his divine essence; he is made, he says, "arch monarch of the earth...."...."by the hand of Jove", not for "deeds of bounty and nobility", but to apply himself "In war, in blood, in death, in cruelty". He will, he says -

...plague such peasants as resist in me
The power of Heaven's eternal majesty.
II (IV, i, 157-158)

¹⁶
His determination to spread horror:

I will, with engines never exercis'd,
Conquer, sack, and utterly consume
Your cities and your golden palaces
... ..

I will persist a terror to the world.

II (IV, i, 192-194; 201)

He carries this program out with dreadful thoroughness in Babylon. He double-crosses the governor of Babylon by offering him life in return for information, and when the information is given he hangs the governor in chains and has him shot. He hurls men, women and children into a lake of asphalt. He taunts his victims. He persists in violence; a course fatal to a ~~prince~~ prince, Machiavelli had observed, and one which was certainly alienating the people, and uniting and increasing his enemies. Clearly the elements of perversity, extravagance and destructiveness of the romantic Machiavellian are becoming stronger.

While it can be argued that such scenes as those at Babylon were designed possibly to thrill and ^{appeal} ~~appeal~~ the groundlings, or to raise the pitch of unrestrained conquering action to its extreme, they are consistent with the main argument presented here: that the development of Tamburlane appears as a limited, imperfect reflection of Machiavellian thought, which reveals in Marlowe an appreciation of the daring, self-assurance, courage and ingenuity of his prince (which Machiavelli never failed to accord men of ability) but fails to reveal any

advocacy of constructive statemanship. Tamburlane exhibits the unbalanced excess that, Machiavelli warned, takes hold of a ruler who permits himself to ignore law and get lost in self-esteem. Marlowe, however, one feels, is himself intoxicated by the excesses he describes.

Tamburlane, in part I of the play, is the prototype of Machiavelli's man of virtue, the new prince favored only by opportunity. He is fearless, confident, skilful in war and diplomacy, open, free and generous with his followers whose fortunes he advances with his own. He is authoritative and commanding in bearing, and eloquent in speech. He is capable, however, of deception and treachery when they serve his interests, and he is ruthless in the punishment and destruction of those who oppose him. He honors religion in that he represents himself as "the scourge of god" and regards himself as favored by heaven; but the god he serves is never clearly defined, and is referred to as Jove, Mahomet, Majesty of Heaven, the god of thunder and revenge, and the immortal god. Tamburlane is out to conquer the world, to humble emperors, to map continents, and to reorganize governments under the rule of his followers appointed by him as kings. His triumphal progress and the rapid growth of his following testify to his

ability and the popularity of his leadership. Part I of the play concludes with the sympathy for Tamburlane still in the ascendant; and the truce with which it comes to an end establishes Tamburlane as the absolute prince, whose empire is administered by kings deputed to rule under him; that is, by a government which Machiavelli describes as the most difficult to conquer.⁸

Tamburlane, as part II shows, however, falls a victim to that fault which Machiavelli notes so often brings about the downfall of otherwise capable men. He persists in cruelty and becomes indifferent to the favor of the people. He further makes the error of failing to exterminate all members of the family of the prince he had overthrown, and makes possible the regrouping of his enemies under the leadership of their hereditary prince.

All this suggests the influence of Machiavelli. There is, however, about Tamburlane, an extravagance and bombast that is not of this world, and must have been excessive even to some Elizabethan lovers of the "high-astounding" in language and life. It seems likely, therefore, that Marlowe knew and used

8) The Prince, IV, 15-16

Machiavelli's writings, but was for some reason impelled to preoccupy himself with the problems rather of excessive ambition than of mature statesmanship.

The destructiveness that was strong in Tamburlane becomes dominant in Barabas, the chief character of The Jew of Malta. Moved only by love of gold, Barabas is prepared to resort to every subterfuge and every crime to save or recover his wealth. He exhibits in detail the whole-hearted, headlong and unrepentant villainy attributed to the typical romantic Machiavellian of the Elizabethan stage; and he is presented specifically by Marlowe as an exponent of Machiavellian teaching.

The prologue to The Jew of Malta is spoken by Machiavelli, who introduces the play as

.....the tragedy of a Jew,
Who smiles to see how full his bags are cramm'd;
Which money was not got without my means.

(Prologue, 30-32)

The prologue rehearses the alleged characteristics and views of Machiavelli. The soul of Machiavelli, we are told, went to France to reside in the Duke of Guise, the militant and notorious leader of the Catholic faction in France. Upon the death of Guise, we learn, Machiavelli's soul crossed to England, "to frolic with its friends", by obvious inference, the English Catholics. The soul acknowledges that it has

both friends and enemies, but that it disdains the opinion of all. Those who criticise Machiavelli, we are assured, secretly rely on him to guide them to the realization of their ambition, particularly if they aim at pre-eminence in the Catholic church. Further, those who reject him are destroyed by those who still follow his guidance. He is, therefore, indispensable to success. He is contemptuous of religion, laughs at belief in auguries, and holds that "there is no sin but ignorance". He pointedly challenges the principle of hereditary title to power, arguing

Might first made kings, and laws were then most sure
When, like the Draco's, they were writ in blood.

(Prologue, 20-21)

Military strength triumphs over learning, he insists.

Primed with this interpretation of Machiavellian doctrine, the audience views the career of the diabolical Barabas, whom they have been called upon to

grace.....as he deserves,
And let him not be entertained the worse
Because he favors me (Machiavelli).

(Prologue, 33-35)

Anyone familiar with the works of Machiavelli can appreciate the distortion and over-simplification of Machiavelli's presentation of the prince in this prologue. Marlowe has deliberately selected the notorious representative of the enemies of Protestantism in a neighbouring state as the abode of the

soul of Machiavelli. The Guise, it should be remembered, was prominently associated with the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, a mass Catholic outrage against the French Protestant party, which was supported by England. Marlowe, thus by the familiar technique of those who seek to influence thought without resort to reason or demonstration, associates what he is about to discuss with something already abhorrent to the mind addressed, and proceeds, by innuendo, to ensnare everyone in the net of suspicion, although the Catholics are selected for a special smear. He then proceeds to the lie direct, by saying Machiavelli despised religion. Having demoralized his audience on the subject to be discussed, and ignored the broad general aims of Machiavelli's thesis, Marlowe concludes with citing two fundamental points in Machiavelli's thought: that power rests on force upon which law also depends, and that force is greater, or more effective in achieving one's aim, than is learning, or the way of persuasion. The character he then selects as the model of Machiavellian thought and action is an outcast, an un-Christian Jew, and an avaricious merchant and money-lender. Prejudice could not be better barbed and winged.

Barabas, the original, fully developed and grossest of the "Machiavellian" villains is a study of fiendishness. He is avaricious, diabolically cunning and unscrupulous, lacking

in any decent human feeling. He is devoted only to money to which he will sacrifice everything, including his only and lovely daughter, Abigail. He is quite without political significance. Gold, not empire is his object; contempt for Christians and triumph in their discomfiture his pre-occupation; death in a trap he set for others, his end.

This play, however, The Jew of Malta, Marlowe announces as an exposition of practice according to Machiavelli; and, indeed, many of the lines of Barabas are bitter and damning parodies of Machiavellian maxims. For example -

Barabas: No, Barabas is born of better chance
And fram'd of finer mould than common men,
That measure naught but by the present time.
A reaching thought will search his deepest wits,
And casts with cunning for the time to come;
For evils are apt to happen every day.

(I, ii, 219 - 224)

Barabas: Be rul'd by me, for in extremity
We ought to make bar of no policy.

(I, ii, 272 - 273)

Barabas: Hides many mischiefs from suspicion.
for religion

(I, i, 281 - 282)

Barabas: And when we grin we bite; yet are our looks
As innocent and harmless as a lamb's.

(II, iii, 21 - 22)

Barabas: (To Ithamore)...be thou void of these affections
Compassion, love, vain hope, and heartless fear;
Be mov'd by nothing, see thou pity none,
But to thyself smile when the Christians moan.

(II,iii,170 - 173)

Barabas: No..Barabas....
....since by wrong thou gott'st authority
Maintain it bravely by firm policy;
At least unprofitably lose it not;
For he that liveth in authority,
And neither gets him friends nor fills his bags,
Lives like the ass that Aesop speaketh of....
(V, ii, 34 - 40)

Barabas: Slip not thine opportunity, for fear too late
Thou seek'st for much, but canst not compass it.
(V, ii, 45 - 46)

Barabas: Thus loving neither, will I live with both,
Making a profit of my policy;
And he from whom my most advantage comes,
Shall be my friend.
(V, ii, 111 - 114)

In these lines a savage burlesque is made of Machiavelli's eulogy of foresight, political flexibility and dissimulation. There is a burlesque of his advice on the necessity to discipline feeling in the interest of realizing one's objective, and on the tactics one must adopt to retain a throne acquired by conquest; there is a burlesque of Machiavelli's warning that one must defend and preserve one's own interests and advance one's own position; and on the arguments that merit requires opportunity, that one must choose one's allies or associates for the advantage they afford, and that forestalling is the best means of thwarting a conspiracy. In all, the travesty of Machiavelli lies in attributing to the executor of the actions an exclusively selfish, evil and destructive intent.

As has already been noted, absolute egotism and essential evil, so thoroughly represented in Barabas are at the heart of the romantic Machiavellian as he becomes known on the Elizabethan stage. With these goes atheism, symbolized in Barabas by his being a Jew, committer of "unhallow'd deeds of Jews", by his frequent cursing of Christians, and rejoicing in their discomfiture, and by the frenzied sort of hatred that possesses him:

Barabas:.....so I live, perish may all the world.
(V, v, 10)

Marlowe, in The Jew of Malta pilloried Machiavelli as a villain and an atheist, through the most powerful propaganda medium of the day, the stage. In doing so he moved a good distance from his position in relation to the thought of Machiavelli in Tamburlane, in which he chose to stress those aspects of the upstart prince -- his resolution and daring -- with which one could remain in sympathy. In Doctor Faustus, he presented a learned man selling his soul to the devil in exchange for a life of domination over nature, which to the medieval mind was governed by God's law. Here in essence is the same attack launched in The Jew of Malta: the charge is egotism and love of worldly materialistic power; the demonstration is destructiveness and self-destruction; and the pattern of the individual's

development is again that of Tamburlane and of Barabas.

Faustus is a man of humble origin who rises to eminence by sheer ability. He advances, however, not as a warrior or a man of wealth, but as a scholar. Like Tamburlane and Barabas he becomes a victim of his own boundless love of his particular worldly object - learning - particularly the black art - and becomes more and more reckless and destructive as the inevitable end approaches.

As in the other two plays announcement is made of the destiny of the chief character. The audience is told at the outset that Faustus, a man of humble origin, went to the university of Wertenberg where he studied law, medicine and divinity. Then, master of these arts, and "swoln with cunning, of a self-conceit", he "surfeits upon cursed necromancy", while the "heavens conspire his overthrow".

Marlowe then outlines the illusions that conceit and ambition create:

Faustus: O, what a world of profit and delight,
Of power, of honour, of omnipotence,
Is promised to the studious artisan!
All things that move between the quiet poles
Shall be at my command:

(I, i, 54 - 58)*⁹

⁹* Christopher Marlowe, The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus,
London, Mathuen & Co., Ltd., 1932.

But his dominion that exceeds in this,
Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man;
A sound magician is a mighty god:
Here Faustus, tire thy brains to gain a deity.
(I, i, 61 - 64)

This is the temper of Tamburlane, whose aim soared beyond earthly bounds and reached into heaven. But Faustus, like Barabas, and unlike Tamburlane, had a sense of evil-doing, of desperation:

Faustus: This night I'll conjure, though I die therefore.
(I, i, 167)

His complacency returns and his pride grows as his spells succeed and Lucifer appears, to be his slave:

Faustus: How pliant is this Mephistopholis,
Full of obedience and humility!
Such is the force of magic and my spells:

(I, iii, 21 - 33)

and, like Tamburlane, he becomes dangerous and meaningless in his obsession with power:

Faustus: To do whatever Faustus shall command,
Be it to make the moon drop from her sphere,
Or the ocean to overwhelm the world.

(I, iii, 39-41)

With such an aim, Faustus dedicates himself to Beelzebub, "the chief of Hell", and becomes through his pride in worldly learning, wholly devoted to power, self-love, appetite and money.

The moral of Faustus' fate is stated specifically by the chorus:

Chorus: Faustus is gone: regard his hellish fall,
Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise,
Only to wonder at unlawful things,
Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits
To practise more than heavenly power permits.

(Epilogue, 4 - 8)

In all this the denunciation of irreverent and unbridled ambition finds expression; and Marlowe thus ultimately interprets Machiavelli in the terms voiced first by the Catholic Reformation Movement and later with such abandon by Gentillet. In *Barabas* he vilified Machiavelli through the drama as vehemently and in as unprincipled a fashion as had Gentillet in his book, the *Contre-Machiavel*. In *Edward II* he seized upon English history and illustrated the anti-Machiavellian in a political play; but in it he turned the interpretation conceived by the champions of Catholic feudalists against themselves.

In *Edward II* Marlowe attempted to deal with politics and history seriously and realistically. He took a theme from the history of England, a segment of the reality from which Machiavelli's mind was never detached, and for the first time disciplined his genius to cope with experience and not with fantasy. He adapted the record of Edward II's reign as given in Hol~~l~~inshed, and in spite of the considerable liberties he

took with time he produced a play that was relatively accurate history and powerful drama. Poetic bombast tended to be replaced by the poetry of reason and reality.

The theme of the play is the danger to hereditary monarchy-- and consequently, it is inferred, to the common weal -- inherent in strife between the king and the nobility. In the struggle of the feudal nobility to retain their control of Edward II, the Younger Mortimer -- initially one of the insurgent nobility striving to recover the influence of the king from the "upstarts" and "flatterers" -- Gaveston, the Spencers and Baldock -- becomes the victim of his own ambition, and turns the fight for the restoration of the feudal control of the monarch into what amounts to the usurpation of the throne by himself. Mortimer's role as a "Machiavellian" does not become apparent until Act IV of the play, when the atmosphere of intrigue and double-dealing becomes heavy whenever he appears, or the action of others is provoked by him. The play moves to its conclusion under the impetus of the genius of evil that became traditionally associated with "Machiavellianism" on the stage.

The sequence of events during the balance of the play illustrates the increasingly diabolical character of Mortimer.

Escaping from the tower with the aid of Kent, brother to the king, he takes refuge in France, joining the queen at Paris. There, aided by the hospitality of the Earl of Hainault, he and the queen recruit French and German military aid for their return to England and their attempt to depose the king and replace him by his son. By these ambitious plans, however, he alienates the young Prince Edward and Kent. With the invasion of England, he assumes leadership, though in the queen's name; and Leicester acts in Mortimer's name when he arrests the king at Neith.

Mortimer now becomes anathema to the king. He is "That bloody man", and the companion of hell. Imprisoned under the care of Leicester, the king complains against "the ambitious Mortimer" and later, tormented by the incessant moving about which Mortimer orders as a means of preventing his rescue, the king cries -

Edward: Will hateful Mortimer appoint no rest?

(V, iii, 5)

When will the fury of his mind assuage?
When will his heart be satisfied with blood?

(V, iii, 8 - 9)

Although such epithets, as well as those of "tyrant" and

"traitor" had been bandied about by both sides during the scenes of struggle between the nobles and the king, from now on they accumulate around Mortimer, and are confirmed by his acts. The queen too develops as a dissembler and a would-be assassin at one with Mortimer in his wilful ambition; and it remains only for them to call in the fictional character, Lightborn, created for the play by Marlowe to stamp Mortimer and Isabel as consciously developed romantic Machiavellians; for Lightborn announces himself as a villain trained in crime in Italy, and cunning in nameless murderous designs.

If the features of the "Machiavellian" outlined by Miss Fellheimer are recalled, it will be seen that Mortimer, Isabel and Lightborn are drawn after the pattern she records. The opening words of Mortimer in Act V, scene iv, "The king must die, or Mortimer goes down", introduces in full the "Machiavellian", headstrong, ambitious, cunning, unscrupulous, egotistical, contemptuous of others and defiant to the last, consciously a wrong-doer.

The significance of this trio to the tradition of "Machiavellian" villainy lies in the number of facets of this villainy that they reflect. Two of them are from the high-ranking nobility, close to the monarch; they move in their

development from discontent to ambition, and from ambition to obsession with power. The crown has in the end an irresistible fascination for them. Seeking it, they demonstrate increasing degrees of violence, cunning and cruelty. Overcome, they are unrepentant. Lightborn, the base-born one of the trio, is remarkable for the vulgarity of his pride in his art of assassination, his insensibility and his credulity. None of them have any aim other than that of advancing themselves to the highest attainable peaks of greatness. For the woman this is to be the companion and abettor, and sometimes the guide to a daring and cunning man; for the paid assassin it is skill and novelty in the art of murder. All are indifferent to legitimate claims to what they seek, and to the damage their actions do to the lives of others. Together they make a composite "Machiavellian".

The development of excessive ambition begins in Isabella only after she abandons hope of winning back the king's affections, alienated from her by the king's infatuation with Gaveston. Before she decides to seek foreign aid with which to win power for her son in England, she makes every effort to restore herself to the favor of the king. Alone and in the king's presence she declares her love and loyalty to him, and gives no encouragement to Mortimer's advances. Once she is

in France, however, she appears to feel that she has made an irrevocable break with the king. She then becomes Mortimer's whole-hearted accomplice, and involves Prince Edward as an unwilling and helpless tool of his ambition.

The front of legitimacy which Prince Edward's title to the throne affords only enhances the dishonesty of Isabella and Mortimer, who are concerned chiefly with their own domination and security. In the campaign against King Edward, for example, before the Spencers and Baldock have been seized and executed and ^{the} king transferred to Berkeley, Isabella and Mortimer keep up the pretense of seeking to right the wrongs the king has committed against their country and of freeing the court from unwise counsellors; but with the imprisonment of the king their pretense is dropped.

Mortimer: Fair Isabel, now have we our desire;
The proud corrupters of the light-brain'd king
Have done their homage to the gallows,
And he himself lies in captivity.
Be rul'd by me, and we will rule the realm.

(V, ii, 1 - 5)

Isabel: so that my son be safe,
Whom I esteem as dear as these mine eyes,
Conclude against his father what thou wilt,
And I myself will willingly subscribe.

(V, ii, 17 - 20)

Mortimer: First would I hear news he were depos'd,
And then let me alone to handle him.

(V, ii, 21 - 22)

There is a singular brutality and coarseness about that last line of Mortimer's, like the snarl of a beast full of unbridled savagery. The shield is down. Isabel should recoil; but she does not. On the contrary, interrupted by a messenger, she inquires with apparent sincerity about the health of the king; but when the Bishop of Winchester appears bearing the crown everything fades before her ambition.

Isabel: (To the messenger)
How fares my lord the king?

Messenger: In health, madam, but full of pensiveness.

Isabel: Alas, poor soul, would I could ease his grief.

(Enter the Bishop of Winchester with the crown)

Thanks, gentle Winchester.
(To the Messenger) Sirrah, be gone.

(V, ii, 24 - 27)

The appearance of the crown, visible symbol of power, explodes pretense, and the messenger of Edward is unceremoniously despatched. Isabel bursts into energetic action, she orders the young prince to be brought to her, and peremptorily demands a severer guard for the king. Inspired by her example,

Mortimer calls for Gurney and Mathevis to take charge of the king, and prepare his assassination. Before they arrive Isabel asks pointedly:

Isabel: But, Mortimer, as long as he (the king) survives,
What safety rests for us, or for my son?

Mortimer places it to her bluntly:

Speak, shall he presently be dispatch'd and die?

Isabel: I would he were, so it were not by my means.

(V, ii, 42 - 45)

Mathevis and Gurney carry on their diabolical task of trying to break down the mind and morale of the king; and Kent fails to free the king, is himself captured and sent to Mortimer.

Mortimer, meanwhile, is aware that the prince also is his enemy:

Mortimer: Yet he that is the cause of Edward's death,
Is sure to pay for it when his son is of age.

(V, iv, 4)

That second prosaic and pedestrain line jars as much as the cowardly thought it carries. Mortimer now resorts to cunning; and despatches the ambiguous Latin message to Gurney, inviting him to assassinate the king. And so we are led to Lightborn, called in by Mortimer to make sure the king is executed, and in a manner that will not reveal the cause of

death. Lightborn is "resolute", laughs at the suggestion that he might relent in face of the king, and boasts reassuringly to Mortimer:

You shall not need to give instructions;
'Tis not the first time I have killed a man.
I learned in Naples how to poison flowers;
To strangle with a lawn thrust through the throat;
To pierce the windpipe with a needle's point;
Or whilst one is asleep, to take a quill
And blow a little powder in the ears:
Or open his mouth and pour quicksilver down.
But yet I have a braver way than these.

(V, iv, 29 - 37)

Lightborn will not reveal his secret to the fascinated Mortimer. He is as good as his word, however, in the execution of the king, which he carries through with a perverse jauntiness and professional pride. He is, of course, assassinated by Gurney and Matrevis, upon orders from Mortimer, written in Latin, and brought by Lightborn himself.

The character of Mortimer is that of the romantic "Machiavellian" -- the individual seized and driven by an insatiable demand for power, rejoicing wickedly in each triumph, prepared to resort to any crime or deception, and meeting his end, cynically flinging a taunt, a boast or a curse. He is of the kind, though not of the rank in enormity, of Barabas.

The villain thus created and labelled Machiavellian by Marlowe became the prototype for villainy on the stage of

Elizabethan England. He appears to be the reflection of the fear and hatred of the excessively ambitious individual that haunted the minds of many in Elizabethan England, and particularly of those who championed the Tudor absolutism. Defined originally by the protagonists of medieval forms of government in their pamphlets and public denunciations of the new Tudor absolutism, he figured on the stage, when politically defined, as the enemy of the new renaissance absolute monarchy, as the irreconcilably ambitious noble, whose aim was selfish and whose object was oppression. Product of the disturbed conditions of the time, he was an extravagance and his career was brief.

Marlowe had certainly caught the essentially revolutionary quality of the conflict of his time, the desperation of the contenders and the irrevocability of the outcome of the contention. In the dramatic poems, Tamburlane, The Jew of Malta, and Dr. Faustus he depicted this essence in striking symbols from the field of war, of commerce and of learning, and in poetic and extravagantly dramatic terms had sown ambition gone wild. In Edward II in more moderate terms and with some regard for historical reality, he dramatized the triumph of monarchy over both the nobility as a class and over the

single man of ambition: the governing principle of the pre-eminence of the monarch was confirmed in the triumph of Edward II over the nobility; and the villainy of the insurgent noble was stressed in the degeneration and downfall of Mortimer.

Among the romantic Machiavellians of the Elizabethan stage, Shakespeare's Richard III holds a unique place. In the variety of ways in which he demonstrates ruthless self-assertion, he exceeds all other "Machiavellians" of the romantic school; while in the demonstration of a soul in the agony of self-knowledge and despair he does not fall short of Faustus in his final hour; but Richard's agony is rooted in real human dilemma and not in the conflict of the human soul torn between the powers of heaven and hell, or goaded by some driving passion. Richard comes to his position logically, and in freedom from infatuation; and in his pitiless self-examination ^{he} reveals a human conscience and modesty that is absent from other "Machiavellians".

Bowing to facts, not passions, Richard masters the art of unprincipled dissimulation and develops a nearly impervious self-assurance. In his dealings with women, old and young, in affairs of the heart and in affairs of state

he is the master psychologist and cynic. He can seduce a young woman with shameless art, as he does Lady Anne, break down with equally shameless equivocation the rooted hate of an outraged mother, as he does that of Queen Elizabeth, with exquisite aplomb outface every court schemer, triumphantly stage a transparently organized demonstration of public support, which fools no one and yet achieves its end, with finely tempered cynicism play so astute a politician as Buckingham until open contempt compels him to revolt. But in his exacting appreciation of his own skill, Richard reveals also an agonized disillusion. In triumphing over humanity he is breaking his own heart. He penetrates too deeply into the human soul, including his own, for his own peace of mind; he is too, too conscious of human frailty. After he has won Anne, he recoils upon his own achievement:

Richard: What! I, that killed her husband and his father.

To take her in her heart's extreme hate;
With curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes,
The bleeding witness of her hatred by;
Having God, her conscience, and these bars
 against me,
And I no friends to back my suit withal
But the plain devil and dissembling looks,
And yet to win her, -- all the world to nothing!
Ha!
Hath she forgot already that brave prince,
Edward, her lord, whom I, some three months since,

Stabbed in my angry mood at Tewksbury?
A sweeter and a lovelier gentleman--
Framed in the prodigality of nature,
Young, valiant, wise, and, no doubt,
 right royal --
The spacious world cannot again afford:
And will she yet abase her eyes on me,
That cropt the golden prime of this sweet
 prince,
And made her widow to a woful bed?
On me, whose all not equals Edward's moiety?
On me, that halt and am mis-shapen thus?
My dukedom to a beggarly denier,
I do mistake my person all this while:
Upon my life, she finds, although I cannot,
Myself to be a marvellous proper man.

(I, ii, 230-254)

The mockery of the inveterate realist seizes him. He will get a mirror; obviously he has failed to appreciate himself. He cries:

Shine out, fair sun, till I have bought a glass,
That I may see my shadow as it pass.

(I, ii, 262 - 263)

He triumphs as cruelly in his own discomfiture as he does in the discomfiture of his victims. As a close examination of his career will show, he stands apart from other romantic Machiavellians in the logic of his being. Other romantic Machiavellians exemplify excessive, irrational ambition, love of power, greed, pride; all are the victims of illusion, all are sealed up in egotism. Richard is denied the comfort of illusion; he is the victim of too clear a vision of the facts.

He is a man brimful of life, yet condemned by monstrous physical deformities to isolation from all the delights of love and sweet companionship. ^Misshapen in body, he is yet endowed with amazing physical and mental energy. A warrior of such outstanding ability that his father, the Duke of York, commends him above all his brothers for his prowess in battle, he is also intellectually the superior of all those with whom he associates. He is shrewd, quick-witted, sagacious, and above all a lover of action, mental and physical. While war rages he has full scope for his energies; but when peace spreads over the land he becomes a caged spirit, alien and alone.

Presented to us at first in the second part of Henry VI as one of Richard, Duke of York's valiant sons, he appears, until the humiliating death of his father at the hand of Queen Margaret and her followers, a high-spirited, shrewd and courageous youth. In the parliament scene, when the Duke of York has Henry VI at his mercy, Richard is urgent in his demand that York act to assert his advantage and claim the crown. When, under Queen Margaret's influence, Henry VI is moving to rescind his oath to recognize the Duke of York as heir to the throne, Richard is the one that supplies the

argument that would allow his father to enforce his title to the crown with a clear conscience. Finally, in the decisive battle between the Yorkists and the Lancastrians, Richard is the son who is represented as the fearless, tireless and generous fighter, seeking out his father's chief foes for battle, and coming again and again to the rescue of one or another of his father's leading allies. In Act I, scene 1 of the third part of Henry VI, the Duke of York says of him, "Richard hath best deserved of all my son^s". (I, 1, 17). Although he is the youngest, Richard has displayed more spectacular courage and greater initiative than have his elder brothers. He appears, indeed, more as the potential true Machiavellian prince than as the romantic villain.

While his father lives, indeed, Richard does nothing that suggests either the cripple or the criminal; and his grief at his father's death is impressive for its depth and sincerity, and for the determination he shows, above that of his brothers to take revenge upon those responsible for his father's humiliating end.

The change in Richard to inveterate self-seeking ambition, or romantic Machiavellianism, sets in with the marriage of Edward to Elizabeth Woodville, Lady Grey, and the ^rtendency Edward immediately displays to favor the members of her family

before his brothers. Edward endows his wife's brother with one of the greatest estates in the land, and makes the most advantageous marriages for her sons. Further, Edward so affronts Warwick, one of the most eminent and powerful lords of England, by his marriage, that sharp criticism is evoked from both Clarence and Richard. Underlying Richard's turn away from loyalty to his family then, is his brother, Edward's own treason to his family, and the certainty that Edward's marriage renders irrational any hope Richard might harbor of inheriting the throne, or of long enjoying the advantages of his birth.

The remarkably human penetration and realism of Richard's thinking, which distinguishes him from other Machiavellians of the romantic school, now appear. Facing the facts of Edward's marriage and his favoritism for the Rivers family, Richard considers the alternative ways of life lying open to him. Bereft of power, he sees himself also, by the harsh hand of nature, bereft of all the attributes that make love and the pleasures of company attainable. He is a cripple. Ruthlessly he catalogues his deformities: a withered arm, a hunched back, unequal legs; and he laughs

to scorn dreams of being beloved. Nature, he notes mockingly, had disproportioned him in every part. And he comes to his conclusion:

Then, since this earth affords no joy to me,
But to command, to check, to o'erbear such
As are of better person than myself,
I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown,
And whiles I live t'account this world but hell,
Until my misshaped trunk that bears this head,
Be round impaled with a glorious crown.

(III Henry VI, III, ii, 165-171)

Behind Richard's determined fight for power, then, lies despair of inheriting the crown, a justifiable resentment against Edward's betrayal of his brothers' interests, and despair of personal happiness. His misanthropy thus has a keenly felt and natural explanation. His isolation from all human attachment eats into him, until the triumph of his abilities alone seems to him to offer consolation. He becomes, as it were, a spectator of his own "policy", appreciating, if not enjoying the success of his subtleties, cruelties and stratagems. His art of dissimulation, as he himself claims, is supreme; for it is clear that he imposes himself upon others as thoughtful, gracious, soft-hearted, ingenuous or pious, as he chooses to represent himself.

Just as his exacting examination of himself, which

drove him to the conclusion that happiness was not for him, revealed in him the presence of a natural hope of happiness, so the existence in him of the possibility of goodness is suggested in the confusion into which he falls after his gruelling argument with Queen Elizabeth over his desire to make suit to her daughter. Elizabeth turns every shaft of deceit, hypocrisy or equivocation that he hurls, exposing his dishonesty relentlessly; so that when she finally agrees to try to influence her daughter in his favor, she has left him stripped of every pretense.

Following upon this interview, Richard receives a succession of messengers all bringing bad news. Apparently unnerved, he issues contradictory orders, or fails to give necessary instructions. Although his recovery is rapid, one feels that his shell of indifference has been penetrated by Elizabeth's sharp rejoinders, for it is not consistent with his character that merely bad news should frighten him. Danger but threatens yet, and up to this point danger has never dismayed him; nor does he in the end allow even the terrors of his ghostly visitations to rob him of his readiness for battle. On the contrary, Richard argues with himself in a very natural though desperate manner, following

the visitation of the ghosts. Unlike other romantic Machiavel-
lians, he voices not the outcry of a tormented soul fearing
hell but that of the miserable and isolated individual, con-
scious of complete friendlessness. He cries out, "Have
mercy, Jesu ! ", but this is an exclamation of habit; it is
his behaviour among men that bothers him.

Richard: O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!
For a moment he allows the color of the light to frighten him;
it is blue, reputedly the sign of the presence of an evil
spirit. But he does not spend a moment on the supernatural.
"What do I fear?", he asks. There is no one by; no one but
himself; and he loves himself. But there is a murderer by;
himself; there is a perjurer by: himself; there is a villain
guilty of a thousand sins; himself. His relentlessly real-
istic and rational mind will not allow himself ex^scape from
a single accusation; nor will it allow himself to deny his
continuing self-love, even though he is without pity for
himself in his deep misery.

There is no creature loves me
is his last desperate conclusion.

When Ratcliff enters his tent to waken him, he leaps in terror.

Zounds! Who is there?

His first concern then is to sound out the loyalty of his supporters. Will they prove true? He doubts it, and sets out, therefore, with Ratcliff to eavesdrop on his army, and returning, wants corroboration from Ratcliff upon what they have overheard. He allows himself to acquiesce, in an almost simple-minded fashion, in the report that Richmond knows nothing of warfare; and then lets himself fall into wondering if the dull weather is ominous. Norfolk's call to arms, however, brings him to action at once, as though he were relieved to be required to do something. His orders are decisive and commanding; his self-assurance revives, and his address to his troops is full of scorn for the enemy. One feels, however, that he knows he is doomed, but that he will go down fighting, and enjoying the battle.

No other Machiavellian of the romantic type gives so natural an explanation of his behaviour. Each is obsessed with the love of power; but no other is so clearly denied by nature and circumstance all alternatives to despair. Richard

sees himself in hell, in a land of briars, lost, alone, cut off from all but the resources of his own being, and doomed to suffer torment in hacking his way to the object that alone promises reward -- the crown. He can sit down and weep, or he can fight. He chooses to fight; and to fight when his own common sense tells him he is irrational.

His recital of the attributes his role requires pictures the Machiavellian as Gentillet defined him, and as Barabas demonstrated him:

Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile;
And cry 'Content' to that which grieves my heart;
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions:
I'll drown more sailors than the mermaids shall;
I'll slay more gazers than the basilisk;
I'll play the orator as well as Nestor;
Deceive more sily than Ulysses could;
And, like a Sinon, take another Troy:
I can add colours to the chameleon;
Change places with Proteus for advantages;
And set the murderous Machiavel to school.
Can I do this and cannot get a crown?

(III Henry VI, III, ii, 182 - 194) ¹⁰

Although Richard falls, in his completely unregenerate character, into the pattern of the Machiavellian villain set by Marlowe, he manages to remain convincingly human, and free

¹⁰) William Shakespeare, "Henry VI, Part III", Works, 1938.

from the diabolical gloating^{of} Barabas or even Tamburlane. Perhaps this is because Shakespeare dealt so deeply in the human heart as it warmly beats and throbs, and because he was reincarnating an historical character apparently for a practical reason -- the discrediting of the last of the Yorkist kings. Certain it is that the character of Richard III convincingly suggests the kind of mental turmoil conceivably accompanying the career of a real tyrant who, like Agathocles, Oliverotto da Fermo, or Severus, all referred to by Machiavelli, commanded admiration for their courage and their craft, but merited infamy only for the sterility of their object.

Richard, like all Machiavellians of the romantic school, falls through the excess of his own cruelties and frauds. In the completeness of his characterization, he is the counterpart, as in his qualities as a ruler he is the antitheses of Henry V, Shakespeare's supreme representation of the true Machiavellian. Both are isolated, resolute individuals; but the one is isolated and motivated by despair; the other by the greatness of his conception of the responsibilities of the individual called to the exercise of power.

Chapter V

Real Machiavellianism -- Ben Jonson

If our stage Machiavellian villain proves himself villain to the true Machiavellian, must it be concluded that the stage of Elizabethan England failed entirely to reflect the concept of the prince and politic behaviour as Machiavelli intended them to be understood? Irving Ribner, writing upon the influence of Machiavelli on Sidney ¹, expresses the opinion that

"His (Machiavelli's) ideas were a pervasive influence in Elizabethan thought and will, upon investigation, be no doubt found reflected in the works of many of the other writers of the age....." 2

It will be the purpose of this chapter to demonstrate that a genuine appreciation of the political outlook expressed by Machiavelli did indeed find expression in the plays contemporary with those of Marlowe, or following closely after

1) Irving Ribner, "Machiavelli and Sidney: The Arcadia of 1950," Studies in Philology, The University of North Carolina Press, 1949.

2) Ibid. - p. 172

them.

First of the great Elizabethan dramatists, Marlowe, initiated the tradition of distorted Machiavellianism; last of the great Elizabethan dramatists, Ben Jonson dramatized the political intrigues of ancient Rome with an eye that measured the participants with an objectivity almost as detached as that of Machiavelli, and with an appreciation for skilful manoeuvring on a par with his.

In the two frankly political plays by Jonson, Sejanus (1603) and Catiline His Conspiracy (1611) the lines frequently are paraphrases of the statements of Machiavelli, and the passions and personalities reveal themselves consistently in political situations.

Sejanus tells the story of the political association and rivalry of two powerful men in the Roman state: Tiberius, the emperor, and his favourite, Sejanus, a man of common birth, but experienced in the affairs of Rome and raised by the emperor to a position of influence in the Roman state. The chief protagonist is Sejanus, whose ambition to succeed Tiberius initiates the action of the play and provokes into motion the political talent of the emperor whose decline into idleness and debauchery has not robbed him of his state-

craft.

The action of the play takes place in a period of political corruption. Popular discontent and disapproval of the emperor have produced adherents for the cause of the house of Germanicus, next in line for the imperial crown. The play, therefore, opens to the audience political Rome, seething with intrigue and unrest, and festering with corruption and debauchery.

A group of citizens innocent of acts against the emperor, but critical of him, and in sympathy with the claims of the house of Germanicus to the succession, is the conscience of the play; and, appearing as part of the crowd, or meeting in the palace or on the streets, points the moral.

In Act I, scene I, one of these, Sabinus, forecasts the outcome of events:

Sabinus: Tyrants' arts
Are to give flatterers grace; accusers power;
That those may seem to kill whom they devour.

(I, 1, 70 - 72) 3

This is precisely the theme of the play; it is also, in

3) Ben Jonson, "Sejanus", Ben Jonson, Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1932, Vol. 4.

brief Machiavelli's advice on conspiracies ⁴, and on the prince's need for executioners to take responsibility for acts of violence and repression in the interests of the state. ⁵ Tiberius, the apparently unwary, and certainly the dissolute prince, plays with the aspiring Sejanus as a cat plays with a mouse. He meets subtlety with subtlety, dissembling with dissembling, cruelty with cruelty, and proves himself in the end the stronger.

Jonson's character-drawing and unfolding of plot are in the realistic vein of Machiavelli. Sejanus, the would-be usurper, in full career toward the imperial title, has been appointed the emperor's deputy at Rome during the absence of Tiberius. He is taking this opportunity to sell offices and favors, and bribe the guard as a means of building a personal following while he secretly prepares to bring about the death of the emperor's son and heir, Drusus, and to marry Drusus' wife.

People, advanced from obscurity, Machiavelli and history had warned, and promoted to power by the favor of a prince, develop, not gratitude, but ambition. ⁶ Such people must be

4) Niccolo Machiavelli, The Discourses, III, vi, 434-435

5) Raleigh is quoted by Strathmann, Sir Walter Raleigh, as referring to this maxim, p. 164; also The Prince, xix, 82.

6) The Discourses, III, 414-415

allowed to imagine that their schemes are succeeding so long as he against whom the conspiracy is directed cannot with safety act against them. While appearing not to know of the conspiracy, the threatened prince must initiate counter-measures secretly; and when the time is ripe, act with dispatch against it.⁷ This, Tiberius does, feeding Sejanus with hopes and continued favors until the moment of his exposure and execution.

Jonson, an intellectual egotist, as an artist self-consciously dramatizes his learning and his ideas. He pointedly introduces Tiberius to the audience as a dissembler; Tiberius first appears on the stage ostentatiously refusing to be treated as a god and protesting that he is the servant of the senate. That his duplicity may be fully appreciated by the audience, Jonson has his bystanders, Cordus and Arruntius remark:

Cordus: Rarely dissembled!

Arruntius: Prince-like to the life.

(I, 395)

It is thus made indisputably clear that in Tiberius one has the "politicke prince", cautious, cunning and fully aware of the dangers of his position; and the battle of wits proceeds

7) The Discourses, III, 434-435.

between Sejanus and the emperor with the audience keyed to appreciate the duel of wits.

In the scene between Tiberius and Sejanus (Act II, Sc. II) in which Tiberius skilfully uses Sejanus' own ambition to prompt him to recommend the extermination of the Germanici, the house next in line after Tiberius' son for the imperial title, the arguments for ruthless action put so bluntly in Chapter XVIII of The Prince, are reviewed:

Tiberius: When the master prince
 Of all the world, Sejanus, saith he fears,
 Is it not fatal?

Sejanus: Yes, to those are feared.

Tiberius: And not to him?

Sejanus: Not, if he wisely turn
 That part of fate he holdeth, first on them.

Tiberius: That, nature, blood, and laws of kind forbid.

Sejanus: Do policy and state forbid it?

Tiberius: No.

Sejanus: The rest of poor respects, then let go by;
 State is enough to make the act just, them guilty.

Tiberius: Long hate pursues such acts.

Sejanus: Whom hatred frights,
 Let him not dream on sovereignty.

Tiberius: Are rites
 Of faith, love, piety, to be trod down,
 Forgotten, and made vain?

Sejanus: All for a crown.

(II, 178 - 185)

This is sound Machiavellian sentiment up to a point; but the lines immediately following show that Jonson, like so many others, has overlooked the qualifying restraints that Machiavelli urges upon the prince that would win security and lasting fame instead of the name of tyrant.⁸ Jonson shows that he is discussing tyranny and not princely rule of a beneficent type when he has Sejanus continue:

The prince who shames a tyrant's name to bear
Shall never dare do any thing, but fear;
All the command of sceptres quite doth perish,
If it begins religious thoughts to cherish:
Whole empires fall, sway'd by those nice respects;
It is the license of dark deeds protects
Ev'n states most hated, when no laws resist
The sword, but that it acteth what it list.

(II, 178 - 185)

Tyranny, Machiavelli understood as the sacrifice of public welfare and state security to personal interest; Tiberius and Sejanus are obviously speaking as tyrants who are indifferent to the hatred of the people and rest, or propose to rest their power entirely on force and without regard to law. As has been shown, Machiavelli regarded tyranny as the evil side of princely rule, as princely rule in a state of decadence and

8) The Prince, XVII, 74.

doomed to suffer disaster through the loss of the support of the people.

The conversation of Tiberius and Sejanus continues, cold-blooded, self-interested and calculating on both sides, Tiberius leading Sejanus on by a pretended mildness to demand ever more stringent measures against the Germanici. He causes Sejanus at length to expose his own ambition to do away with possible rivals.

Using the arguments approved by Machiavelli Sejanus points out that to compass the downfall of the rival Germanici, Tiberius must advance them, make them believe that they are more favored and secure than ever. Then, having won over one or two of their supporters to act as witnesses against them, he should expose them and execute them. Tiberius pretends to be hesitant and asks if people cannot be won by benefits. Sejanus, as would Machiavelli, remarks that the wolf cannot be won away from his nature and that benefits do not make people loyal.

Pursuing the policy, advocated by Sejanus himself, of giving his secret enemy enough rope to hang himself, Tiberius accepts the proposal that he go on a journey from Rome. Before leaving, however, he carefully takes stock of his position, and appoints Macro, a notoriously unscrupulous schemer and

criminal to remain in Rome as his spy, to watch the movements of Sejanus. Tiberius' reflections here are frequently those expressed in Machiavelli.

Thus Machiavelli notes:

"A prince, therefore should never bestow so much authority upon his friends but that there should always be a certain distance between them and himself, and that there should always be something left for them to desire; otherwise they will almost invariably become victims of their own imprudence,...." 9

Compare this statement with Tiberius' reflection:

Tiberius: 'Tis then a part of supreme skill to grace
No man too much; but hold a certain space
Between the ascender's rise, and thine own flat,
Lest when all round be reach'd, his aim be that.

(III, 643 -646)

Machiavelli says:

"These (conspiracies) I say, have generally for their originators the great men of the state, or those on terms of familiar intercourse with the prince. None other, unless they are madmen, can engage in conspiracies; for men of low condition, who are not intimate with the prince have no chance of success, not having the necessary convenience for the execution of their plots". 10

Comments Tiberius:

Tiberius: Those are the dreadful enemies we raise
With favours, and make dangerous with praise;

9) The Discourses, III, vi, 415.
10) The Discourses, III, vi, 413-441.

The injured by us may have will alike,
But 'tis the favourite hath the power to strike;

(III, 637 - 640)

The Parallel here is so close as to make one suspect Jonson had recently read Machiavelli.

The duel of wit and intrigue between Tiberius and Sejanus moves to its climax in a welter of trickery and double-dealing. Sejanus, through his agent, Latiaris, tricks Sabinus, a supporter of the Germanici, into a treasonable utterance against Tiberius, and has him arrested. He further incites the ambition of Agrippina's sons, Nero and Drusus, stirring them to mutual suspicion, and to impatience with the emperor. Caligula, the third son of Agrippina, alone escapes capture by Sejanus' agents by throwing himself on the mercy of the emperor.

Meanwhile the emperor, Tiberius, has been demonstrating his skill in confusing the minds of men.¹¹ He issues contradictory orders, promotes both friends and enemies of Sejanus, issues and cancels instructions in rapid succession, and creates amongst the people generally and those who serve him the greatest consternation and uncertainty. Sejanus, however, appears to continue a triumphal advance. Lepidus sees in

11) The Prince, xviii, 74

As Tiberius had failed to act with this discretion, and had lost the hearts of the common people, he had just cause to fear conspiracies ¹⁵, and was forced to resort to delay, subtleties and manoeuvring to ready himself to break the assault of Sejanus.. He also undertook, according to Lepidus, to bring hatred upon Sejanus by giving him unpopular tasks to fulfil, honoring the principle that

"...princes should dispatch those things by their deputies which will move envie..." ¹⁶

^{soliloquy}
~~colloquy~~ The success of the art of Tiberius appears in Sejanus' ~~colloquy~~ with which Act V begins. Sejanus is quite overpowered with elation:

.....at each step, I feel my advanced head
Knock out a star in heaven.

(V, 8 - 9)

Sejanus is now impatient for more obstacles to overcome, so that his capacities may be worthily tried and proven, for even the attainment of the imperial crown now seems hardly enough. Touched now with extravagance, he is the familiar vaunting hero-villain of the plays of Marlowe; and the audience is prepared for his destruction. He is, one should note,

15) The Prince, xix, 80.

16) Ibid. xix, 82

built upon but one of the types of men seeking power, and not the one that Machiavelli held up as the model prince.

The unrolling of the plot exposes Sejanus as an atheist, who scoffs at auguries and questions the power of all the gods save Fortune; and when Fortune averts her face, scorns even her. He prepares to advance to his object by his own powers alone. His credulity, however, is as great as his conceit. When, for example, he learns that a special senate has been called without his knowledge, fear stabs him to the heart; but he recovers self-assurance instantly upon being informed by his enemy, Macro, that the emperor's purpose is to raise him to still higher office.

The depth of the corruption of the state in which Sejanus and Tiberius flourish, is exposed by Macro's midnight missions throughout Rome on the eve of the special senate meeting. Now it is shown that the officials, soldiers and common lackeys that could be bought by Sejanus are equally open to the appeal of Macro's bribery and the terror of imperial reprisal. Scenes ii, iii, v, vi, vii, and viii of Act V usher before the audience a milling, swift-moving throng of servants and messengers, consuls and other agents of the government, mostly under the direction of Macro, bearing letters or whispered

messages about to supporters of both sides in the contest for power. They appear as the very embodiment of Jonson's incredible ability to contrive the most complex network of rivalries. Their work leaves the stage set for the climax of Sejanus' career, as duped, trapped and deprived of all support he stands helpless and exposed before the senate.

The letter which the praetor reads out to the senate in the last act of the play would do honour to Machiavelli himself. Reeking of false modesty, flattery and insincere concern for the people, the letter successfully guides the corrupt senators into assuming responsibility for the destruction of Sejanus. Skilfully it enlists the senators' sympathy and pity for the absent emperor, and promotes in them satisfaction with themselves as guardians of the state. Tiberius' professed leniency towards those who slander him relieves from fear each one who has thought critically of him; while his promise of severity towards serious offenders unites all who are innocent of conspiracy in his support. Having thus prepared the senators, the letter raises the name of Sejanus, reminds the senators of the honor and power to which he has been advanced, apologises for the possibility that the emperor has been too generous,

and expresses the hope that Sejanus may have proved deserving. It then admits that the emperor has possibly endangered himself and even offended some by so preferring Sejanus. It then expresses the emperor's regret that Sejanus has been so ruthless toward the house of Germanicus, noting that this cruelty makes it impossible for the emperor now to exercise clemency, except by appearing weary of violence. The letter then suggests that some people might think Sejanus was seeking his own ends in

"...the strengths he hath made to himself, by the praetorian soldiers, by his faction in court and senate, by the offices he holds himself, and confers on others, his popularity and dependents, his urging and almost driving us to this our unwilling retirement, and lastly, his aspiring to be our son-in-law".

(V, 590 - 595)

Thus smoothly but indisputably are the damning charges laid, and the illusion of further promotion torn from Sejanus' eyes.

The letter then declares it leaves the matter to the judgment of the senators, but remarks that to the emperor it appears "most malicious".

(V 600)

Tiberius then, through the letter, electrifies the senate with the news of Sejanus' audacious demand for marriage with

Livia, and announces that he has witnesses to prove his charge. The letter ends on a note of weariness and doubt and disappointment, declaring that, while the emperor is not anxious to change his favor, he must be guided by the interest of the state, and the knowledge that princes must beware for their safety, not so much of humble people but of the great. The letter then demands the removal of Sejanus from all offices, and the suspension of his powers until a trial is held. It emphasizes, however, that the emperor does not wish to limit the authority of the senate should they think that the property of Sejanus should be confiscated, and then it hardens the hearts of the senators against Sejanus by explaining that the emperor dare not be present with them at the trial both because he does not wish to sway their minds, and because, if a powerful faction does, in fact, exist, he would be greatly endangered by coming from his retirement. The letter concludes by urging the senators not to hurt the innocent by sparing the guilty, and remarks, "how grateful a sacrifice to the gods is the life of an ingrateful person".

(V, 643 - 644)

This letter rests upon all the basic assumptions about men voiced by Machiavelli. It assumes men to be inconstant,

dishonest, self-seeking, fearful and easily flattered and eager for revenge. It invokes the principle of enlisting others to execute the harsh measures one proposes, and plays upon their envy. It demonstrates how skilfully Tiberius has acted upon the principle of decoying an enemy before springing the trap on him. It appears indeed that Tiberius knows well that

"...still he had beste successe in his affayres that had best skill to playe the foxe, and by fayninge and dissemblinge to sett a fayre varnishe on his fowle vice, for men generallie are soe simple, and soe much geeven to their present affairs, that a deceaver that can cunninglie counterfeite his purpose, shall never wante subjectes on whom he may practise his skill". 17

He further is aware that

"A prince shoulde observe with all dilligence and care that noe woorde sholde passe his mouthe that did not savour of one of these five quallities before mencioned, and wheresoever he were seene or hearde, he should seeme with greate reverence to extoll and imbrase Pittie, Fayth Honestie Courtesie & Religion...." 18

The letter is Machiavellianism: a technique of persuasion that by flattery, insinuation, open promises and veiled threats

17) The Prince, xviii, 76

18) Ibid. xviii, 77

compels acquiescence in an event or a proposal. Jonson's mind like that of Machiavelli saw things objectively and coolly; it estimated men by their acts and their acts by their circumstances.

The materialist approach to events is illustrated in the fate of the various characters of the play. The Germanici fail because they seek to honor an ideal of respect for the ruling prince; Tiberius' success stems from his correct estimation of the needs for retaining state power in a corrupt society, and his ability to manipulate people. Sejanus errs when he fails to perceive that circumstances and political convenience, not ability on his part, are basically responsible for his triumphs. When he becomes a victim of self-love and of a belief in fate, he is doomed. Tiberius never loses his objectivity, even when he cannot be certain that Sejanus is not aiming at his life.

Catiline His Conspiracy¹⁹ (1611) dramatizes the conflict that arose when a republic was falling into decline. Its two chief characters are Catiline and Cicero, the leader on the one hand of the insurgent, dispossessed nobil-

19) Ben Jonson, "Catiline His Conspiracy", Ben Jonson, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1932, Vol. V.

ity, adventurers and malcontents of various status, and, on the other hand the champion of republican principles of government.

Catiline himself seems to be a composite figure, part Senecan revenger, and part the man of excessive ambition and unlicensed passion so often appearing as the romantic Machiavellian. The object of his uprising is purely destructive; it is the burning and the sack of Rome for the private enrichment of Catiline and those who adhere to him; it is loot and personal revenge for loss of property, prestige and public power. When, in spite of the backing of Caesar, Crassus, Catullus and the nobility in general, Catiline is defeated in the contest for the consulship, the spirit of fury and destruction, breathed into him in the opening of the play by the ghost of Sylla, takes command of him, and he finds himself incapable of accepting the popular vote. Irrepressible ambition to conquer and take revenge consumes him. He will burn all, reduce his city, Rome, to ashes, kill without cease before he will bend his will to ^{that of} the common sort.

Speaking of Catiline, whose plot is reported to him by

This is Machiavelli's argument of the time and the man meeting to resolve chaos; the idea that opportunity must exist for talent to realise itself in the promotion of the welfare of the individual and the advancement of the country. That the term virtue is used in the sense in which Machiavelli employed it is further shown in another passage.

Sempronia: ...the patricians should do very ill
To let the consulship be defiled
As't would be, if he (Cicero) obtain'd it!
a mere upstart
That has no pedigree, no house, no coat,
No ensign of a family!

Fulvia: He has virtue.

[illegible]

Fulvia: 'Twas virtue only, at first, made all
men noble.

Sempronia: I yield you... ..
but now we have no need
 To dig, or lose our sweat fort. We have
 wealth:
 Fortune, and ease; and then their stock to
 spend on,
 'Gainst all new comers, and can never fail
 us,
 While the succession stays.

(II, 117 - 135)

Obviously virtue here is that initiative, energy, aggressiveness and resourcefulness that accumulates wealth and power, and that to Machiavelli ^{were} ~~was~~ the marks of the great.

Immediately upon his election Cicero places before the people his understanding of the situation in Rome. He tells them that he believes the proud and envious nobles have allowed his election to take place because of the vexing and perplexing problems that face Rome, and he calls upon the people to be vigilant against --

some turbulent practices
Already on foot, and rumours of more dangers,

(III, 51 - 52)

He then sets about to demonstrate his own resourcefulness and capacity for action as the competent ruler. He enlists supporters from the ranks of the conspirators to act as spies for him. He moves slowly and with caution, mobilizing his own forces before he publicly exposes Catiline at a senate meeting, where he forces him into voluntary exile. He divides the ranks of the conspirators, by showing clemency to the lesser offenders, and by judiciously failing to force the secret backers of Catiline amongst the nobles into the open, thus affording them opportunity, as the plot is progressively exposed, to safely withdraw themselves from association with it. Skilfully he retains his popular support, and in the end sends the heads of the conspiracy to death with the approval of the senate and the consent of the other consul

who at no time is an adherent of Cicero, and who in the presence of a less accomplished, or "pòlitic" man, might have become the agent of the conspirators. Not once does he surrender objectivity to sentiment.

Cicero, further, is aided in his manoeuvring by differences among the conspirators. Cethegus, the military man, is for headlong action; Catiline, Lentulus and others favor more considered development of the plot.

Cicero's "politic" approach is illustrated in the manner in which he handles the consul, Antonius, his colleague. Although Antonius is not part of the conspiracy, Cicero knows that he is not hostile to it. He, therefore, calls him in, after Curius, one of the conspirators, has reported details of Catiline's plans. With the object of forestalling the possibility of Antonius becoming part of the plot, Cicero decides to show him special favor and bestow benefits upon him.

Cicero: He (Antonius) is a man 'gainst whom I must
 proffide
That, as he'll do no good he'll do no harm.
He, though he be not of the plot, will like it,
And wish it should proceed; for, unto men
Prest with their wants, all change is ever welcome,
I must with offices and patience win him,
Make him by art that which he is not born.

A friend unto the public, and bestow
The province on him, which is by the senate
Decreed to me; that benefit will bind him:
'Tis well, if some men will do well for price;
So few are virtuous when the reward's away.

(III, 469 - 480)

The reasoning of Cicero here follows that of Machiavelli, both in its general tone, and in the specific arguments it pursues, as, for example, that men welcome change as a possible means of improving their fortunes, and that they may be bought by favors.

Enough has been said of Machiavelli's philosophy and of his analysis of politics and the problems and dangers of conspiracies to enable a reader to appreciate the similarity of the thought in the following passage:

Caesar: (To Catiline)

Be resolute,
And put your enterprise in act. The more
Actions of depth and danger are consider'd,
The less assuredly they are perform'd:
And thence it happeneth, that the bravest plots,
Not executed straight, have been discover'd.
Say, you are constant, another, a third,
Or more; there may be yet one wretched spirit
With whom the fear of punishment shall work
'Bove all the thoughts of honour and revenge.
You are not now to think what's best to do,
As in the beginnings, but what must be done,
Being thus enter'd: and slip no advantage
That may secure you. Let them call it mischief;
When it is past, and prosper'd, 'twill be virtue.
They're petty crimes are punish'd, great rewarded.
Nor must you think of peril, since attempts
Begun in danger, still do end with glory;

And, when need spurs, despair will be call'd wisdom.
Less ought the care of men, or fame to fright you;
For they that win, do seldom receive shame
Of victory, howe'er it be achieved;
And vengeance, least: for who, besieged with wants,
Would stop at death, or anything beyond it?
Come, there was never any great thing yet
Aspired, but by violence or fraud:
And he that sticks for folly of a conscience
To reach it --

(III, 491 - 518)

Catiline, however he may have received Caesar's advice, does not act on it; for the dangers, of which Machiavelli warned, do not escape the plotters. The conspirators fight among themselves over the time to act, the method they should pursue, and over who should kill Cicero. They are informed upon by turncoats (Curius, Crassus, Caesar); they include too many in their confidence, and are betrayed by those not sworn to the plot (the Allobroges); their plans are revealed through the confidences of lovers (Curius and Fulvia); their action is delayed by endless conferences; they expose themselves by committing their scheme to paper (the letter to the Allobroges and the letter from Lentulus to Crassus) and their sympathisers in high places are won away from them by bribery (the consul, Antonius). Their final folly, according to Machiavelli, is that their action is directed against a man and a government that has the full support of the people.

When the complete picture of the conspiracy has been gathered into his hands, Cicero acts. He takes measures for his own personal security as well as for that of the republic. He calls in his kinsmen as guards to his house, and closes the house to all visitors; by doing so, he outwits the conspirators who send Vargunteius and Cornelius, with others, to his home with the purpose, under pretext of a visit on business, of assassinating him. Keeping himself securely under guard, Cicero goes about to arrange a senate meeting, where he presents the evidence he has against Catiline and his associates, and proposes banishment as their sentence. Supported by all, he forces Catiline into voluntary exile, while the alarmed and grateful people vote Cicero sole consul of Rome for the period of danger that faces them.

The battle is not yet over, however. The republic is not yet secure. Catiline, as resolute as ever, leaves Rome to mobilize an army while his followers within Rome continue their work of propaganda and subversion. The blow that Cicero has dealt the conspirators, however, proves crippling. Enthusiasm flags, mistakes increase, defections grow.

The play concludes with Cicero's able organization of the seizure of the conspirators left in Rome, and the despatch of

two armies against Catiline's forces.

In both of these plays Jonson pursues an interest and a line of action that closely parallels those that pre-occupied Machiavelli. He is in each play concerned with politics in a corrupt state, a topic with which Machiavelli dealt as a specific aspect of power. In Sejanus, Jonson exposes the effort of a commoner raised to prominence by the favor of the prince to seize the imperial crown from his patron; and in Catiline His Conspiracy, his topic is the desperate attempt of a noble to overturn the state for the personal gain and freedom from restraint of himself and a crowd of dissolute retainers and hangers-on. His chief characters, Sejanus and Tiberius, and Catiline and Cicero are drawn with a political emphasis and understanding reminiscent of the approach of Machiavelli, many passages of the play are so close in thought and form to passages in Machiavelli as to suggest a recent reading of the works of the Italian writer, and the logic of the action of the plays conforms to that which underlies the careers of the princes considered by Machiavelli. The parallel between the political plays of Jonson and the philosophy of Machiavelli, indeed, seems founded upon a similarity of outlook - a worldly, indulgent

and cynical view of men in their public activities -- and a common scholarly interest in and admiration for the achievements of ancient Rome. This lends to Jonson's plays an overall mood and tone that is truly Machiavellian, and a frequent appearance in his dialogue of what amounts to paraphrasing of Machiavellian sentiment. In this Jonson's work is distinct from that of Marlowe whose understanding of Machiavelli asserts itself only spasmodically against the pre-eminently romantic trend of his thought and interpretation of life, and from that of Shakespeare who selects with exquisite precision the essence of the key figure Machiavelli sought to elaborate -- the constructive, forward-looking, and unfailingly realistic prince.

Chapter V - Part II

Real Machiavellianism - William Shakespeare.

One can discuss the influence of ideas on art pedantically, insisting that words are the origin of ideas, and that the influence of idea on an artist can be shown only by reference to chapter and verse. The substance of thought, however, is experience; and whether one evolves thought through communication or through direct experience, it is life that confirms and quickens one's conclusion. In every age, scholars have discussed the philosophies of the time as if they derived from the writings or pronouncements of this, that or the other individual. Looking a little deeper, however, one can discern that the thoughts of individuals are the products of association in the common life of society; that ideas are a reflection of social activity, and that labelling philosophies after individuals is not unlike naming diseases and processes after the scientists who made the first useful diagnosis of them. Philosophies are as much the creation

of individuals as are the diseases; they had their being among men before the thinker conceived his thesis. Naming philosophies after individuals is justified to the extent that the particular individual so honored more precisely, more succinctly, more usefully summarized and expounded the experience represented in the thought than did others: this is his contribution, that he formulated experience in words that made available to workers in the field discussed a ready-made tool, even as the medical scientist by his diagnosis affords medical investigators and practitioners an instrument which simplifies their task of research and of healing.

In his works Machiavelli reflected with crystal clarity the politics of his time, and gave to politicians an exact text-book of their craft. In Machiavelli is expressed the political consequences of the diffusion of initiative that accompanied the disintegration of feudal corporate society and that imposed upon the individual the necessity to grapple directly and alone with the problems of survival. Machiavelli defined what his contemporaries were being compelled by circumstances to practice; and he raised to the sphere of conscious controversy the principles upon which

the political practise of his era rested. The reflection of those principles in works of art might derive either directly from the artist's experience or from acquaintance with Machiavelli's writings, or from both. If the artist's glance were of a kind and as penetrating as that of Machiavelli his work would reincarnate the world as Machiavelli saw it. Machiavellianism was the reflection of the materialist and naturalist attitude to power that underlay the politics of the renaissance.

Artistic reaction to the political-religious polemics in which the name of Machiavelli figured emerged, naturally enough, at the peak of Elizabeth's reign, when the logical consequences of the Tudor renaissance policy threatened finally to subordinate the feudal to the modern world, and the prince, as the embodiment of authority, became vital as the agent of reconciliation and continuity between the passing and the rising society. As has been shown, Marlowe endowed the usurping prince and the unrestrained self-seeker as his counterpart among common men with diabolical qualities. More realistically, Jonson portrayed the conniving prince, both in power and in the ascent to power, rationally, with the scholar's judicious and detached appreciation of the deceptions, illusions and affectations of ambitious people; while he

showed in his treatment of Cicero that he understood the republican potentialities of the strong, wise and popular prince. Shakespeare placed upon the stage as in life the true renaissance prince as Machiavelli analysed him; and in treating of the usurper whose aim was tyranny, he couched his analysis in terms of the real, the credible, the human, the natural; and confessed recognition of the inescapable agony and dilemma of the traditionalist in an era of revolutionary change.

In the Henry VI plays Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, is pictured by Shakespeare as a great prince, the likeness of whom to the hero of Machiavelli is striking. The Duke of York not only sees himself as the man born with ability to rule, but he demonstrates in all his acts a shrewdness and resourcefulness that places him always in the position of command.

Inspired by the tumult and chaos of England under Henry VI, Richard puts forward his claim to the throne of England. He is introduced to the audience challenging his companions to question the legitimacy of his claim to power. He speaks decisively, demandingly, as one who, convinced of the necessity to act, required³ a declaration from his asso-

ciates. Forthright and imperative, he is nevertheless ready to listen to others, to keep silent when necessary and ^{to} remain~~ing~~ patient. He knows when to demand and when to ask, and how to be soft-spoken and mild. He has respect for the law and for his supporters both of gentle and of common birth, as well as for the great nobles who support him. He is a good general. He is valiant, passionately fond of his country and tender of her prestige abroad; he is skilful in his resort to strategy and duplicity; he has a sharp wit. He is capable of tremendous passions, but he can exercise self-control. He is ruthlessly realistic, can be suave and politic, and is unflinching in dangerous situations in which dignity, daring and eloquence can be as decisive for security as the sword. He is feared and respected by the people, with whom he is popular; and he sees himself as the restorer of order and good government in England.

This Machiavellian of Shakespeare's honors Machiavelli's principle that the new prince, if he has widsom, "shall seeme as though he came by the estate by anciente inheritaunce..."¹

1) The Prince, XXIV, pp. 108 - 109.

and is concerned to establish his right to rule by birth, although he, like Machiavelli, feels that ^(his proven abilities) and his will to identify himself and his personal aims with the welfare of the populace, ~~and his proven abilities~~ are proof enough of his greatness and of his right to rule. In only one instance does Richard, Duke of York, fail to live up to the requirements of the Machiavellian prince. In Act I of Part III of Henry VI, when with Warwick and his armed forces he occupies the Parliament House ahead of Henry VI and his queen, and is in a position to enforce his right to the throne, he swears to recognise Henry VI as king during Henry's life. If Henry will acknowledge him and his sons as heirs to the throne, he declares, he will retire to his estate and live as a duke under Henry VI. This act costs him his throne and his life, and England, the peace and order which he was fighting to restore to her. At one stroke he thus abandons the advantage of popularity and armed superiority, ignores his pledge to have the heart's blood of the Lancastrians, puts himself at the mercy of a rival power, and places faith in the contract of an enemy. The result is renewed wars; further chaos and disorder and loss of life.

The situation in which York appears is one that was

common in any feudal country and was remarked upon by Machiavelli, who noted that principalities ruled

"...by a prynce and certeine Peeres whoe haue been rayssed to that honour not by the favour or permission of their prynce, but by the discente and antiquitie of their owne blud", ²

are controlled with infinite difficulty and are seldom tranquil.

Act I of I Henry VI pursues the internal conflict at home and the debacles of the English forces in France. York enters upon the stage in scene iv of act ii, when he appears in discussion with a lawyer, the earls of Somerset, Suffolk and Warwick, and one, Vernon. He is manifestly the leader in the group, and is pressing for a statement from the others:

York: Great lords and gentlemen, what means this silence?
Dare no man answer in a case of truth?

(II, iv, 1 - 2) ³

The lords hesitate and prevaricate; but Richard will not allow them to escape a declaration of their stand on his claim to the throne. Finally, he challenges those who support him to

2) The Prince, IV, 15.

3) William Shakespeare, "Henry VI, Part I", The Works of William Shakespeare, Oxford, Shakespeare Head Press, 1938

pick a white rose. Somerset, York's rival, picks a red rose; and so the issue is forced. All declare themselves. Here is a man who appears to know how

"to rayse and continewe that opinion of him
in the hartes of his suiects, that they maie
imagine he can neither be abused by frawde,
nor altered by flatterie". 4

The slur cast on York's social origin by his rival, Somerset, is the subject of the final scene of act one. From the English point of view, York must make clear his claim to the throne by birth, if he is not to expose himself to the charge of usurper.

In this scene, therefore, the descent of York as ^elegitimate heir to the crown is carefully rehearsed by his dying uncle, Edmund Mortimer. Mortimer declares that York's father, the Earl of Cambridge, died trying to restore the rightful kings to the throne, and he urges York to claim the crown. When, however, York betrays impatience and bursts out passionately that his father's death was bloody tyranny, Mortimer cautions him:

Mortimer: With silence, nephew, be thou politic:

(II, i, 101)

4) The Prince, xix, 79.

York takes his uncle's counsel; and resolves to act with discretion and cunning. He decides first to seek recognition of his right through parliament, and to

Make my ill th' advantage of my good.

(II, i, 29)

or show that he "can reape some commodity owt of anyie inconvenience".⁵

Before Parliament, where the dispute between the Bishop of Winchester and the Duke of Gloucester is aired, York holds his peace, deeming it not timely to intervene:

York: (aside)

Plantagenet, I see must hold his tongue,
Lest it be said, "Speak, sirrah, when you should;
Must your bold verdict enter talk with lords".

(III, ii, 61 - 63)

He is then all humility when Henry VI, in response to Warwick's representation, grants the restoration of his title and his lands:

York: Thy humble servant vows obedience
And humble service till the point of death.

And so thrive Richard as thy foes may fall!
And as my duty springs, so perish they
That grudge one thought against your majesty!

(III, i, 167-168; 174- 176)

After varying fortunes, the English are victorious again

5) The Prince, xxi, 102

in France and Henry VI goes to Paris to be crowned. York is present, but remains silent until the court is invaded by two persons in conflict over the roses they wear. While King Henry addresses the two disputants, and makes a play of treating their differences lightly by taking the red rose and airily pinning it on himself, declaring it means nothing, York remains cautiously quiet. But, when the king has gone, he shows by his exchange with Warwick⁶ over the favor shown to Somerset that his challenge to the throne is indeed living and ardent. He remains quiet again, however, in the interest, as it later appears, of England's fight for France.

In France, York, in command of forces for the relief of Talbot at Bordeaux, is prevented from taking action by the failure of Somerset to send the promised reinforcements. York fumes and rages, but remains at his post, and in the end has the honour of conquering Joan of Arc and sending her to execution. York thus far appears as the patriotic and magnanimous prince and competent army leader; a man of passionate feeling, who, however, knows how to keep himself well in hand.

Still biding his time, York further restrains himself while the marriage of Henry VI to Margaret, daughter of King

6) IV, i, 174 - 181

Reignier, is solemnized and the humiliating peace with France is read. He remains silent even after the king has left the court with all but ^York, Salisbury and Warwick. Salisbury speaks out, however, denouncing the corrupt self-seeking of Somerset and his associates, and appealing to York and Warwick to join together in an effort to save England. Salisbury argues that York by his military exploits in Ireland and France, has won the fear and respect of the people. York is thus appealed to as the man of virtue who can save the nation from the disasters into which the self-seeking faction of nobles under Somerset have lead it.

Salisbury: While these (Somerset and his associates)
do labour for their own preferment,
Behoves it us to labour for the realm.

II (I, i, 181 - 182) ⁷

Later in the same speech, addressing himself to York, he adds:

Salisbury: And, brother York, thy acts in Ireland,
In bringing them to civil discipline;
Thy late exploits done in the heart of France,
When thou wert regent for our sovereign,
Have made thee fear'd and honour'd of the
people:-
Join we together, for the public good,
In what we can, to bridle and suppress

7) Shakespeare, "Henry VI, Part II", Works, 1938.

The pride of Suffolk and the cardinal,
With Somerset's and Buckingham's ambition;
And, as we may, cherish Duke Humphrey's deeds,
While they do tend the profit of the land.

To this Warwick and York comment:

Warwick: So God help Warwick, as he loves the land,
And common profit of his country.

York: (aside)

And so says York, for he hath greatest cause.

II (I, i, 194 - 207)

After Warwick and Salisbury go, York breaks out into a soliloquy that reveals his whole heart: He sees in the loss of the French provinces and the extravagant concessions made for Margaret's consent to marry Henry, the squandering of his own patrimony. He can wait, however, for the favorable moment to act,

A day will come when York shall claim his own;

(I, i, 239)

and, as his strategy, he plans to go along for a time at least, with Warwick and Salisbury, in support of the Duke of Gloucester and against the Somerset and Suffolk clique.

His object, he states now, is to become king:

York: And, when I spy advantage, claim the crown,
For that's the golden mark I seek to hit:

(I, i, 242 - 243)

He despises Henry's "churh-like humours" as unfit for a king;

and, indeed, the prince of Machiavelli would never be a victim of religion as Henry is. York's tactic is waiting:

York: Then, York, be still awhile, till time do serve:
Watch thou and wake, when others be asleep,
To pry into the secrets of the state;

(I, i, 47 - 49)

When the time arrives he will grapple with the house of Lancaster and force the crown from it. Meanwhile, the machinations progress against the Duke of Gloucester and his wife Eleanor, Suffolk and Beaufort conducting them, and York quietly supporting them. When Buckingham and York together discover and expose the Duchess Eleanor consulting with devils, York discreetly leaves Buckingham to report the event to the king.

Satisfied that the downfall of the Protector, Duke Humphrey, is imminent, York calls together Salisbury and Warwick, and places before them his request for their support of him as claimant to the crown. He persuades them to agree, after he has again reviewed his lineage; and he then lays before them his plan to act against the king when the split of the Somerset faction against the Lord Protector and his wife is completed.

Encouraged by the promise of support, York joins in the

accusations against ^CGloucester, and conspires with Margaret, Beaufort and Suffolk to bring about the death of the Protector. The first obstacle to the throne he claims he thus dooms by conspiracy with his own rivals.

When the news arrives that Ireland is in revolt and that an armed force is needed to suppress the rebels, York further reveals his craftiness. He sneeringly suggests the appointment of Somerset, who has just returned from France after having lost all the English provinces there. Somerset bristles, and Beaufort comes forward to suggest that York, perhaps, would like to take the Irish post. York agrees, and they all consent, thinking they are rid of him. After they have left, however, York, again in soliloquy, reveals his policy. It is the careful and calculated plan of a true Machiavellian:

York: Now, York, or never, steel thy fearful⁸ thoughts,
And change misdoubt to resolution;
Be that thou hopest to be; or what thou art
Resign to death, -- it is not worth th' enjoying:
Let pale-faced fear keep with the mean-born man,
And find no harbour in a royal heart.
Faster than spring-time showers comes thought
on thought;
And not a thought but thinks on dignity.
My brain, more busy than the labouring spider,

8) fearful here undoubtedly means full of fear. York is trying to work his courage up and cast out fear.

Weaves tedious snares to trap mine enemies.
Well, nobles, well, 'tis politicly done,
To send me packing with an host of men:
I fear me you but warm the starved snake,
Who, cherisht in your breasts, will sting your
 hearts.

'Twas men I lackt, and you will give them me:
I take it kindly; yet be well assured
You put sharp weapons in a madman's hands.
Whiles I in Ireland nourish a mighty band,
I will stir up in England some black storm,
Shall blow ten thousand souls to heaven or hell;
And this fell tempest shall not cease to rage
Until the golden circuit on my head,
Like to the glorious sun's transparent beams,
Do calm the fury of this mad-bred flaw.

(III, i, 331 - 354)

Although some of the idiom here is perilously close to that of the "romantic Machiavellian", there is a greater significance to the passage. York here is the man of resolution, consciously nerving himself to a great task. He rejoices in the mental exercise of plotting and contriving the means of attaining his noble object. He realizes that not force alone, but fraud, deception and cunning are required for success. His attitude toward the nobles who have been tricked into making him the head of an army is not malevolent or vindictive, but rather loftily contemptuous; his superiority to them pleases and at the same time entertains him. He knows their failure to measure up to him will prove their downfall and his success; and, although the intensity of

his feelings, now that he is committed to action from which there is no turning back, startles and a little dismays him, his confidence rises and his plans crystallize.

With an army at his command, he feels he can go forward with his preparations to foment an uprising within England under the leadership of Jack Cade, "A headstrong Kentishman", who resembles John Mortimer, now dead. This rising, he feels can be used to his advantage; and we find him declaring that by the revolt

I shall perceive the common's mind,
How they affect the house and claim of York.

(III, i, 374 - 375)

In this York honours Machiavelli's argument:

"...for noe man will venter to take in
hande a conspiracie unles he make this
reconinge with himself, that the death
of the prince wilbe acceptable to the
people". 9

York is the shrewd judge of the circumstances he requires to make his claim effective; he must know the popular will, he must have an army at his command, and he must be satisfied that the main persons standing between himself and the crown are disposed of. It is clear from his argument that he rests his ability to achieve his object in the favor of

the people, armed force and his own cunning. His ruthlessness is evident; Jack Cade is a pawn in his game, useful, but expendable; so were Suffolk and Buckingham, for a time.

While York is busy with his Irish expedition, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, Lord Protector of England, is murdered by an assassin hired by Suffolk. Upon his death, Warwick and Salisbury, aware in advance that the crime was to be committed, arrive at the head of a crowd of common people at Bury St. Edmunds, where the murder took place. They invade the palace and demand an explanation. Warwick charges Suffolk with murder, and the commons demand his banishment. The king consents.

Thus the events inspired by York and his supporters, Warwick and Salisbury, who quietly abetted Somerset and Suffolk in their plots against the Gloucesters and who gave consent to the death of Humphrey, lead to the disintegration of the second group of nobles that stand between York and the throne. Suffolk's banishment deprives the group of its most daring and resourceful member; and the folly of the assassination strengthens the commons' hatred of the Suffolk group, and enhances the popular favor of those who exposed the crime, Warwick and Salisbury, the allies of York. Surely

the manoeuvring of these developments is the work of the Machiavellian prince who knows how to suit action to the times, to wait, to influence men's minds, to win popular support, and to build armed strength.

Fate lends a hand to help on York when Cardinal Beaufort dies within hours of the discovery of the death of Gloucester, and when Suffolk is beheaded by a seaman, Walter Whitmore, who is represented as destined to execute Suffolk. Whitmore is one of a ship's crew who seem united behind a remarkable captain who knows the whole history of Suffolk and who is confident that England is rising up under the Nevils in support of York.

Cade's uprising proves the truth of the captain's prophecy that an action favoring York would soon develop. The ~~f~~ollowers of Cade are moved, like York, by the loss of the French provinces and Henry's inept rule at home. They accept Cade's claim to become protector over Henry VI so that England's prestige can be restored. In the end the rising is broken up by Clifford's clever appeal to the people's feeling for the warrior king, Henry V, whose memory the people revere, and by the doubt he rouses in them that Cade can lead them to triumph over their foreign enemies the French, or even help

them protect England against a French invasion. This identity of the people's and York's feeling about England's position, and the proof of the people's admiration for a warrior king, strengthen the prospects for York's return.

Scarcely is Cade's rebellion dispersed than news arrives that York is back in England with his army, declaring his return is to save the king from the traitor, Somerset. This excuse is plausible, and frees York from being charged with sedition. As Machiavelli remarks, "a prince can never want occasions to colour the breach of his promise". ¹⁰

Encamped between Dartford and Blackheath, York prepares for his seizure of the crown. He sees himself now as not only the lawful king, but the man with the ability to rule:

York: Let them obey that know not how to rule;
This hand was made to handle naught but gold.
I cannot give due action to my words,
Except a sword or sceptre balance it:
A sceptre shall it have, -- have I a soul, --
On which I'll toss the flower-de-luce of France.

(V, 1, 6 - 11)

He is the Machiavellian man who by his own virtue and capacity has the right, because he knows how, to rule, and

10) The Prince, xviii, 75

because he has a vision for his country's greatness. ¹¹

He is interrupted in his musings by the sudden arrival of the king's envoy, Buckingham, who has been warned, not out of pity but out of fear, not to deal roughly with York. York, immediately cautious and wary, gathers his faculties:

York: Whom have we here? Buckingham, to disturb me?
The king hath sent him, sure: I must dissemble.

(V, 1, 12 - 13)

Prepared for defence, York yet gives the appearance of being completely duped when Buckingham assures him that the king has arrested and imprisoned Somerset. On the unconfirmed word of Buckingham, he dismisses his soldiers and is preparing to go to the palace when the king enters with a number of attendants, and is soon followed by the queen accompanied by Somerset. The apparent fallibility of an otherwise most astute prince may be an example of the gullibility to which people become victims by the pressure of their needs and desires. The convenient entrances of Warwick, Salisbury, and York's sons later, however, when York is threatened with arrest, suggest that York knew his strength, and was indeed

11) The Discourses, I, 102

dissembling when he exposed himself to capture.

York, apparently trapped, reveals his mettle. He boldly challenges the king, demanding an explanation for Somerset's being at large, and he denounces the king for his bad faith, his weakness, and his ineptitude:

York:

 thou art not king;
Not fit to govern and rule multitudes,
Which darest not, no, nor canst not rule a traitor.
That head of thine doth not become a crown;
Thy hand is made to grasp a palmer's staff,
And not to grace the awful princely sceptre.
That gold must round engirt these brows of mine;
Whose smile and frown, like to Achilles' spear,
Is able with the change to kill and cure.
Here is a hand to hold a sceptre up,
And with the same to act controlling laws.
Give place: by heaven, thou shalt rule no more
O'er him whom heaven created for thy ruler.

(V, 1, 92 - 105)

York is here the magnanimous prince, born to rule by ability not by heredity. The bases of his claims to the crown are those endorsed by Machiavelli, as the weaknesses of Henry are those Machiavelli censured in a prince. As the scene develops, York's boldness is commanding. Ordered arrested, he refuses to go with the guards, and has his sons called in to go surety for him. When Old Clifford and his son enter, following York's sons, and do obeisance to Henry as King, York deliberately assumes they are recognizing him,

and thanks them. Their denunciation and demand for York's arrest is cut short by the entry of Warwick and Salsbury. The forces are drawn; York's challenge is in the open; the court and all England stand divided; all leave to prepare for battle.

This is the kind of brilliant and principled challenge for power that Machiavelli hoped the Medici would make in Italy.

The Duke of York and his supporters carry the victory in battle, and immediately occupy the House of Parliament. They there conceal soldiers and await the arrival of the king and queen, who, they know, had planned to meet there, following the fight. Encouraged by Warwick and by his sons, York is persuaded to occupy the regal chair. The dethroning of Henry now seems imminent.

York fails, however, in policy, when he trusts the king, whom he already had found wanting in faith, and accepts his promise to recognize York and his heirs as rulers of England after Henry's death. Although this action frees York of any charge of excessive ambition, it makes nonsense of his frequently voiced concern for the plight of England under the inept Henry; and it abandons the people, for whose cause he

claimed to fight.

York's abdication of his claim to the crown during the life of Henry VI, nevertheless is history; as was his character generally as Shakespeare depicted him. Had Machiavelli been taking his examples from the history of England he might have selected York, as Shakespeare draws him, as an example of the great prince whose virtue was marred by an excessive respect for tradition. But in every instance but this he is the true Machiavellian prince.

Chapter V -- Part II

Subdivision 2

The prince who comes to power and retains authority in the most difficult circumstances, according to Machiavelli, is he who achieves his aim principally through the assistance of other great men, and who then successfully secures himself against the jealousy and revolt of those who first abetted him. Such a prince is Henry Bolingbroke, later Henry IV, successor to Richard II. In Richard, Duke of York, Shakespeare had depicted the prince who demonstrated true Machiavellian resourcefulness in the attempt to achieve power against great odds, and who, in pursuit of this aim made use of every advantage of superior courage, cunning and clarity of aim and

every weakness in the front of his opponents to compel recognition of and advancement for himself. In Henry Bolinbroke, he presents the man whom personal qualities, fortune, the voluntary help of the great and the favor of the people raises to power, and who, placed in command of a nation by these aids, successfully consolidates and maintains his power against conspiracy and revolt.

When Henry Bolingbroke landed at Ravenspurgh, his claim was merely his dukedom; but the access of power which came to him from the welcome of Northumberland, Westmoreland, Hotspur, Willoughby, Ross and others, from the favor shown him by the common people, the lords of the north, and the gentlemen of the south, the young and the old, and from the pusillanimity and perverseness of Richard II encouraged him to claim the crown. Bolingbroke, therefore, did not rise up in revolt, conspire or connive his way to power; he came to assert a right under the law; he did not seize opportunity, occasion used him; he did not create, he accepted a situation. His rise to power therefore, lay essentially with the arms and influence of those nobles who abandoned Richard II in the hope of a better government, a government more to their liking.

As Machiavelli warned, a ruler such as Henry lives under the constant threat of rebellion from those nobles who aid him to power, because it is most unlikely that their expectations will be realized under his rule, and because his power rests not in support of his own making, but in the continued allegiance of those who chose to align themselves with him for their own advantage.¹²

At the conclusion of Richard II, Bolingbroke, now Henry IV, is already called upon to deal with conspiracy against him, and to grant clemency to Aumerle, his cousin, one of the conspirators, and to mete out death sentences to the rest. He is led also, by the danger to which Richard's life exposes him, to incite assassins to kill him.

Bolingbroke, however, proves himself equal to the tasks imposed by power. In Henry IV, Part I, the means by which he consolidates his control of England is recited in the grievance placed before Blunt by the rebels under Hotspur. After relating how Henry arrived at Ravenspurgh and enjoyed increasing support -- inspired, according to Hotspur, chiefly by Northumberland's welcome -- Hotspur reminds Blunt that Bolingbroke had deposed and later killed the king, and then had subdued

¹²
1) The Prince, III, 5

the whole state to his authority: that he had allowed his kinsman, Mortimer, -- who had a more direct title to the crown -- to remain, unransomed, a prisoner in Wales: that he had deprived Hotspur of the prisoners he had captured by his own prowess; and that he had set spies upon Hotspur to trap him: that he had driven Hotspur's uncle, Worcester, from the king's council; and in a rage had dismissed Northumberland from court: that he had indeed broken one oath after another given to those who aided him; and that he had committed one wrong after another until he had driven the lords in self-defence to rebel. He had, indeed, as Hotspur put it "fool'd, discarded, and shook off"¹³ those who had helped him to power.

This "vile politician, Bolingbroke", however, when faced with the uprising under the Percies, shows that he can muster a greater force and wider popular support than can the revolting lords; and his strength persuades the supreme opportunist, Northumberland, father of Hotspur, not to commit his following to the uprising, although his own son leads it. After the first encounter ends in Hotspur's death and the rout of the rebels, a second muster of the rebels is persuaded to parley about terms. Now, Henry IV accomplishes his second victory

13) I Henry IV, I, iii, 178

by strategy and deceit. Making an agreement through his son John of Lancaster to grant the rebel lords^S redress of their grievances, he persuades them to disband their forces, and then has them arrested, explaining suavely that he made no promise not to seize their persons.

Thus by demonstrating military strength, popular support and a capacity for subtlety and fraud, Henry IV secures the throne won by favoring fortune and the help of others. Of his possession of the crown Henry IV tells his son, Hal:

.....I had many living to upbraid
My gain of it by their assistance;
Which daily grew to quarrel and to bloodshed,
Wounding supposed peace: all these bold fears
Thou see'st with peril I have answered;
For all my reign hath been but as a scene
Acting that argument:

(V, i, 323 - 329)

.....all my foes, which thou must make thy friends,
Have but their stings and teeth newly ta'en out;
By whose fell working I was first advanced,
And by whose power I well might lodge a fear
To be again displaced: which to avoid,
I cut some off, and had a purpose now
To lead out many to the Holy Land,
Lest rest and lying still might make them look
Too near unto my state. Therefore, my Harry,
Be it thy course to busy giddy minds
With foreign quarrels; that action, hence borne out,
May waste the memory of the former days.

(V, i, 335 - 346)

The troubles of Henry are exactly those of Machiavelli's prince who comes to power chiefly by the aid of others, and

whose success in retaining the throne is attributable to the qualities urged by Machiavelli as those essential to the true prince: capacity in war, subtlety and fraud. His proposal to "busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels" expresses the tactic popular with the astute King of Spain, so much admired by Machiavelli.¹⁴ The essence of Henry's position is contained in the opening paragraph of Chapter II of The Prince; and, although it should be stressed that no suggestion is made that Shakespeare wrote the play to demonstrate the principles enunciated by Machiavelli, the treatment of the subject is that of a person thoroughly imbued with the values and objective spirit and understanding of political event that marked the thinking of Machiavelli.

The character and career of Henry V is forecast in the early scenes of Henry IV, Part I. They are to be those of the ideal prince, wise just and strong. In Scene ii of Act I of the first part of Henry IV, the future King Henry V, hero of Agincourt, carouses and jokes with his boon companions of the taverns and the highways, Falstaff and Poins. At the conclusion

14) The Prince, XXI, 98 - 99.

of the scene, however, in a soliloquy obviously addressed directly to the audience, he prepares the minds of his listeners for the transformation that is to take place.

Prince Henry: I know you all (Falstaff & Poins) and
will awhile uphold

The unyoked humour of your idleness:
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds,
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That, when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted, he may be more wonder'd at,
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.
If all the year were playing holidays,
To sport would be as tedious as to work;
But when they seldom come, they wisht for
come,

And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.
So, when this loose behaviour I throw off,
And pay the debt I never promised,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much will I falsify men's hopes:
And, like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My reformation, glittering o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
I'll so offend, to make offence a skill;
Redeeming time, when men think least I will.

(I, ii, 199 - 219) ¹⁵

The cool and calculating detachment of this youthful prince's observation is revolting to anyone with a human rather than a state approach; so deliberate a manipulating of human life, including one's own, for future, ulterior ends seems

15) William Shakespeare, "Henry IV, Part I", Works, 1938

hardly natural and certainly is not common. Hal's feeling for all men is subordinated to his determination to shine as a king. His attitude toward his common companions is easy, indulgent, not unkind contempt; that toward the nobility, studied caution: toward both his actions are for effect. His intention is to impress by his reform those of both classes whom his present behaviour has misled, and by this demonstration of will and self-command to reinforce his hold upon his subjects, high and low: "I'll so offend, to make offence a skill". He is offending his father and the nobility now; he will offend Falstaff and Poins later; but he will rise superior to both. This capacity for studied action calculated to baffle and impress is at the core of the Machiavellian prince -- is the essence of the Machiavellian use of the word policy; it assumes an absolute independence of mind, a complete self-assurance, shrewd judgment and a detachment from ties of affection that together make possible the devotion of all effort to a predetermined end. Nor is it necessarily associated with corruption or evil intent.

The suggestion that Hal is not as abandoned as his behaviour would lead one to believe was expressed first by

Henry Bolingbroke at the conclusion of the play, Richard II. In scene iii of act V Bolingbroke, accompanied by Hotspur, came to Windsor Castle, as king of England. The presence of Hotspur, and the absence of his own son, Prince Hal, in this hour of triumph stung him to outcry:

Can no one tell me of my unthrifty son?

(V. iii, 1)

He was told, and by Hotspur, that Hal was among his low companions; and that, upon being informed of the triumphs to be held at Oxford honoring the new king, his father, he had said he would come wearing the glove of the commonest creature from the stews. This is the first reference to Prince Hal in the plays in which his career figures. His father's reply to Hotspur is interesting from the point of view being discussed here.

Henry Bolingbroke: As dissolute as desperate; yet
 through both
I see some sparkles of a better hope,
Which elder days may happily bring
 forth.--

(V. iii, 20 - 22)

There follows in the first act of Henry IV, Part 1 the explicit statement of Hal himself, already quoted, in which he confirms the hope expressed by the king that he would not

always continue to be a ne'er-do-well. And finally, in Scene iv of Act iv of the second part of Henry IV, when Henry IV, against triumphant, lacks the presence of his son and heir, and breaks out in despair, Warwick replies:

Warwick: My gracious lord, you look beyond him quite:
The prince but studies his companions,
Like a strange tongue; wherein, to gain the
Language,
'Tis needful that the most immodest word
Be lookt upon and learn'd; which once attain'd
Your highness knows, comes to no further use.
But to be known and hated. So, like gross terns,
The prince will, in the perfectness of time,
Cast off his followers; and their memory
Shall as a pattern or a measure live,
By which his grace must mete the lives of others,
Turning past evils to advantages.

(II Henry IV, IV, iv, 67 - 78)

With the audience prepared by the prince's soliloquy to see him ultimately emerge as a great ruler, the play, Henry IV, part 1, proceeds first to bring out his qualities as a wit, and a man of resourcefulness and command, welcome among and at ease with common people. The series of episodes with Falstaff, Bardolph, Pistol, Dame Quickly and the rest does this admirably. Hal is a match for Falstaff in repartee, and his equal in daring and irreverent criticism of the world, including the world of the court; he is as ready for and as able to carry out a practical joke as is Falstaff;

and his attitude to authority is as critical, and is much more dignified. He can assert his princely rights promptly and effectively whenever the event calls for it and without embarrassment or apology for the circumstances in which he is found; and the impression is maintained that he never at any time is a victim of the vices he chooses to indulge in his companions. If the criticism is raised that he marred his reputation by the wildness of his youth, the answer is, of course, given by his own declaration that it is all part of policy, a demonstration of his vital interest in life, his self-command, and an exercise in free will. He can stop when he chooses. And so it proves. Thus the whole, famous and entertaining section of the Henry IV plays which is devoted to the life of the young prince among Falstaff and his associates, is a brilliant dramatization of a deep understanding of the components of the popular prince, who knows people, and who uses his knowledge and his command over vices and virtues to effect his own security and the security of the state. As Machiavelli says in his chapter, headed "Of those things which cause men and especiallie princes to be either praised or blamed":

"...it behooves a prince to use that discretion whereby he maye avoyde the

infamie especiallie of such vices as maye
weken his power, or hazarde the losse of
his principallitie, he should alsoe indea-
vour to shunn the reast thoughe they
threaten noe such daynger, but yf he
could not, he might lett them passe with
lyght regarde, neither must he be scripu-
lous to straine courtesies to incurr the
infamie of such vices as preserve the
safetie of his owne estate, for yf matters
be weyed in indifferent ballances, and
considered of rightlie as they are indeede,
yow shall finde that by practising of some
thinges that carrie the face and shewe of
vertue yow shall purchase your owne ruyne
and overthrowe, and that by following some
other that att the first sight seeme
vitious, yow shall finde most sure defence
for your owne safetie and quietnesse." 16

By virtue of these scenes, Prince Hal is shown to be basi-
cally royal and completely master of his passions and
natural human inclinations and weaknesses; he does not
suppress or inhibit them, he uses them, and he uses them
to his own and the sates' advantage. 17

16) The Prince, XV, 67 - 68.

17) J. Dover Wilson takes issue with this interpretation
of Prince Hal in his work, The Fortunes of Falstaff. Under the
heading, Riot and the Prodigal Prince, Mr. Wilson has this to
say:

"Falstaff may be the most conspicuous, he
is certainly the most fascinating character
in Henry IV, but all critics are agreed, I
believe, that the technical centre of the
play is not the fat knight but the lean
prince. Hal links the low life with the
high life, the scenes of Eastcheap with
those at Westminster, the tavern with the
battlefield; his doings provided most of

Long before Agincourt, indeed, and while he is still living under the cloud of his father's doubt, our young scapegrace demonstrates the virtue that is his. As a warrior he proves himself to be superior to the most renowned champion of the time, Henry Percy, Hotspur, whom he kills at his first encounter with him.

The depth of Shakespeare's penetration of the psychological problems that beset the true Machiavellian prince, the prince striving for absolute power and popular favor, is revealed further in that remarkable scene with Poins

the material for both Parts, and with him too lies the future, since he is to become Henry V, the ideal king, in the play that bears his name; finally, the mainspring of the dramatic action is the choice I have already spoken of, the choice he is called upon to make between Vanity and Government, taking the latter in its accepted Tudor meaning, which includes Chivalry or prowess in the field, the theme of Part I, and Justice, which is the theme of Part II. Shakespeare, moreover, breathes life into these abstractions by embodying them, or aspects of them, in prominent characters, who stand, as it were, about the Prince, like attendant spirits: Falstaff typifying Vanity in every sense of the word, Hotspur Chivalry, of the old anarchic kind, and the Lord Chief Justice the Rule of Law or the new ideal of service to the state".

(From J. Dover Wilson, The Fortunes of Falstaff
Cambridge University Press, 1943, p. 17)

In this Mr. Wilson is arguing that the essence of the problem of Henry IV is the old medieval one of youth tempted by vice and invoked by virtue or good deeds. If this were so, the appeal of

following the first defeat of the rebel nobles and Hal's victory over Hotspur. Hal, wandering in the streets of London with Poins, suddenly complains of deep weariness, and remarks that his thoughts are turning to small beer. This, he feels is unworthy of him as a prince, even as his association with Poins and familiarity with his personal problems disgrace him. Hal's depression is real, but he hesitates to state it frankly to Poins because he knows he will not be

Henry IV to modern readers would be paralleled by that of the old medieval moralities. But this is not so. The essence of the interest roused by Henry IV is not, therefore, its reflection of medieval concepts but its demonstration of concepts that distinguish it from the medieval. It is the break with the old picture of youth tempted by riot in Henry IV and the demonstration of the modern concept of independent judgment, self-mastery and free will, of consciously directed destiny, that marks Henry IV as a modern play. Nowhere in the plays dealing with Prince Hal and Falstaff is there ever the suggestion that Prince Hal is not master of the situation; that he is torn between riot and good government; that he is in danger of becoming the victim of his tavern companions, that he does not fully appreciate them for what they are; that he is not consciously the heir to the throne and prepared to fulfil that destiny, not competently, but brilliantly. Everyone of Hal's remarks about his companions-- from those made of the tapsters who have accepted him as a good fellow, "a very Corinthian", to those addressed to Poins in the conversation on Hal's concern for his father -- are edged with contempt, weighted with understanding and rejection. That is why Henry V's cold, "I know thee not old man" has roused the controversy it has; for Falstaff, whatever his moral qualifications, has been deceived, is frustrated in his hopes, recognizes himself for a dupe.

believed; and he knows that he will be mocked at as a hypocrite if he confesses that the cause is his concern for his father, the king. What Hal sees coming up, as his father's illness continues, is the necessity to assume power; and his isolation is oppressing him. Who would believe him if he said he was concerned for his father? Poins confirms Hal's conviction that any expression of feeling for the king would be met with in^credulity:

Prince Henry: Marry, I tell thee, -- it is not meet that I should be sad, now my father is sick: albeit, I could tell thee,-- as to one it pleases me, for fault of a better, to call my friend,--I could be sad, and sad indeed, too.

Poins: Very hardly upon such a subject.

(II, ii, 40 - 44)

Hal knows that Poins and his associates are as much deluded in him as a true companion of thieves, hardened and indifferent to his father, as the nobility are deluded in him as a hopelessly wayward youth. The mutual contempt and rivalry of the thieves and their acceptance of him as one of them momentarily nettles him; but he presses his point:

Prince Henry: By this hand, thou think'st me as far in the devil's book as thou and Falstaff for obduracy and persistency: let the end try the man. But I tell thee my heart bleeds inwardly that my father is so sick; and keeping such vile company as thou art hath in reason taken from me all ostentation of sorrow".

Poins: The reason?

Prince Henry: What wouldst thou think of me, if I
should weep?

Poins: I would think thee a most princely hypocrite.

(II, ii, 45 - 53)

Poins has no hesitation: he has judged the prince by appearances as everyone had, and Hal is pleased to find him so typical. He applauds Poins:

Prince Henry: It (that the prince is a hypocrite)
would be every man's thought; and
thou art a blessed fellow to think
as every man thinks; never a man's
thought in the world keeps the
road-way better than thine; every
man would think me an hypocrite
indeed".

(II, ii, 54 - 59)

Here Hal is proving that he is aware of the truth that, as Machiavelli affirmed, the vulgar judge by appearance and are misled in judgment because they do not know the inner problems of power. 18

This scene continues with a visit to the inn in Eastcheap, agreed upon deliberately as a means of spying upon Falstaff, and of driving him to more of his ingenious excuses for his

18) The Prince, XVIII, 77.

vilifications of the prince. Episodes such as these are the embodiment in drama of the activity of a singularly objective, balanced critical and curious mind, such as the astute prince of Machiavelli must be assumed to possess. These London street and tavern scenes place in flesh upon the boards the maturing of a worldly wise, intelligence, the growth of a man of exceptional mental capacity. Throughout these scenes the prince appears as the youthful intellect bent upon understanding everything, its self-esteem unaffected by the mistaken impressions that others derive from the rare independence of its activity. The prince, indeed, is evolving into one of those unusual personalities that can be at home in all company, and in command in all assemblies, and that can keep people guessing by the novelty and daring of their activities. He is, indeed, the personification of the individualist making his entrance in the sixteenth century to a place of prominence in public life, of whom the despotic prince was the pre-eminent example.

These scenes are remarkable for the effect they must have had on Elizabethans as pleas for indulgence for their ruler who, by his position was doomed to be misunderstood

and misrepresented in the minds of all because his high purpose could be known only to himself. All would think him a hypocrite if he confessed himself.

Discussion of episodes such as these is pertinent to the subject of this thesis as they illustrate the imaginative insight of Shakespeare into the probable workings of the mind of a prince such as Machiavelli admired and the age of Shakespeare required. These scenes express dramatically the likely emotional reactions and reflections of a nobleman consciously preparing for power resting upon popular support and striving to organize both himself and his necessary associates to encompass the power and authority he aims at. Hal's association with Falstaff and his companions is not irresponsible self-indulgence but a highly conscious adventure in association, motivated chiefly by his sense of destiny as heir to the throne, and designed to equip him with a capacity to know, judge and use men -- even those whom in his heart he despises -- as Warwick, in the remarks quoted, surmised.

So far the prince appears as sanguine, youthful, witty, warlike, a master of his passions, deeply observant and astute. He has also a profound sense of his dignity and

destiny as a ruler, and as the heir of his father.

The prince's valor and Henry IV's duplicity combine to defeat the insurgent nobles and to bring about the capture and execution of the leaders. There follows then King Henry's plan to lead the militant spirits abroad in a crusade, before peace can breed new discontents. Death, however, cuts off the king; and at once, the apparently riotous prince is King Henry V.

The wise prince, according to Machiavelli, respects the law; governs as much as possible by means of established institutions;¹⁹ and demonstrates his wisdom by his choice of counsellors and the relationship he establishes between himself and them.²⁰ With his first appearance among the officials and nobles of his court, Henry V allays all fears that had grown up among them as a result of his apparently ungovernable youth. His entrance to them in the palace in his regal robes is easy and majestic.

King Henry V: This new and gorgeous garment, majesty,
Sits not so easy on me as you think.--
(V, ii, 44 - 45)

19) Discourses, I, x, 143 - 144; I, xxv, 182.

20) Prince, xxii, 103, 104 - 105.

he remarks, well knowing that they think him most unfit for it. He pauses; and then he immediately takes on the manner and voice of authority.

Most fearful of his ascent to power is the Lord Chief Justice, loyal and severe enforcer of the laws of the realm under Henry IV, and more than once the agent of the young prince's discomfiture. The Chief Justice, however, is not only retained in office by the new king, but is praised for the diligence with which he administered the law of the land even upon the king's son. He does not receive the clemency and approval of the new king, though, before he has been subjected briefly to the terror of the king and compelled to make an open declaration of what he believes to be the responsibilities of his office. Then he is assured by Henry V, quoting the old king:

Henry V: (quoting Henry IV)
"Happy am I, that have a man so bold
That dares do justice on my proper son".

(V, ii, 108 - 109)

The Chief Justice has proven himself to be the ideal agent of the prince, a man prepared to take upon himself responsibility for the most unpopular acts in the enforcement of the law.

In this scene Henry V demonstrates his respect for

law, his readiness to perpetuate the office of effective officials, and his capacity to make himself both feared and loved. His object, he declares is to be a good ruler --

Henry V: To mock the expectation of the world,
To frustrate prophecies, and to raze out
Rotten opinion, who hath writ me down
After my seeming.

(V, ii, 92 - 95)

He continues:

The tide of blood in me
Hath proudly flow'd in vanity till now;
Now doth it turn and ebb back to the sea,
Where it shall mingle with the state of floods,
And flow henceforth in formal majesty.
Now call we our high court of parliament:
And let us choose such limbs of noble counsel,
That the great body of our state may go
In equal rank with the best-govern'd nation;
That war, or peace, or both at once, may be
As things acquainted and familiar to us;

(V, ii, 95 - 105)

He is ^a prince, self-willed, independent and self-reliant,
but prepared by virtue of understanding and a vision of
state power to learn from experience, conform to law and
admit counsel.

The prince, before his ascent to the throne, had
proven himself a man capable of hoodwinking and managing
to his own ends both the common people and the nobility.
The ruthlessness of which he is capable in the interests

of his state power is then shown in his rejection of Falstaff. "I know thee not old man", his icy and death-dealing reply to the old soldier's ardent greeting to him as he rides from the coronation, is the essence of calculating state policy.²¹ Inhuman to the utter degree, treacherous to natural human feeling, giving the lie to everything he had appeared to be to the improvident knight, this reply is all the proof that is needed that King Henry V is the calmly objective, calculating and astute prince who will allow nothing to stem his drive to what he conceives to be the well-ordered state. He has been a spy among the common people to learn the art of managing them to his own advantage, which he identifies with that of the commonwealth. His measures to ensure that Falstaff and his associates are provided for show justice, but the punitive action that accompanies this justice is killing. Falstaff dies.

The opening scenes of Act I of Henry V advance the king from the ranks of the commons amongst whom in Henry IV

21) The Prince, XVII, 71: "Let therefore a prince esteeme yt lighte to be accompted cruell soe he maye haue his subiectes in fayth by feare. For he shalbe thought more gentle by shewing a fewe examples of severitie, then through foolishe pittye nowrishe disorders,....."

he chiefly demonstrated his capacity for leadership, to the ruling ranks of the nobility. He has adopted his father's plan for a military adventure abroad; but instead of a crusade, he proposes an attempt to extend his empire in France; not penance but glory and prestige are his aim. It is an undertaking of the kind that Machiavelli advocated for a prince newly come to power.²² Henry takes great pains to get the consent of his church and lay supporters, and to find just cause in law for his proposed campaign, honoring in this the Machiavellian observation that the wise prince should give cause for his actions, color all enterprises with religious pomp, and act as far as possible in accordance with the laws and customs of the country.

Without fully declaring himself, Henry has allowed the Archbishop of Canterbury to understand that he is indifferent to a law being proposed in parliament to deprive the church of considerable land and to subject the church to heavy taxation, in order to provide the king with a fitting court and to give him an annual income of one thousand pounds.²³

22) The Prince, xx, 95.

23) William Shakespeare, "Henry V", The Works of William Shakespeare, Oxford, Shakespeare Head Press, 1938, I, i, 1 - 23 and I, i, 68 - 74.

He has insinuated that he might be open to a proposal of some compromise that would give him aid in his invasion of France. The discussion of this with the Archbishop, however, he has put off until the French ambassador is heard, and the matter of his right to the French crown by descent has been settled. Henry has thus made the satisfaction of his desire to prove a right to the French throne a matter of most immediate concern to the prelates; and scene two of the play is devoted to the marvellous and intricate argument of the archbishop in support of Henry's claim. Henry's appreciation of the effort is pithily expressed in his dry inquiry, following the long and involved argument:

Henry: May I with right and conscience make this claim?
(I, ii, 96)

Nobles and churchmen hasten to take full responsibility for urging the action; and Henry proclaims a policy as that of the counsel of his countrymen which he had conceived and decided upon before his father's death. In this scene Henry demonstrates the absolute prince, as Machiavelli conceived him, skilfully playing off the conflicting classes in his kingdom to his own advantage.

The virtues of Henry had already been sung by the

Archbishop of Canterbury:

Canterbury: Hear him but reason in divinity,
And, all-admiring, with an inward wish
You would desire the king were made a prelate: ✓
Hear him debate of commonwealth affairs,
You would say it hath been all-in-all his study:
List his discourse of war, and you shall hear
A fearful battle rendered you in music:
Turn him to any cause of policy,
The Gordian knot of it he will unloose,
Familiar as his garter:--

(I, i, 39 - 48)

And the admiring Archbishop further remarks that the new
king bears himself

So that the art and practice part of life
Must be the mistress to this theoric:

(I, i, 52 - 53)

Henry V, the martial prince, champion of an expanding empire, noble servitor of the church and observer of the laws, but in himself law-giver and chief counsellor, is vigilant for the safety of himself and for the defence of his kingdom while he is away at war. Act II, scene ii, presents lay nobles marvelling at the brilliance of the king, as the two churchmen did in Act I. Now the Dukes of Bedford and Exeter, and the Earl of Westmoreland discuss the king's apparent unconcern about the conspiracy of Lord Scroop, the Earl of Cambridge and Sir Thomas Grey to kill the king at Hampton in the interest of the French.

They are wondering what the king intends by going forward with his preparations to leave for France, when, as Bedford remarks -

Bedford: The king hath note of all they (the
conspirators) intend,
By interception which they dream not of.

(II, ii, 6 - 7)

King Henry, like the astute Machiavellian prince he is, has the situation well in hand; and in the council-chamber in Southampton he stages his exposure of the guilty noblemen. His technique is to dissemble with them and lead them on with appearances of favor and trust to grow too confident and to condemn themselves out of their own mouths in their indictment of others, and in their anticipation of further promotions; and then to expose them in the very receipt of their new commissions. He then hands them over to the law for punishment. This is the method of forestalling conspirators observed and recommended by Machiavelli, and the recognition of the law as the instrument of state security also honors the advice of Machiavelli. Henry says:

King Henry:we our kingdom's safety must so tender
Whose ruin you have sought, that to her laws
We do deliver you...

(II, ii, 174 - 176)

Henry V here acts as the chief magistrate of the state,

initiating and directing the exposure of the plot, laying the charge and proposing sentence, but honoring the law of the land as the instrument of punishment, as Machiavelli would have advocated.

As a soldier, which, he confesses, is "A name that, in my thoughts becomes me best", Henry V fully accepts all the implications of terror, brutality and violence that war implies; and, defied, he is as ready as Tamburlane to threaten pillage and violence. He is, however, the general who is notable for justice rather than for severity, combining a capacity for ruthlessness with a politic preference for restraint, as his readiness to preserve Harfleur from the looting he threatened, and his severe measures against freebooting by his soldiers show. He orders discipline and mercy toward the citizens when Harfleur finally surrenders; and under his general order against robbing and looting, he has Bardolph hanged for robbing a church. He is the valiant and sober general extolled by Machiavelli.

George Ian Duthie sees in the drastic punishment of Bardolph evidence of the politic reasoning of Henry V:

"Shakespeare seems to say that 'policy' is necessary in a king; but the ideal king,

while using 'policy' when necessary, is, nevertheless, in general characterized by a franker, a more open, a more warm-hearted disposition than Henry IV had". 24

Scenes iii, iv, vi, vii and viii of Act IV are designed to implant Henry V in the minds of the Elizabethans as the valiant and popular leader of the English, who is profoundly aware of the personality of his men, and who respects their simplicity and their courage. His intimate companionship with men of the ranks and of the lesser officer class -- Lluellan, Gower, Michael Williams -- is shown in scenes cut with the sharpness and brilliance of gems; and scenes with Exeter, Bedford, Warwick and Gloucester show the respect and warm friendship he enjoys among the nobles.

Henry V is indeed that prince sought by Machiavelli, who combined valor with ingenuity, and by example and skill won the respectful adherence of the nobility and the enthusiastic loyalty of the commons, sealing in his person and the institutions he favored the unity of the commonwealth.

Although this study of true Machiavellianism makes no

24) George Ian Duthie, Shakespeare, London, Hutchinson's University Library, 1951, p. 145.

claim to

be exhaustive, it may be not without interest to examine for evidence of Shakespeare's appreciation of Machiavellian character one of his plays that lies outside those dealing with English history - Coriolanus.

Coriolanus dramatizes the lesson of policy relevant to this study in scene two of act three. Coriolanus in his home, surrounded by the patricians and attended by his mother, stubbornly refuses to change his attitude of open contempt for the people of Rome or to appear humbly before them asking them for their vote. He is frankly and naively astounded that his mother does not agree with him; and he alone, of all the patricians, fails to see her wisdom. Although his mother, Volumnia, is no less contemptuous of the populace than he is, she has a Machiavellian intelligence as well as courage; she has, that is, an acute understanding of the realities of life, as well as pride in her position as a patrician. Her opening words in this scene reveal her political insight. In reply to Coriolanus' reproach of her for disapproving of his behaviour, she cries:

Volumnia: O, sir, sir, sir,
I would have you put your power well on,
Before you had worn it out.

(III, ii, 17 - 19) 25

She argues for policy as defended by Machiavelli. Coriolanus should have restrained his nature, she says, when he was in no position to impose his will; and he should have awaited the moment when the power of the consulship had been fully confirmed to enforce his policy. As Coriolanus remains surly, she gives him as good as he offers in sharpness, the patricians supporting her:

Volumnia: Pray, be counsell'd:
I have a heart as little apt as yours,
But yet a brain that leads my use of anger
To better vantage.

(III, ii, 28 - 30)

Coriolanus, outnumbered, and faced with his mother's disapproval, is cowed, and asks what he should do. He is told he must apologise to the tribunes and the people. He shrinks, and Volumnia reminds him:

Volumnia: You are too absolute;
Though therein you can never be too noble,
But when extremesities speak. I have heard you
say,
Honour and policy, like unsever'd friends,
I' the war do grow together; grant that,
and tell me
In peace what each of them by th' other lose,
That they combine not there.

(III, ii, 39 - 45)

She continues the argument of policy:

Volumnia: If it be honour in your wars to seem
The same you are not, -- which, for your best friends,
You adopt your policy, -- how is it less or worse,
That it shall hold companionship in peace
With honour, as in war; since that to both
It stands in like request?

(III, ii, 52 - 57)

Coriolanus fails to see the connection, and Volumnia patiently tells him why he must dissemble:

Volumnia: Because that now it lies you on to speak
To the people; not by your own instruction,
Nor by the matter which your heart prompts you,
But with such words that are but rotes in
Your tongue, though but bastards, and syllables
Of no allowance to your bosom's truth.
Now, this no more dishonours you at all
Than to take in a town with gentle words,
What else would put you to your fortune, and
The hazards of much blood.
I would dissemble with my nature, where
My fortunes and my friends at stake required
I should do so in honour: I am in this,
Your wife, your son, these senators, the nobles;
And you will rather show our general louts
How you can frown than spend a fawn upon 'em,
For the inheritance of their loves, and safeguard
Of what that want might ruin.

(III, ii, 51 - 68)

No clearer, more logical or more succinct summary of the argument of Machiavellian policy could be made. Coriolanus, Volumnia reminds him, is a noble, one of the class that commands, or wills to command. He is now dealing with those whose subservience, if not love, must at all cost be retained. The moment is not one when Coriolanus can afford to be himself, because the cost of displaying himself in all his pride and scorn of the populace is disaster to himself, his family and all his friends; therefore, he must use strategy, as he does before a beleaguered town, the

strength of which would compel him to resort to strata-
gem rather than frontal attack, if he would master it.
The moment is one in which dissembling does honour to
oneself because it wins safety and security for oneself
and all one cherishes. Finally, Volumnia makes clear
with some scorn that she would rather not believe that
her son is so ^Childish as to wish ^S to domineer briefly
over louts by frowning, than to save all he loves from
ruin by pretending humility for a moment.

Menenius' exclamation, "Noble lady!" voices the heartfelt appreciation and relief of the nobility upon hearing so clear a statement of their position. Doubtful of her son's understanding, Volumnia goes on to interpret her advice in a vivid word picture of the prince dissembling before the commons in order to retain his powers and privileges:

Volumnia:

I prithee now, my son,
Go to them, with this bonnet in they hand;
And thus far having stretcht it, -- here
be with them,--
Thy knee bussing the stones, -- for in such
business
Action is eloquence, and the eyes of th'
ignorant
More learned than the ears, -- waving thy
head,
Which often, thus, correcting thy stout heart,
Now humble as the ripest mulberry
That will not hold the handling, -- or say to them,

Thou art their soldier, and, being bred in
broils,
Hast not the soft way which, thou dost confess,
Were fit for thee to use, as they to claim,
In asking their good loves; but thou wilt frame
Thyself, forsooth, hereafter theirs, so far
As thou hast power and person.

(III, ii, 72 - 86)

Chapter eighteen of The Prince does not place the case more plainly.

Conclusion

When one compares the expression of political truth through the medium of the drama and through scientific analysis, one must estimate the use of language with care. The scientific analyst examines the events and the persons as an outside observer, and explains what he sees in terms of objective, if not impartial, criticism. He describes and analyses the external social effects of the actions of his heroes. His language is free of the expressions native to morality and sentiment, which voice the subjective reactions of people, with which he is not concerned. Nevertheless, it need not be assumed that the analyst is incapable of appreciating these aspects of human experience. His theme, however, is not feelings, subjective motive or aspiration, but objective purpose and observed activity with their consequences upon the material status of all affected by those actions, including the status of the initiator of the actions. — Machiavelli did not ponder the inner conflict or secret hopes of Cesare Borgia, Oliverotto da Fermo, Alexander,

Ferdinand of Aragon, Moses, Romulus, Agathocles, or the feelings of the many others whose political actions he weighs, because his object in discussing them was not the deeper understanding of the human heart, but the solution of the problem of national unity and security in Italy. That his appreciation of life was not exclusively that revealed in The Prince and The Discourses is testified to by the variety of other literary forms to which he turned his hand not without proof of subtlety and insight of a different kind. His great achievement, however, was in the field of political thought, probably because it was in political activity that he spent the best years of his life, and because the subject which dominated his heart and mind was the plight of divided and invaded Italy, his concern for the return to his country of something of the greatness of ancient Rome.

The dramatist, unlike the analyst, is caught up in a surging preoccupation with the human personality, with the self-consciousness and individuality of the actor, the doer, and the relationship between his deliberate and his involuntary, or socially-imposed, activity. What image does the doer have of himself as he performs his part in

life, what feelings does he undergo, the dramatist asks.

The success of the dramatist is seen in the subtlety and completeness with which he exposes the interaction of personality and environment in promoting action, and in bringing about alteration in personalities and social relationships. The language of the dramatist is that native to morality and sentiment, to the expression of hopes and fears and aims peculiar to the individual; and the action of the players and resolution of the plot establishes the relationship of the ideas of individuals expressed in the dialogue to social and objective truth. Drama, considered in relation to idea, then, fleshes thought, re-incarnates, as it were, the abstract generalization in the material form from which it derived. Drama is impossible without the creation of life-like people, without credible human action, and is empty without thought.

In the study of drama for the purpose of searching out the line of thought that dominates it, or which it betrays, dialogue and action must be considered jointly, for the real character of the actor is not necessarily that of the sentiment he expresses; and the point of view

that dominates the play may be revealed in the resolution of the action as much as, or even more than it is in the dialogue, the point of view of which may express self-delusion or deception.

Machiavelli stripped political figures of their professions of faith, moral sentiments and personal predilections to discuss their success or failure as builders of national state power. The conclusions he came to, it will be seen by earnest examination of his work, express the essence of the political practice of the era in which he lived; and the dramatists who most accurately reincarnated the politics of their time demonstrated inevitably in their political characters and the resolution of the action of their historical plays the sway of the political principles he expounded.

The Machiavellian of the Marlovian romantic tradition tends to be stereotyped and static, because he is a symbol rather than a real being. He is the bogey who haunted the ruler of every feudal principality, each of whom had for his devil the prince who based his strength on the people rather than on the nobility, on ability rather than on blood. Fear distorted this "Machiavellian" and endowed

him with diabolical powers and intentions. Although he became the symbol of disruptive and destructive ambition to supporters of both feudal monarchists and renaissance absolutists in England, his outline was originally framed by the pamphleteers and spokesmen for medieval Catholic reaction and in opposition to the trends toward nationalism.

The true prince of the renaissance, the builder of the national state that was destined to supersede the feudal principality -- the prince sought by Machiavelli and realized in the Tudors of England -- was dramatized pre-eminently by Shakespeare in his historical plays. Richard, Duke of York, is the courageous, subtle and scheming prince who by perseverance and ability in war and intrigue wins support and creates occasion whereby he may attain power. Henry Bolingbroke of Hereford and Lancaster, afterward Henry IV, demonstrates in his career the combination of opportunity and shrewd capacity to take advantage of opportunity that makes possible the realization of a new dynasty. In Henry V Shakespeare presents the politic prince in heroic proportions.

Drawn in essential conformity to the principles that guided Machiavelli in his delineation of the prince, Henry V is the absolute ruler through whose vision and energy the feudal principalities were to be subjected and fused into the national state and the legislative and institutional groundwork laid upon which empire and democracy were destined to flourish. He is the true Machiavellian.

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