Machiavellian thought and Shakespeare's history plays

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MACHIAVELLIAN THOUGHT AND
SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORY PLAYS

By

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INTRODUCTION

"The master figure of elizabethan art, drama, is Machiavelli." So states Wyndham Lewis in The Lion and the Fox. E. W. M. Tillyard, however, in discussing the influence of Machiavelli, concludes by saying: "... in trying to picture how the ordinary educated contemporaries of Shakespeare looked upon history in the years we do not need to give much heed to Machiavelli. His day had not yet come." 1 Lewis.

Like Mario Praz, 2 documents rather thoroughly to substantiate the claim of the Machiavellian influence upon Elizabethan drama. Tillyard, on the other hand, in putting so much stress upon the continuities in the "Elizabethan world picture," as he calls it, with its emphasis upon order, degree, and hierarchy, cannot be counted on to believe, to give an adequate description of the novelty of the period, among which was instead the political theory of Machiavelli. Yet neither Tillyard's nor Lewis's approach seems satisfactory, for neither abundant references to "Machiavellianism" in Lewis nor passing references to the Machiavellian influence by Tillyard give a clear idea of the "master figure" Lewis believes Machiavelli to be of the impact he had upon the dramatists of Shakespeare's age. What is needed, I believe, if we are to better estimate this impact of a basic understanding of the key political ideas and concepts introduced by Machiavelli, after which

1 Wyndham Lewis, The Lion and the Fox (New York, 1927), p. 64.
3 Mario Praz, Machiavelli and the Elizabethans (London, 1928).
we should test their sixteenth-century contemporary relevance by exam-
ing a few key political dramas of the period. In this way we can
begin to discover how Machiavellianism was dealt with on the stage.
Was it just an indirect influence, more theatrical than political, or
was it a genuine response to Machiavellian political inceptions, in
particular those proclaimed in The Prince? For outside of Italy, it
was The Prince that was the most widely read of all Machiavelli's
political writings.

Machiavelli distinguished himself from other political thinkers
of the sixteenth century by breaking with two widely understood and
accepted tenets of political theory: (1) the traditional divine right
view of a philosophically or theologically sanctioned political order
grounded in tradition, genealogy, myth or ideology; and (2) the human-
istic concept that the ideal man, ethically speaking, and the ideal
ruler ought to be one. For Machiavelli all political systems were
provisional; he had no theory of divine right and no mystique of the
state. To Machiavelli that system of government was best which main-
tained the security and stability of the state while securing in its
own way the ends of government: life, property, trust and impartial
justice. Machiavelli was aware, Joseph Masseo insists, "that life
escapes all the abstract schemes we may construct to control it . . .
no single principle is always, in every instance, good."4 No single
theory or ethic could account for the diversity in, and often the

irrational course of, life that Machiavelli saw all around him. Political success could be achieved, however, by a ruler's observation of instances of past political success as well as instances taken from his own historical period, or by the ruler's observation of what Machiavelli described as the "verita effettuale," or the effectual truth. In other words, Machiavelli drew upon examples he took from history, proximate and remote, because he believed that experience transcended system. Rather than an elaborate political theory or system, Machiavelli's theory, as set forth in The Prince, as Massaeo points out is organized "around mythic, poetic, and indefinite concepts like fortuna and virtù in a way that precludes any logically coherent result. . . . His great words and images--fortuna, virtù, necessitá, occasiones--appear and reappear like expanding figures running through the texture of his work, each new appearance subtly modifying the meaning of the last and all enriching each other." These and other key ideas, words and concepts, though often used in different senses throughout his works, need to be clearly defined if we are to understand when and how they could be utilised or dealt with, particularly in the historical dramas of Marlowe and Shakespeare.

Virtù

Machiavelli's concept of virtù differs from that of his humanistic predecessors and contemporaries in that Machiavelli sees virtù

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6 Massaeo, p. 157.
as more a concept of action than of contemplation, and finds it more closely allied to the pagan view that rulers should be insolated with "martial and civic virtùs rather than the Christian ones like humility." This difference is due mainly to Machiavelli's focus, which is man in his religious and secular environment. Like the Renaissance Italian humanists, however, Machiavelli recognised the effect one man could have upon the ethos of the state and, like them, looked upon the ruler as a creative force. The importance of virtù is evident by its frequent appearance throughout The Prince, being used fifty-five times as a noun, three times as an adjective and once as an adverb. According to Mark Maza, the definition most frequently cited for virtù is "the human will in action"; however, other attempts have been made to define it which deserve mention. Maza, in his introduction to The Prince, cites twelve possible interpretations of virtù, finding "ingenuity" to be the most satisfactory and the Christian sense of virtue the least. Massaeo describes virtù as that "human power which guided by an understanding of the nature of things, can do what is possible to arrest the decline of the state, or one's "sheer ability," or "prudence in the sense of practical insight and the power to act on it, without any ethical meaning attached." Although Machiavelli did not set down an explicit definition for virtù

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9 ibid., p. x.
10 Massaeo, p. 154.
11 ibid., p. 156.
in *The Prince*, I would define his use of the concept as the human ability or willingness to use force creatively, in its most inclusive sense in martial and civic affairs, but prudently, in terms only of an ethic of consequence. By an ethic of consequence, I mean an exclusive concern for the way things turn out rather than troubling oneself about the moral issues that may arise regarding the means taken to achieve desired ends. The concept of *virtù* is summed up in Machiavelli's description of the prince's utilisation of the metaphors of the lion and the fox. Regarding the use of force Machiavelli asserts, "Those who live by the lion alone do not understand matters," and further on, regarding statecraft, "... he who has known best how to use the fox has come to a better end." Here and in other places, he emphasises the need for political flexibility as well as calculation or cunning.

All these concepts became clear to Machiavelli in his observations of the two major political figures of his time, Ciriaco Savonarola, a Dominican friar who came to Florence in 1481, and ruled the Florentine republic from 1494 to 1498; and Cesare Borgia, the illegitimate son of Pope Alexander VI, who launched one of the most striking political and military adventures of the sixteenth century. Savonarola achieved political power in Florence by means of his fantastic and animated preaching and for a while obtained the wide popular support of those who had faith in his cause, but when the religious and

\[12\] Machiavelli, p. 145.

psychological persuasions that brought him to power declined, he lacked the force necessary to maintain control. Cesare Borgia, on the other hand, achieved political power through force and cunning. Although Machiavelli praises at great length the exploits of Borgia, he does point out in *The Prince*, that Borgia was hindered from the start in that "his troops did not seem faithful."\(^{14}\) to him, and concludes his remarks on Borgia's attempts to placate his enemies by saying, "And whoever believes that with prominent personages new benefits cause old injuries to be forgotten is deceiving himself."\(^{15}\) It appeared, then, to Machiavelli that the prince's supporters must have faith in his cause or regime and that adequate force for the maintenance of power was also necessary should that faith waver. Dependence upon one to the neglect of the other, as in the case of Savonarola or Cesare Borgia, could bring about the prince's downfall. Thus, in respect to the direct and indirect means the ruler might employ to acquire or maintain political power, Machiavelli concludes by saying the ruler "must have a mind ready to turn itself according as the winds of fortune and the fluctuation of things command him."\(^{16}\)

In regard to the use of force, Machiavelli raises a psychological question that haunted the Renaissance mind: "whether it is better to be loved than feared."\(^{17}\) His answer is unequivocal that it is much safer to be feared than loved. His reasons are closely tied to his beliefs concerning human nature and the will. Self-interest Machiavelli

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sees as the overriding influence in all human activity and produces, therefore, one of the main problems of governing and being governed. Yet as Mannoe points out, "Self-interest, however, is not only society's disease, but also its remedy." Successful rulers must maintain an uneasy equilibrium between infinite desire and actual gratification in their subjects and this is one of the major problems in maintaining the stability of any state. Complicating this problem is the inconstant human will, whose fluctuations Machiavelli sees as the principal constant factor in human relationships. "Love is held by a link of obligation," Machiavelli states, which men will break any time their self-interest is involved, "but fear is held by a dread of punishment.

Here and in other places Machiavelli underscores love, pity, and fear as weaknesses which often prevent the ruler from ruling efficiently. Machiavelli's idea of fear of the ruler is closely related to the religious or classical sense of fear, that is, fear in the sense of awe. In addition, he makes a careful distinction between fear and hatred or contempt: "A prince must nevertheless make himself feared in such a way that if he does not gain love, he will avoid hate."

In the development of his ideas on 'Cruelty and Compassion,' he criticizes both excessive leniency and excessive cruelty performed without sufficient reason or justification. Although often described as an advocate of ultimate ends irrespective of means, Machiavelli

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18Mannoe, p. 121.
19Machiavelli, p. 139.
20Ibid.
21Ibid.
states in *The Prince*, "... it cannot be called ingenuity to kill one's fellow citizens, betray friends, be without faith, without pity, without religion; all of these may bring one to power but not to glory,"\(^2\) and glory as an essential element in a prince's life is well substantiated in the examples he cites.

Although I have limited my discussion of *virtù* to the use of physical force or fear, Machiavelli does not limit the prince to either. He also advocates the creation of public spirit, be it by means of myth, religion or ideology, so as to reduce the need for the exercise of physical force. Self-interest and the unstable nature of human will, however, remain two of the three volatile factors a prince must deal with in his subjects; the third is *fortuna*.

**Fortuna**

"I am not unaware that many have been and still are of the opinion that worldly affairs are in a way governed by fortune and by God,"\(^3\) begins Machiavelli in his chapter discussing, 'How Much Fortune Can Do in Human Affairs and How to Contend With It.' The idea of *fortuna* or fortune is in certain respects antithetical to Machiavelli's idea of *virtù*. In *The Prince* he clarifies the relationship between the two ideas when he says, "I hold it could be true that fortune is the arbiter of half our actions, but she leaves the other half, or close to it, to be governed by us."\(^4\) In *The Prince*, Machiavelli never denies the existence of God or of fortune or its various descriptive equivalents, such as chance, the impersonal agencies active in

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 69. \(^3\)Ibid., p. 209. \(^4\)Ibid.
the lives of men, the force of logic or history, events which can be neither predicted nor understood, or fate. What he does do is to persuade the prince away from the mysticism which surrounds these ideas and toward an attitude that deals with these concepts realistically. Machiavelli's idea of fortune is closely related to that of pagan antiquity. Fortune is not Dante's image of an angelic intelligence or a simple principle that whoever rises must fall. In addition to trying to persuade the prince to give up such ideas, Machiavelli encourages the prince to prepare himself for uncertain turns in events and to adapt himself to changing circumstances. His frequent references to the Romans who took more pride in exercising their prudence and foresight in heading off incipient calamities than in enjoying the fruits of temporary peace illustrated this point. What Machiavelli is trying to do is to instill a certain attitude toward fortune in his prince by condemning the inflexibility and overcautiousness of men in contending with fortune. Emphasizing these two points he concludes:

... fortune varying, and men remaining fixed in their ways, while the two are in accordance with each other men are prosperous, and when they are in discord, unprosperous. I am certainly convinced of this: that it is better to be impetuous than cautious, because fortune is a woman, and it is necessary, if one wishes to hold her down, to beat her and fight with her.

Occasions

Virtu and fortuna are closely related to Machiavelli's concept of occasions. Fortune, the external circumstances or unfolding of

26 Ibid., p. 155.
27 Machiavelli, p. 215.
events, give the prince the opportunity or occasion either to rise to power or display his particular talents in martial and civic affairs. Virtù is the ability or willingness to make the most of the occasions, shaping it to one's needs. The word describes that transitional point in time where one may move from a state of contemplation and preparation to one of decisive action. Without virtù the occasion may pass in vain, and to make use of it requires for the most part the utilization of the nature of the fox. A prince may also create various occasions or opportunities for himself, such as cultivating some hostility, in order to display his talent in stamping it out, thereby augmenting his greatness. It is important, therefore, that when the occasion arises the prince has laid his foundation and is prepared to take advantage of it, for as Machiavelli states, "... armed prophets conquered and the unarmed came to ruin."28

Necessità

Necessità or necessity is the last major concept of Machiavelli's political theory that requires definition, appearing fifty-one times in The Prince.29 Necessity, as a force, is that arrangement of circumstances, power, or political relationships which the prince contends with in coming to or maintaining power. Necessity also justifies the means a prince may take in securing a political objective or the process of keeping up an acceptable appearance of things. To illustrate the first concept, Ralph Roeder in his work, The Man of the Renaissance,

28Ibid., p. 45.
29Maza, p. xv.
describes Cardinal della Rovere explaining to Machiavelli, "Necessity forces men to do what they dislike while they depend on others, but once they are free they act otherwise."\textsuperscript{30} As indicated earlier, Machiavelli's concepts of self-interest and the human will would support this idea. Hence, Machiavelli has to justify ethical flexibility. The following example illustrates the use of the word in its second sense: "Whereby it is necessary for a prince who wishes to maintain his position to learn how not to be good, and to use it or not according to necessity."\textsuperscript{31}

Virtù, fortuna, occasiona and necessità, then, are the principal ideas or concepts upon which Machiavelli's theory is based. Though not always used in the same sense in \textit{The Prince}, nevertheless these concepts maintain a reasonable degree of continuity of meaning throughout the work.

\section*{II}

Although there is no evidence that Shakespeare ever read Machiavelli, there is considerable evidence that Machiavelli was widely read in England and his maxims and terminology were familiar to a number of Elizabethan writers, for instance, Ben Jonson, Sir Walter Raleigh and Christopher Marlowe. Of these men, Marlowe's acquaintance with the works of Machiavelli is the most significant. As Harry Levin reminds us in his study of Marlowe, \textit{The Overreacher}, Shakespeare and Marlowe were exact contemporaries and:

\textsuperscript{30}Ralph Reeder, \textit{The Man of the Renaissance} (New York, 1933), p. 192.

\textsuperscript{31}Machiavelli, p. 127.
as we enter the 1590's . . . Shakespeare will soon be catching up with Marlowe. He will be imitating his contemporary, cut-Marlowing the Marlovian idiom, in Richard III. But Shakespeare may have meanwhile established, with Henry VI, a dramatic balance and a lyrical modulation which Marlowe may well be emulating in Edward III.\(^2\)

The Marlovian work to which Levin is alluding here is The Jew of Malta, in which Machiavellianism is fully evident here and there. Irving Ribner, in his introduction to The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe, places the probable date of the first performance of this play somewhere between 23 December, 1588, when the Duke of Guise was assassinated, and 26 February, 1592, when a performance of the play by Lord Strange's Men is recorded in Philip Henslowe's diary.\(^3\) The composition of Shakespeare's Richard III can be safely dated between 1591 and 1594.\(^4\) These dates lend some support to Levin's claim of Marlovian influence upon Shakespeare, although the exact dating regarding the plays remains problematical. A worthwhile, though brief, comparison can be made between The Jew of Malta and Richard III, a comparison which, I believe, will substantiate Levin's comment and indicate how Marlowe and Shakespeare were initially influenced by Machiavelli.

As a member of the dramatic personae of The Jew of Malta, "Machiavelli" introduces the play in the prologue, setting forth basic beliefs which had come to be identified with Machiavelli: the habits


of considering "not men therefore not men's words" (Prologue, 8), and of counting "religion but a childish toy" (Prologue, 14). These ideas, however, are secondary matters, in view of Marlowe's introduction of the wealthy Jew, Barabas, the central character of the play, whose money, "Machiavelli" states "was not got without my means" (Prologue, 32). Just what these "means" are is perhaps best summed up in the word "policy," a key word used in crucial passages throughout the play. The word is discussed at length by Mario Praz in Machiavelli and the Elizabethans. Praz states:

As soon as the dramatists became haunted by the character of the Machiavellian knave, they began to use with an unprecedented frequency the words 'policy' and 'politic'. . . . The association between 'politic' and 'Machiavellian' became so close that the Italian form 'politico' was used in England with the bad connotation already illustrated (see N.E.D. under "politico").

Nor is this all. In Act II, Barabas instructs his servant Ithamore to rid himself of certain Machiavellian weaknesses: "First, be thou void of these affections:/ Compassion, love, vain hope, and heartless fear./ Be mov'd at nothing. See thou pity none" (II.iii.166-168). A similar comment is made by Richard, Duke of Gloucester (Richard III to be), in 3 Henry VI, "I that have neither pity, love, nor fear" (V.vi.68), and indeed as Richard III closes, Richard finds himself to have been

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36Praz, p. 15.

The problem with Italian in general and Macbeth particularly in particular.

the Italian with Italian in general and Macbeth particularly in particular. The
are Italian with Italian in general and Macbeth particularly in particular. Both plays
seen a satiric "when most I play the devil" (I.1.111-113). Both plays
written and made allusion with odd ends stuck in worth of holy writ and

290-293). Therefore, common to a similar story in the final play, there never seen
the heaven's never seen "as firm as mean stock and them" dissimulate

therefore, the Italian with Italian in general. "As Good as

and a characteristic appearance of the previous play. As a picture, not a
the appearance is stressed in both plays, as well as the need to keep

The importance of patience, secrecy and preparing oneself for

III in greater detail.

human nature. Here will be said on this subject when I desire high

and both find that love cannot be exclusively used or expanded from

both seen to free themselves to be without love, both desire to be loved

needs love for his own purposes, both play dramatic, that even though

and his setting. Therefore, Richard, although he desire to be loved,

and Lady Drew. Like Parables in his relations with the daughter Althea

relation. Richard III opens with a love scene in which Richard caught love to...

appreciation of both characters and Richard III toward love are quite to-

If I die, no soul will pity me" (II.3.11-20). ...190-202), the

sudden rift of despair he states, there is no creature loves me! and

so unfortunate that he has observed no ethical limit whatsoever. In a
parallels drawn here, however, are only superficial and do not lead us very far when we begin to question whether or not Marlowe and Shakespeare were truly dealing with the basic political and moral issues raised by Machiavelli. For it is the primary aim of this paper to show that both Marlowe, and more so Shakespeare, were aware of these issues and dealt with the subtler aspects of Machiavelli's theory. In respect to Marlowe, this fact, as I think it is, can best be seen in his English history play, Edward II.

Edward II was probably written in 1592 or 1593, and was probably first performed in 1592, approximately one year after the initial performance of The Jew of Malta. Dr. F. S. Beas, however, has marshalled evidence leading to the conclusion that the play cannot be dated before 1592. But since the same company of actors performed Edward II and 2 and 3 Henry VI, the probability is strong that Shakespeare saw the play or knew of the issues raised in it before launching into his second tetralogy of historical plays, Richard II, 1 and 2 Henry IV and Henry V. Like Shakespeare in the Henry VI-Richard III tetralogy, Marlowe dramatizes a king far removed from regal grandeur. The character who captures our attention is Mortimer the younger, and it is through him that we see Marlowe's handling of the issues raised by Machiavelli.

Definite contrasts between Edward II and Mortimer are apparent from the start. Edward II is both passive and incompetent in martial

39 Ribner, Plays, p. xiii.


and civic affairs, while Mortimer is active and capable. From the outset we also gain an understanding of the role fortune plays in the lives of both men and their respective attitudes toward it. The issues of virtù and fortuna are most apparent in the relationships of both men with the nobles, commons and the church. As a result of his homosexual affection for Gaveston and the pursuit of his own self-will at the expense of the welfare of the realm, Edward II has alienated himself from the nobles of the realm. Through overtaxation in order to lavish gifts and expensive entertainment upon Gaveston, Edward II has alienated the commons, and in seizing the goods of the church, he has lost the support of the English hierarchy. Mortimer, on the other hand, is highly respected for his martial ability, whereas Edward II has seldom appeared in the field and then only for show. Mortimer is also intent that the king attend to matters of state. He has the support of the commons to such an extent that when Gaveston proposes sending him to the Tower, Edward II replies, "I dare not, for the people love him well" (II.ii.233). The combination of Edward's misrule and Gaveston's impudence in diverting the king's attention from the affairs of the realm strengthens Mortimer's position as the champion of responsible government. When Gaveston is finally banished, however, Mortimer's influence diminishes. He therefore consents to the Queen's appeal for the return of Gaveston, justifying the action on the basis "of necessity" (I.iv.38), or the possibility that Gaveston may raise an army to attack Mortimer and the estranged nobility and restore himself to his position as the king's minion and adviser. In pursuing this course of action, Mortimer exercises his virtù by skillfully
employing the nature of the fox. Later, his position is further strengthened by Edward's refusal to ransom Mortimer's uncle, the elder Mortimer who has been captured by the Scots in the king's wars, and by the disaffection of Kent, the king's brother who realizes that the king's affection for Caveston, "Will be the ruin of the realm" (II.ii. 207). These events, all of which amount to fortune in Machiavelli's sense, give Mortimer the occasions to again exercise his virtù, to display his talents, and in the process rise to power.

When Edward II is eventually deposed, he blames his fall on fortune, saying, "O day! the last of all my bliss on earth, / Center of all misfortune! 0 my stars, / Why do you look unkindly on a king?" (IV.vi.61-63). In The Prince, Machiavelli comments on the kind of attitude Edward II has concerning the role of fortune in the life of the ruler when he says:

Therefore, let these princes of ours who have been in their principalities for many years and then come to lose them not blame fortune, but rather their own laziness; because never having thought during peaceable times that conditions could change (which is a common fault of men, not to consider the possibility of a storm when the weather is fine), when adverse times come, they thought about running away instead of defending themselves; and they hoped that the people, disgusted with the outrages of the conquerers, might call them back. ④

But it is evident that Edward II's attitude toward fortune is close to the classical and medieval conception, which Machiavelli criticizes at the beginning of his chapter on "How Much Fortune Can Do in Human Affairs and How to Contend With It." He says of fortune,. . . that men with their wisdom in worldly affairs are not able to control them,

④Machiavelli, p. 207.
indeed, that men can do nothing about them, and for this reason they would conclude that there is no point in sweating much over these things, instead let them be governed by chance." Edward II assumes this attitude rather than fight with fortune to bend it to his will. Yet Edward II finally realises, in a Machiavellian sense, the essential role of force in the affairs of state when he says, "But what are kings when regiment is gone" (V.1.26).

In Mortimer we also see a movement toward an inflexible attitude toward fortune. He says to Gurney, "As thou intendest to rise by Mortimer, / Who now makes Fortune's wheel turn as he please" (V.ii.52-53). Here, Marlowe takes the medieval image of "Fortune's wheel" and adapts it to express the sense of a Machiavellian idea of a growing self-willed and inflexible attitude toward fortune like that described above, which verges on hybris. Later, Mortimer, in describing his strategy for maintaining power, again reveals his attitude toward fortune, saying, "Mine enemies will I plague, my friends advance, / And what I list command who dare control? / Major sum quam cui possit fortuna necesse. [I am greater than fortune]" (V.iv.67-69). Such an attitude again indicates a growing kind of hybris.

In addition to blaming fortune for his downfall, Edward II raises the issue of cruelty and compassion, "Yet how have I transgressed, / Unless it be with too much clemency?" (V.1.22-23). Edward II's comment, however, indicates a kind of self-deception or excuse for his own passive nature or unwillingness to use force rather than the active virtue which he claims. Mortimer, we find, is at the other

\(^{43}\text{Ibid.},\ p.\ 209.\)
extreme. Kent, though for a time an ally of Mortimer, soon recognises Mortimer’s true purpose, "Edward, this Mortimer aims at thy life" (IV. v.19). When Kent violates Mortimer’s directive and attempts to rescue Edward II from captivity, Mortimer has Kent beheaded even though he is without the legal authority to execute such an order and ignores the protestations of Prince Edward, legal heir to the throne. In Mortimer’s action there is grossly lacking the "convenient justification and manifest reason" Machiavelli set down as a requirement for taking life. But Mortimer has become politically hybristic, "I seal, I cancel, I do what I will./ Fear’d am I more than loved; let me be feared" (V.i.v.51-52). Consequently, Mortimer through his actions does what Edward II has done through inactivity. Unlike Edward II he is feared, but he also becomes hated and held in contempt by nobles and commons alike.

Necessity, reasons Mortimer in Act I, requires that Gaveston return to England, otherwise while banished he might raise an army and return to take by force the position he was formerly granted by Edward II. Later necessity forces Mortimer to make a temporary alliance with the forces raised by the Queen, Prince Edward and Sir John Hainault of France. On the first occasion Mortimer uses the word to justify an arrangement of circumstances which would again put him within striking distance of the crown. Defeated in this attempt by developments he did not foresee, and finding himself an outcast, he is forced by necessity to rely on others. Mortimer begins to act highhandedly, and the distinctions between good and evil fade. As the play develops, however, Mortimer uses the concept of necessity more and more as a means of

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justifying his own ambitions. Necessity seems to him a force with which he must contend less and less. This shift in combination with his growing inflexible attitude toward fortune and his lack of foresight concerning the difficulties involved in removing a lawful monarch from the throne cause further complications.

The psychological forces which Machiavelli recognized in situations similar to those in which Mortimer and Edward II are involved, and of which Marlowe no doubt was aware, now begin to assert themselves. Having been held in captivity for so long and caused to suffer as much, Edward II comes to be pitied by nobles and commons alike. Mortimer realizes, too late, "The king must die, or Mortimer goes down" (V.i.28-39). The letter, a masterpiece of ambiguity, which Mortimer employs to rid himself of Edward II, is ineffective in masking his part in the murder. Through Gurney, it falls into the hands of Prince Edward, to whom the intent of the letter is clear, and Mortimer's complicity is discovered. Thus, Mortimer's hybristc attitudes toward fortune and necessity eventually bring about his final downfall. His plot discovered, Mortimer acknowledges, "Base Fortune, now I see, that in thy wheel/ There is a point, to which when men aspire,/ They tumble headlong down. That point touch'd/ And seeing there was no place to mount up higher,/ Why should I grieve at my declining fall" (V.vi.59-63). Whether or not Marlowe is here presenting a critique upon Machiavelli's view of fortuna is perhaps a new point, but it is clear that Marlowe sees fortuna as one part of the political complex.

To sum up, comparison of The Jew of Malta and Edward II reveals a gradual but definite move by Marlowe away from a theatrical portrayal
of the Machiavellian villain toward an in-depth examination of ideas
and concepts dear to Machiavelli. In Edward II there is less emphasis
on the melodramatic effects of intrigue and treachery. Stereotypes
like poisoned flowers and intricate deceptions are conspicuously absent,
and attention is centered on the four basic issues of virtù, fortuna,
occasione and necessità. Marlowe confronts his characters with actual
problems involved in governing and being governed, and sets his char-
acters in a public rather than an essentially private world like that
of Barabas. As will be seen, Shakespeare examines these same issues
in his three Henry VI plays and Richard III of the first tetralogy.
In Richard III, Shakespeare reaches a kind of apex, examining criti-
cally with the help of the rich historical material available to him,
the more shocking aspects of Machiavelli's theory, shocking to those
who were opposed to Machiavelli's position in The Prince, that violence
and deception are keys to obtaining and maintaining political power.
Aside from this aspect of Richard III, however, we can perceive through
both of Shakespeare's historical tetralogies, a similar movement to
that of Marlowe, and as we witness his growth as a playwright, we also
perceive his growing ability to deal with the subtler aspects of pol-
itical philosophy. These include the principal Machiavellian concepts
isolated at the beginning of this chapter.
CHAPTER I

PARTS I, II AND III HENRY VI

The order in which I wish to consider Shakespeare's English history plays is that of the First Folio in which the first tetralogy (the three parts of Henry VI and Richard III—1590-1593) precedes the isolated play, King John (1595-1596), after which follows the second tetralogy (Richard II, the two parts of Henry IV, and Henry V—1595-1599). In dealing with 1, 2 and 3 Henry VI, however, I wish to move freely from one play to another, because issues raised in Parts I and II are not resolved until Part III; just as in 3 Henry VI and Richard III, what takes place is often related to events which have occurred in the earlier plays. King John is important because it deals with the issue of "commodity," a concept important not only to Shakespeare's depiction of the ruler, vis-à-vis the state, but to his analysis of self-interest in political life, and self-interest is, of course, at the core of Machiavelli's political thought, as that thought involves man's psychology. Approximately ten years after Shakespeare completed Henry V, he wrote Henry VIII, another isolated history play which I have chosen to omit because the principal issue dealt with in this play, the development of Christian patience in four of the characters, is not essentially historical and has no firm connection with political thought, be it Machiavelli's or Shakespeare's.

The first tetralogy sets the foundations for issues, typically Machiavellian, which are further developed or reexamined in the second tetralogy. Together they make up a thorough dramatic presentation of
the qualities of the ideal king and the characteristics of the ideal state, in addition to many political issues crucial to Tudor England in Shakespeare's age. At the same time they frequently provide a critique, whether deliberate or not, of characteristic Machiavellian concepts whose locus is *The Prince.*

In *1 Henry VI,* Shakespeare limns in the landscape of political chaos. Through the dialogue and actions of the principal characters, he sets down the causes of the disorder, rebellion and political anarchy in England that led to The War of the Roses in the fifteenth century. He does this by focusing primarily upon the three volatile factors a ruler must come to terms with (already outlined in the Introduction to this study): man's innate self-interest, the unstable nature of the human will, and the role of fortune in political affairs. In Act I, scene I, Bedford, uncle to Henry VI, introduces the theme of disharmony which is to prevail throughout all of Shakespeare's English history plays until in *Henry V* order, degree and the *commitas*¹ of the realm are restored.

Before the bier of Henry V (who died in 1422), Bedford states:

> Hung be the heavens with black, yield day to night!
> Comets, importing change of times and states,
> Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky
> And with them scourge the bad revolting stars
> That have consented unto Henry's death—
> King Henry the Fifth, too famous to live long!
> England ne'er lost a king of so much worth.

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¹ *Commitas*—harmonious unification of various political factions in a state or kingdom, resulting in a sense of oneness, purpose or direction.

In alluding here to the correspondences between the cosmos and the body politic, Bedford not only refers to the state of discord in the kingdom but also links this discord with fortune ("the bad revolting stars"). Here is one of many instances in which fortune is used in a near Machiavellian sense; fortune in this context means the unpredicatable unfolding of political events in the lives of men. Tillyard, in The Elizabthan World Picture, clarifies the Elizabethan attitude toward fortune when he states that "for the Elizabethans the moving forces of history were Providence, fortune, and human character." Although Machiavelli places greater stress upon human character than upon fortune or providence, he does recognize fortune as one of three volatile factors that a prince must come to terms with, whether he is seeking power or is trying to retain it.

Tillyard further states, however; "It must not be thought that the evident havoc in nature's order wrought by the stars at all upset the evidence of God's Providence. . . . It was not primarily God who allowed it [havoc] but man who inflicted it on both himself and the physical universe." Thus, Bedford's reference to "the bad revolting stars" has a double meaning. He refers to the rebels in the realm who have brought about disorder as well as to the "stars" that have conspired to bring about the death of Henry V. According to Tillyard, in spite of the Elizabethan's attitudes toward fortune and the stars, they "always fought the superstition that man was a slave as well as victim of chance," and Shakespeare was no exception to this Elizabethan view.

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4 Ibid., p. 54.
5 Ibid., p. 55.
Exeter, shortly after Bedford's remarks on Henry V's death, comments:

Upon a wooden coffin we attend,
And death's dishonorable victory
We wish our stately presence glorify,
Like captives bound to a triumphant car.
What? Shall we curse the planets of mishap
That plotted thus our glory's overthrow?
Or shall we think the subtile-witted French
Conjurers and sorcerers, that, afraid of him,
By magic verses have contrived his end?
(I.1.19-24)

Exeter questions the validity of the interpretation of what has happened as the result of fortune or the chaotic movement of the stars and, like Machiavelli, questions just what role fortune plays in the lives of men. Indeed, his remarks reveal some resistance to the complete acceptance of the idea that what has happened is strictly the result of misfortune or the sorcery of the French. As the play develops, we continue to see instances of this questioning attitude. In France, Charles, the Dauphin, comments on fortune's arbitrary nature, saying:

Mars his true moving, even as in the heavens
So in the earth, to this day is not known.
Late did he shine upon the English side;
Now we are victors, upon us he smiles.
(I.i.1-4)

Again, our attention is directed to the unpredictability of political events. In this same act, Talbot comments upon the role of fortune or Divine Providence in respect to the apparent sorcery of Joan of Arc which prevents him from defeating the French: "Heavens, can you suffer hell to prevail?" (I.v.9). In this passage it is not clear whether "Heavens" is a reference to fortune or to Divine Providence. A close examination of references of this sort, however, reveals that Shakespeare uses both concepts interchangeably. Hence, questions and attitudes
toward the unpredictability of events and their causation remain un-
answered or are not commented upon at any length in the first tetralogy.
Fortune, however, is introduced as a concept with which the principal
characters must come to terms either by submitting to it or by trying
to wrest it to their own will.

Helpless anxiety over political disorder, which Bedford attri-
butes to the inexplicable working of fortune or the stars, is added to,
for when Henry V dies, Henry VI is still an infant in his cradle.
Anxiety is also apparent in the prevailing tone of the remarks of Hum-
phrey, Lord Protector of the Realm, and the other nobles as they prepare
to attend Henry V's funeral. Their anxiety is well founded. Henry VI's
claim to the throne is questionable owing to the usurpation of the
throne by his grandfather, Henry IV, in 1399, and the subsequent secret
murder of Richard II in 1400. Although Henry VI assumes the throne in
a legal manner, nevertheless as a child without the support of proven
followers he lacks both the physical and psychological force necessary
to maintain himself as king. Henry VI's incapacity, as a child, to
rule necessitates the creation of a protectorship, a role assumed by
his uncle, Humphrey of Gloucester. But the weakness of Henry VI's
dynastic right to the throne, the growing dissension among the nobles,
a number of whom wish to be the power behind the throne, and the dynas-
tic claim of Richard Plantagenet, who bases his right of succession
through his descent from the third son, Edward III, Lionel Duke of
Clarence—all these factors cause the development of three major polit-
cal factions within the kingdom. One is led by Humphrey of Gloucester
and is supported by individuals like Lord Talbot, all of whom stand for
political stability and the military power to maintain it. Another,
led by Richard Plantagenet, is made up of those who wish to assert Richard's claim to the throne; and a third, led by the Earl of Somerset and Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, wish to retain Henry VI as king, but are determined to exercise the dominant influence in the internal and external affairs of England. This, briefly, is the political situation. Shakespeare, however, is more concerned with the political and moral issues raised as a result of this situation than with the "who's in, who's out" aspects of court politics.

In the three Henry VI plays, then, Shakespeare is initially concerned with the causes of dissension, rebellion and political anarchy. This concern naturally leads to implicit examination of the strengths and weaknesses of the divine right theory of monarchy in respect to Henry VI and the corruption of the public and the private will. Shakespeare's main focus, however, is centered upon the inadequacies of political leadership in a world in which the public attributes of kingship are of major importance.

One of the major questions raised in the three parts of Henry VI concerns the legality of Henry VI's title to the throne. Dynastic succession has been violently broken by Bolingbroke, so that the question remains whether or not the throne which was taken by force and duplicity cannot be claimed and reclaimed by the same means by other aspirants to the crown. For a more thorough examination of the doctrine of divine right, which is involved here, we would have to move ahead to

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6 No playwright in Shakespeare's age would have been permitted to stage a play that dealt overtly with this theme, since the Tudor monarchs all held to the theory of divine right, even if they seldom mentioned it in public.
Richard II, in which Shakespeare treats this question in depth. It is enough to say here, however, that the reign of Henry VI is haunted by the same legal and moral questions regarding divine right that face Bolingbroke in 1 and 2 Henry VI. These questions, of course, faced the Tudor monarchs and were also of great interest to Shakespeare's audience. Because of Bolingbroke's action, Henry VI's claim to the throne is defective. If the breach cannot be repaired in a manner other than acceptance of the claim of Richard Plantagenet, which is dynastically better than Henry VI's claim, some other means must be relied on if Henry VI and his possible successors are to rule peaceably.

Initially in 1 and 2 Henry VI, the mystique of divine right manages to hold the more active and rebellious subjects of the king in a state of uneasy orderliness, but that mystique is beginning to lose its effectiveness. Although Humphrey has the title of Lord Protector of the Realm, he is in other respects on an equal footing with the other nobles, many of whom are envious of his position. Gradually the philosophical and psychological persuasions of the divine right theory deteriorate until a conflict of wills among the power-hungry nobles takes over. The Earl of Suffolk, for instance, argues openly: "Faith, I have always been a truant in the law/ And never yet could frame my will to it,/ And therefore frame the law unto my will" (II.iv.7-9). Suffolk makes this comment in the Temple Garden scene (1 Henry VI) which depicts the creation of the rival factions of Lancaster and York. What Suffolk openly acknowledges is fully visible in the actions of members of both factions. In Act I, scene iii, Humphrey confronts two guards of the Tower of London appointed by the Bishop of Winchester to prevent him from taking a survey of the artillery and munitions stored
there. When challenged, Humphrey questions, "Who willed you? or whose will stands but mine?/ There's none Protector of the realm but I" (I.iii.11-12). Humphrey asserts his will in terms of the law which has given him the legal authority to do so. Nevertheless, the Bishop of Winchester exercises his own private will when he opposes Humphrey and backs up his self-willed decisions with threats of force. Through Suffolk's comments and actions, which are similar to those of the Bishop of Winchester, it becomes apparent that the public will as expressed in law has deteriorated into individualistic and self-willed interpretations of the law, all of them prompted by the basic self-interest which Machiavelli asserted as the basis for all human action, especially in the political sphere.

In subsequent scenes in both 1 and 2 Henry VI, the attitude Suffolk expresses toward the law becomes highly contagious and infects individuals and groups on all levels of the social order. It takes an extreme form in 2 Henry VI, in the words of rebel Jack Cade, incited secretly to engage in rebellion by Richard Plantagenet, who declares, "My mouth shall be the parliament of England" (2 H. VI, IV.vi.12-13). Cade makes this declaration immediately after dispatching a band of his followers to destroy the Inns of Court. Cade, however, is not alone in his effort to destroy the laws of England. His followers rationalize Cade's usurpation of authority with the shout that "the king's council are no good workmen" (2 H. VI, IV.ii.13-14); they claim that the king's council have so grossly neglected the art of statecraft that the commons are justified in attempting to overthrow Henry VI and his government.

Shakespeare's treatment of Cade's rebellion is in itself a highly successful emblem of the degree to which old political and moral values
and standards have fallen, for the rebellion scenes are both realistic and allegorical. In Cade's world values and standards are inverted—seven halfpenny loaves will be sold for a penny, the three-hooped pot will have ten hoops, the pissing conduit will run nothing but claret for a year. Cade and his followers argue that it is a capital crime to read and write or keep records other than with the score and tally, that it is high treason to speak French, and that, henceforth, all things are to be held in common.

Throughout the series of Henry VI plays, however, Shakespeare dramatizes the ideal norm from which Cade and his company, as well as the nobility of the realm, are departing. The two most memorable passages which dramatize the norm are, no doubt, Talbot's third act speech in 1 Henry VI, in which he pays his respects to God and his king, that is, to political and moral order, and Henry VI's pathetic soliloquy in the "molehill scene" 3 Henry VI, another allegorical scene in which Henry VI voices his regret that he was born a king and instead longs for the peaceful and ordered life of a shepherd. Talbot states:

My gracious prince and honorable peers,
Hearing of your arrival in this realm,
I have awhile given trace unto my wars
To do my duty to my sovereign;
In the sign whereof this arm that hath reclaimed
To your obedience fifty fortresses,
Twelve cities, and seven walled towns of strength,
Beside five hundred prisoners of esteem,
Let's fall his sword before your highness' feet [Kneels]
And with submissive loyalty of heart
Ascribes the glory of his conquest got
First to my God and next unto your grace.

(1 H. VI, III.iii.1-12)

Unlike Cade, Talbot respects order and degree. The sentiments Talbot expresses, duty, obedience and submissive loyalty, are in direct contrast to those of the factions of York and Lancaster, as well as those of Cade
and his followers.

The second ideal norm is proclaimed by Henry VI when he says:

O God! methinks it were a happy life
To be no better than a homely swain;
To sit upon a hill, as I do now,
To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,
Thereby to see the minutes how they run—
How many makes the hour full complete,
How many hours brings about the day,
How many days will finish up the year,
How many years a mortal man may live;
When this is known, then to divide the times—
So many hours must I tend my flock,
So many hours must I take my rest,
So many hours must I contemplate,
So many hours must I sport myself;
So many days my ewes have been with young,
So many weeks ere the poor fools will eat,
So many months ere I shall shear the fleece,
So many minutes, hours, days, weeks, month, and years,
Passed over to the end they were created,
Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.
0, what a life were this! how sweet, how lovely!

(3 H. VI, II.v.21-41)

In addition to expressing his desire for peace and order, Henry VI's remarks are touched with pathos and irony, for the context of Henry's remarks is the Battle of Towton, one of the bloodiest in the history of The War of the Roses. Yet Henry VI's comments here are not without merit, for in them he shows his awareness of how far the nobles and commons have strayed from any decent value system, and he is clearly, in 3 Henry VI, the only disinterested character in the play. The ideas expressed in these two passages, respect for degree in Talbot's speech and the desire for peace and order in Henry VI's lament, are in direct contrast to the ideas voiced by Jack Cade.

Cade's world in its anarchy is close to that which Machiavelli saw surrounding him in the first decades of sixteenth century Italy. Direct political observation informed Machiavelli that the natural
state of man was one of disorder owing to "the destructive and anarchic side of human nature which makes it inevitable that a state shall go from political virtue and peace to idleness, disorder, and finally ruin." Shakespeare, however, in the English history plays, does not express Machiavelli's concept that history is both cyclical and degenerative, but he does make the point that Henry VI, as a king ought to be able to impose the kind of order for which he longs but lacks the will and ability to do so. In this respect, Shakespeare expresses a view similar to that of Machiavelli who believed that although the prince might not be able to maintain the status quo, he could by exercising virtù, do what was possible to arrest the decline of the state in respect to civil and moral order, or maintain the stability of the state while it was in the process of decline. Henry VI, however, lacks virtù or the will and ability to either impose order or arrest the decline of civil and moral order in the kingdom.

Early in 1 Henry VI Shakespeare presents the primary reason for the growing dissension in the kingdom by directing attention immediately to the death of Henry V. His death is symbolic not only of the decline of Christian virtue, but of virtù in the ancient Roman sense, that is, of martial and civic abilities rather than Christian virtues like humility. Humphrey's comments, which immediately follow Bedford's statement on Henry V's death and the disharmony of the cosmos, already quoted, deal entirely with Henry V's martial abilities and accomplishments. The disappearance of the martial and civic abilities Henry V embodied is immediately apparent as the messenger in Act I, scene 1, enters to

7 Mazzeo, p. 151.
report the English defeats in France. These defeats are not the result of changing fortune but of political and military mismanagement, of factionalism at home and want of men and money in France at the right time and place. In 2 and 3 Henry VI, the death of virtù is also evident in the acts and omissions of Henry VI, for in 1 Henry VI, it will be remembered, Henry VI is only a child until at the end of the play he has reached a marriageable age and decides to exercise his own will in the kingdom's political and military affairs.

The decline of virtù, however, is also apparent in the actions and frustrations of Humphrey in the legal and administrative affairs of the kingdom, as well as in the frustration of Lord Talbot as the king's military commander in France. Although Humphrey enjoys an extensive knowledge of the law and has the authority to use the law to maintain Henry VI as king, he overlooks the fact that the government lacks the physical force necessary to enforce it fairly, and the general support of those who are supposed to be governed by law. Humphrey also lacks suspicion enough to ferret out the designs of the nobles who are seeking to take advantage of the political weakness implicit in Henry VI's unsuitability for kingship. When Humphrey is finally imprisoned upon false charges of treasonable activity, it becomes evident that in spite of his wish to promote the welfare of the king and the kingdom and in spite of his knowledge of the law, he is unable to protect himself or Henry VI from the treasonable activities of the factions of Lancaster and York. Lord Talbot had fallen victim to the same kind of factionalism and incompetence, and lack of virtù in Humphrey and the other nobles who rule in the name of Henry VI. In France they allow Henry VI, still a child, to divide the command of his forces between the two rivals,
Richard and Somerset. As a result of a dispute between these two, Talbot is denied reinforcements and is killed in the conflict in which he is involved. As Sir William Lucy describes Talbot's fate, "The fraud of England, not the force of France,/ Hath now entrapped the noble-minded Talbot./ Never to England shall he bear his life,/ But dies betrayed to fortune by your strife" (1 H. VI, IV.iv.36-39). In this comment, Lucy almost draws a parallel between fortune and the will. If not a strict equation, he does direct our attention to the relationship between these two concepts in that the self-willed and incompetent actions of the nobles have "betrayed" Talbot to fortune or to the flow of events which he is neither able to control nor predict. What Sir William Lucy implies is in accord with Machiavelli's observation "that it could be true that fortune is the arbiter of half our actions, but that she leaves the other half, or close to it, to be governed by us." While a lack of virtù on Humphrey's part is the cause of his eventual death, the lack of virtù in Humphrey and others ruling in the name of Henry VI effects the death of Talbot. The passing of Humphrey and Talbot not only signifies the death of the civic and martial aspects of virtù but also marks the passing of an older and simpler way of life, according to which allegiance to king and dedication to country were taken as matters of unquestionable duty by most of the nobility.

Once Henry VI begins to exercise his own will in the affairs of the kingdom, his lack of virtù becomes glaring. His self-willed marriage to Margaret of Anjou on the basis of hearsay comment upon her,

8Machiavelli, p. 209.
promotes political consequences that worsen throughout 2 and 3 Henry VI. By his refusal to listen to advice about marriages of state, Henry VI demonstrates the irrationality of human behavior. Self-interest and the unstable nature of the will which Machiavelli considers as the causes of disruptive irrationality are two volatile factors a prince must deal with in governing, but when they become characteristic of the mode of behavior of the prince, Machiavelli is quick to condemn him: "He [the prince] is contemptible if he is thought of as changeable, frivolous, effeminate, cowardly, irresolute." This, however, is not the only occasion upon which Henry VI demonstrates irrational behavior and lack of virtue. When Humphrey falls from the favor of Henry VI as a result of the discovery of his wife Eleanor engaging in conspiracy, Henry VI declares, "Stay, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, ere thou go,/ Give up thy staff. Henry will to himself/ Protector be; and God shall be my hope,/ My stay, my guide, and lantern to my feet" (2 H. VI, II.iii. 22-25). Later Humphrey accurately describes the true effect of Henry VI's irrational act, saying, "Ah, thus King Henry throws away his crutch/ Before his legs be firm to bear his body" (2 H. VI, III.i.189-190).

To maintain his position as king, Henry VI trusts for a long time that Divine Providence, the doctrine of divine right and his own good intentions will safeguard him and his title to the throne. When Somerset announces that all English interests in France are lost, Henry replies, "Cold news, Lord Somerset; but God's will be done" (2 H. VI, III.i.86). Henry VI's reply indicates both thoughtlessness and supreme reliance on Divine Providence as an interpretation of England's misfortunes

9Ibid., p. 151.
and almost unheard-of political irresponsibility. Henry's attitude is precisely the kind of attitude Machiavelli criticizes when he says:

I am not unaware that many have been and still are of the opinion that worldly affairs are in a way governed by fortune and by God, that men with their wisdom are not able to control them; and for this reason they would conclude that there is no point in sweating much over these things, instead let them be governed by chance.\(^{10}\)

This statement exactly described Henry's attitude, and while Machiavelli does not deny that fortune and God may influence events, he does insist that these unpredictable forces arbitrate only half our actions, or close to it; the "other half" man can influence by exercising his will. Henry VI, in relying so completely on Divine Providence, ignores this principle or any principle close to it. Shortly thereafter Henry allows Humphrey to be imprisoned in spite of his innocence. Again, Henry demonstrates his unwillingness and inability to use or exert the authority implicit in kingship. Although Henry is a good man, his virtue is passive, and passive virtue is not the sort that seeks either private or public good.

Henry's impotence as a king is fully contrasted with the purposeful advances of his rivals, chief among whom is Richard Plantagenet. As Henry declines, Richard rises and rushes in to fill the power vacuum which Henry's weakness has created.

English losses in France, Henry VI's misrule, and Humphrey's death, all of which exemplify fortune in Machiavelli's sense, give Richard Plantagenet, restored to his patrimony as Duke of York, the occasion to display whatever virtue he has. Gradually York, as he is

\(^{10}\) Ibid., p. 209.
now called, begins to exert his will to power. Yet Shakespeare does not cast York as a typical Machiavellian seeker after power. York has the virtù or willingness to use force and craft in political and military affairs, but he underestimates the difficulties involved in removing a lawful monarch from the throne. York has mastered the Machiavellian art of dissimulation, and by concealing his true objective he has gained strong support for his cause in the person of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. York has also taken into full account the fatal impatience of his father and uncle, Edmund Mortimer, in their unsuccessful attempt to overthrow Henry IV. After witnessing his uncle's death in prison, York comments, "Here dies the dusky torch of Mortimer/ Choked with ambition of the meaner sort" (1 H. VI, II.v.122-123). It is precisely this "meaner sort" of ambition that York rejects, and in this passage he indicates his intention to follow the parting advice of his uncle to be "politic" (1 H. VI, II.v.101). His tone carried all the connotations attached to that word by Elizabethans, as pointed out by Mario Praz in a passage quoted earlier in this study. York also declares his intent to go to parliament to be restored to his hereditary right to the crown, or as he says, "make my will th' advantage of my good" (1 H. VI, II.v.129). Here York declares his intention to create an occasion for himself out of his own sheer determination. Virtù and fortune are, of course, closely related to the Machiavellian concept of occasion. According to Machiavelli, the prince may also create an occasion for himself in order to rise to power or augment his own greatness. Exercising such virtù as he has and taking advantage of what fortune seems to have given him, York plans to create the occasion that will make it possible for him to rise to power. His decision is self-
willed, but unlike Henry's act of self-will in his marriage to Margaret of Anjou, York's will is directed toward the acquisition of political power.

Being "politic," York accepts the challenge offered by Margaret and Somerset when they saddle him with the task of quelling uprisings in Ireland. Occasion is putting power into his hands, as well he knows; "'Twas men I lacked, and you will give them me; / I take it kindly. Yet be well assured/ You put sharp weapons into madman's hands" (2 H. VI, III.1.345-347). York again demonstrates his virtù by promoting the rebellion of Jack Cade. York has a dual purpose in stirring up Cade's rebellion. York will learn how the commons are disposed to the claim to the throne by the House of York, and should Cade succeed, York hopes to return from Ireland and triumphantly crush the rebellion, thereby solidifying his own position in England's power structure. Events work out to his advantage. York leads his army toward London on the pretense of removing Somerset as an advisor to the king, but in an aside reveals his hand quite openly:

I am far better born than is the king,  
More kingly in my thoughts.  
But I must make fair weather, yet awhile,  
Till Henry be more weak, and I more strong.  
(2 H. VI, V.I.28-31)

Upon discovering, however, that Somerset is not imprisoned, as he was informed, York declares himself publicly and in doing so compares himself to Henry VI to Henry's disadvantage: "Here is a hand to hold a scepter up/ And with the same to act controlling laws./ Give place. By heaven thou [Henry VI] shall rule no more/ O'er him who heaven created for thy ruler" (2 H. VI, V.I. 103-106). York at this crucial moment emphasizes Henry's deficiencies as king. Henry VI is both unwilling
and unable to effectuate "controlling laws" in order to maintain the
stability of the kingdom. To Machiavelli this was the primary duty of
the prince. The state, to Machiavelli, was not primarily an instrument
of progress; it was rather the instrument for insuring the security and
stability of the common-weal; therefore, the ruler had an obligation to
exercise a responsible use of power in order to achieve political sta-
bility. In spite of his display of certain aspects of virtù, which
leads us to believe he could effectuate "controlling laws," York ul-
timately fails to achieve and maintain the political power for which he
strives.

After the battle of Saint Albans, York has both the physical and
moral or psychological force to enforce his claim to the throne. Instead
he settles for a compromise agreement in which he promises to allow
Henry VI to rule during his lifetime, after which time York will assume
the throne as a designated legal heir, thus depriving Edward, Prince of
Wales, Henry VI's son, of his otherwise hereditary right of succession.
York's decision at this critical moment has disastrous consequences and
ultimately results in his complete defeat and death. As a "Machiavel-
lian" aspirant to political power, York fails, in Machiavelli's terms,
for the following reasons. First, he fails to follow through at the
very moment he could take all. He fails to destroy or render politically
ineffective once and for all Henry VI and his family, namely, Margaret
and Edward, Prince of Wales, who leave for France to return with foreign
troops and restore Edward to his hereditary right of succession. In
doing so, York fails to observe the Machiavellian principle "that men
must be either pampered or done away with, because they will revenge
themselves for a slight hurt, but for serious ones they cannot; so that
any hurt done to a man should be the kind that leaves no fear of revenge."\textsuperscript{11}

In comparison to what York is capable of doing to Henry VI and family after his victory at St. Albans, his depriving Prince Edward of his patrimony is "slight," but as Machiavelli later adds, ". . . men forget more quickly the death of their fathers than their loss of patrimony."\textsuperscript{12}

York also lacks foresight which is also implicit in Machiavelli's concept of virtù, as he says, ". . . once trouble is foreseen, it can be easily remedied; however, if you wait for it to become evident, the medicine will be too late, for the disease will have become incurable."\textsuperscript{13}

York fails to see that Margaret will act out of revenge and, also, fails to appreciate the military power which she is capable of raising. In addition, he fails to appreciate that even those who supported him remain unsatisfied with his compromise agreement. York, instead, remains faithful to his promise until effective action against Margaret and her forces becomes impossible. In this respect he fails to observe Machiavelli's maxim:

\textit{. . . a wise ruler cannot, nor should he, keep his word when doing so would be to his disadvantage and when the reasons that led him to make promises no longer exist.}\textsuperscript{14}

York displays, then, certain aspects of virtù in acquiring political power, but as Machiavelli points out concerning those who acquire power with the arms and fortunes of others, ". . . all the difficulties arise when they have arrived."\textsuperscript{15}

Henry VI's problems have to do more with maintaining than acquiring power, and as king of a hereditary state, he should according to

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 15.  \textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 139.  \textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 17.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 145.  \textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 49.
Machiavelli, experience "fewer difficulties." Such, however, is not the case. In 2 Henry VI, it is evident that Henry VI fails to learn from experience, the experience important to Machiavelli in the education of the prince. Reinstituted fully now as king, Henry VI resigns the administration of his kingdom to Warwick and describes his renewed relations with the commons, saying:

I have not stopped mine ears to their demands,
Nor ported off their suits with slow delays.
I have not been desirous of their wealth
Nor much oppressed them with great subsides,
Nor forward of revenge, though much they erred.
No, Exeter, these graces challenge grace;
And when the lion fawns upon the lamb,
The lamb will never cease to follow him.

(2 H. VI, IV.viii.39-50)

Immediately, however, Edward IV and Richard, Duke of Gloucester (eventually Richard III), with their forces break in upon Henry VI and his court, and Henry VI is once again deposed. Shakespeare arranges these scenes to dramatize a sudden reversal, showing that the praiseworthy moral beliefs of Henry VI are insufficient in themselves to sustain him as king. In the fashion of Machiavelli, Shakespeare shows that good and bad actions may succeed and fail alike, especially when the physical and moral or psychological forces necessary to secure Henry VI in his position are lacking. In respect to Machiavelli, we are again reminded of Savonarola and Cesare Borgia and the functions of faith and force in maintaining the stability of the state. As Machiavelli says in The Prince:

Besides what has been said, people in general are unstable; and it is easy to persuade them of something, but difficult to hold them to that persuasion, and therefore things should be arranged so that when people no longer believe, they can be made to believe by force. 17

16 Ibid., p. 7. 17 Ibid., p. 45
Henry VI's previous misdeeds are not so easily forgotten and, as a result, the psychological force implicit in the divine right claim to the crown is no longer effective. In the incident described above, we also see Henry VI's lack of political awareness as to what constitutes the real causes of rebellion.

In contrast to Richard, Duke of York, who claims that only he can effectuate the "controlling laws" to insure the stability of the kingdom, we still see Henry as the center of ineffectual goodness. In the "molehill scene" (3 Henry VI), Henry acknowledges that both Queen Margaret and Clifford sent him from the battle "... swearing both/They prosper but when I am thence" (II.v.17-18). Although Henry VI acknowledges here his ineffectiveness in martial affairs, his observations in this scene are not without merit. He describes the ensuing battle in terms of the conflicting movements of the wind and sea, both sides are equally poised, neither prevailing over the other. His primary concern, however, is the loss of peace and order in the kingdom, and he voices his longing for the peaceful and ordered life of the shepherd:

So many hours must I tend my flock,
So many hours must I take my rest,
So many hours must I contemplate,
So many hours must I sport myself.

(3 H. VI, II.v.31-34)

Although Henry lacks the will and ability to impose the kind of order for which he longs, he is aware how far the nobles and commons have strayed from any decent value system. Unlike the rival factionalists, Henry has not acted in terms of his own self-interest, yet Shakespeare does not fail to dramatize at length the realities of the situation; lack of virtù and active virtue in Henry VI and what remains of it in others is ineffective in combating total political and moral chaos.
In a world in which active virtue and virtue are on the decline, the conflict of wills which breaks out in 1 Henry VI is only prologue to the total chaos which occurs in 2 and 3 Henry VI. The death of Talbot in 1 Henry VI is the result of the willful neglect of York and Somerset, who like the other nobles are attempting to create occasions for themselves in order to acquire political power. In 2 and 3 Henry VI, however, their means become willful, premeditated political murder, which at first the murderers, whichever ones they be, feel obliged to whitewash in public. The bloodbath begins with the political murder of Humphrey of Gloucester as arranged by Queen Margaret, York, Cardinal Beaufort and Suffolk. Cardinal Beaufort comments, "That he should die is worthy policy;/ But yet we want color for his death./ 'Tis meet he be condemned by course of law" (2 H. VI, III.1.235-237). Suffolk counters by saying, "... do not stand on quillets [i.e., be scrupulous about details] how to slay him;/ Be it by gins, by snares, by subtley,/ Sleeping or waking, 'tis no matter how,/ So he be dead" (2 H. VI, III.1.261-264). To this, all the conspirators agree.

By the time Shakespeare wrote 1, 2, and 3 Henry VI, "policy" and political crimes, particularly murder, had come to be so identified with Machiavelli that one might imagine Machiavelli to be the proponent of political murder as well as of "policy" in its pejorative sense. However, according to Praz, "Politico [the corresponding Italian word for politic], then, in Machiavelli means 'in conformity with sound rules of statecraft'." These "rules" included the proposition that should it become necessary to do away with a man, it should be done "when

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18 Praz, p. 11.
there is convenient justification and manifest reason\textsuperscript{19} for doing so, and although Machiavelli is considered an advocate of ultimate ends regardless of means, he states in The Prince, "Yet it cannot be called ingenuity (virtù) to kill one's fellow citizens, betray friends, be without faith, without pity, without religion; all of these may bring one to power, but not to glory."\textsuperscript{20} He also stresses, in respect to political murder and other cruel acts, that they be "performed all at once, in order to assure one's position, and are not continued, but rather turned to the greatest advantage as possible for the subjects."\textsuperscript{21} This principle, in particular, is ignored in the execution of Humphrey's murder and henceforth becomes the pattern of error which those of both factions pursue as Shakespeare employs a recurrent metaphor of England as a slaughterhouse to describe the resulting chaos.

Shakespeare initiates this metaphor through Warwick's speculations on Humphrey's violent death. Warwick says, "Who finds the heifer dead and bleeding fresh/And sees fast by a butcher with an axe,/But will suspect 'twas he that made the slaughter?" (2 H. VI, III.ii.187-190). The butcher is Cade's right-hand man and for his conscientious efforts in killing Cade's enemies, he commends him saying, "They fell before thee like sheep and oxen, and thou/Behavedst thyself as if thou hadst been in thy slaughterhouse" (2 H. VI, IV.ii.3-5). Thus, England becomes the butcher's workshop. In Act V, scene 1, 2 Henry VI, Clifford slays York's steed and York in turn slays Clifford's. Soon after York kills the elder Clifford, and the younger Clifford replies by killing Rutland, the youngest son of York. These instances of revenge and counter-revenge increase numerically and in intensity of dramatic presentation. The extremes of such conduct are not only reached but

\textsuperscript{19}Machiavelli, p. 139 \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{20}ibid., p. 69. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{21}ibid., p. 73.
surpassed as Clifford slays York after Margaret humiliates him by making him "king of the molehill." She crowns him with a paper crown and gives him a napkin dipped in Rutland's blood to dry his eyes. The tragic effects are brought home in an allegorical scene in which a son unwittingly kills his father and a father unwittingly kills his son.

Reacting to this holocaust of civil war, Henry VI, as the epitome of ineffective virtue, of non-existent virtù, sits upon a molehill contemplating the joys of a shepherd's life. Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and later Richard III, however, has different ideas. He declares his intent to hew his way out of this chaotic situation with a bloody axe:

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 can add colors to the chameleon,
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
And set the murderous Machiavel to school.

(2 H. VI, III.ii.182-193)

Yet the situation in its complete deterioration calls for a ruler with enough virtù to restore the stability of the kingdom and to correct its ethos. York, however, who both declared and demonstrated his intention and ability to effectuate "controlling laws" is dead, ineffectual Henry VI lives, and Richard of Gloucester promises only a continuation of what has preceded, though he intends to employ greater craft and cunning than his father was capable of.

To seize the crown, Richard must, as he says, "... cut the causes off" (3 H. VI, III.ii.142), i.e., eliminate those who stand between him and the crown. He therefore commits the second political murder in the three Henry VI plays, as a means of obtaining political power. Stabbing Henry VI, Richard states, "If any spark of life be
yet remaining,/ Down, down to hell, and say I sent thee thither,/ I, that have neither pity, love, nor fear" (2 H. VI, V. vi. 66-68), and he adds, "I am myself alone" (2 H. VI, V. vi. 83). Thus, Richard insists on his self-sufficiency and the absence in him of the human affections of love and pity which to his mind brought Henry VI to ruin. In proclaiming his absolute self-sufficiency and contempt for those who oppose him, Richard represents the fully deranged product of an age and social order which has been debasing itself for many decades.
CHAPTER II

RICARD III

In Richard III, three words, love, pity and fear, dominate the action. In his opening soliloquy, Richard describes the times and the role he intends to play:

Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York. . . .
And now, instead of mounting barbed steeds
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
He [war] capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.
But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stamped and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,
Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them--
Why I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to see my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity.
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain.
(I.i.1-30)

In this Marlowe-like opening, which is both Machiavellian and Christian in the sense that Richard accepts the Satanic philosophy, "Evil be thou my good," Richard declares his unfitness for love and yet betrays his desire to be loved. It is his willfully suppressed desire to be loved that proves to be his tragic weakness. Here the question Richard answers for himself is essentially whether to be loved or feared. Machiavelli, in his chapter on cruelty and compassion, concludes, "... a
person would like to be one or the other; but since it is difficult to mix them together, it is much safer to be feared than loved, if one of the two must be lacking.\(^1\) Now in choosing to be without love, Richard also declares his self-sufficiency, and unwittingly adopts isolation as a human being. Violence, he declares, is more suitable for him than a peaceful civilian existence. The tone of this passage is revealing in respect to both character and playwright. Richard does not conceal his absolute delight in the prospect of playing the role of villain and taking complete advantage of his "guileless" victims. And Shakespeare seems to have enjoyed the almost grotesque comic approach he pursues throughout the first three acts, during which all the while he is providing a critique of Machiavellian dissimulation, self-interest and cruelty, and the consequences inherent in a ruler's attempt to be self-sufficient, to live unloved and unpitied.

The consequences of Richard's Machiavellian choice come to light as the play unfolds, but the consequences of the absence of love, pity, and fear in other characters is also very noticeable. Edward IV calls attention to the general absence of love and pity in the world of the court when he comments to his family and his courtiers on Clarence's death, engineered secretly by Richard: "Who sued for him? Who (in my wrath)/ Kneeled at my feet and bid me be advised?/ Who spoke of brotherhood? Who spoke of love?" (II.i.107-109). Out of self-interest and indifference, no one in Edward IV's court cares to reply or comment upon the violent direction in which the affairs in the kingdom are moving. Everyone is obliged to look out for himself and to suspect every-

\(^1\)Machiavelli, p. 139.
one else, so that in the ensuing climate of mutual mistrust effective action against Richard becomes less and less practicable. This kind of recognition is expressed in the exchange between the citizens in Act II, scene iii, and later in the comments of the Scrivener, who after the execution of Hastings has finally completed the indictment against him:

Who is so gross
That cannot see such a palpable device
Yet who so bold but says he sees it not?
Bad is the world, and all will come to nought
When such ill dealing must be seen in thought.

(The death of Edward IV and Richard's ascent to the throne mark the death of whatever justice, moderation, and pity have existed. Ruling through fear and coercion, Richard finds himself more and more isolated. Now those would-be friends whom Richard conspires against because they oppose his designs, distrust him and turn against him. Buckingham leaves when Richard refuses to reward him as promised for eliminating his opponents. Derby, in spite of the fact Richard keeps his son hostage, deserts Richard to join forces with Henry, Earl of Richmond, and the Bishop of Ely who in opposing Richard's designs has no doubt as to his probable fate. Feared Richard is, but he has not avoided hatred and contempt. His enemies gather strength and begin to oppose him openly, taking up arms to remove him from the throne. Their actions, however, do not persuade Richard to change his course.

Finding himself more and more isolated, Richard relies more and more on sheer physical force: "My counsel is my shield" (IV.iii.56). Clearly Richard is a tyrant and rebellion against him is justified, as Henry, Earl of Richmond and later Henry VII, instructs his soldiers
before the Battle of Bosworth Field, "God and our good cause fight upon our side" (V.iii.2chi). Nobles and commons who previously had pursued a course of wanton disunity have, through suffering at the hands of Richard III, united against him in a common cause.

By Act V, Richard III's statement in 2 Henry VI, "I am myself alone," becomes a reality in a sense he had not anticipated, self-pity overwhelms him: "There is no creature loves me;/ And if I die, no soul will pity me" (V.iii.201-202). Fear, the emotion Richard had declared himself to be without, now dominates all his actions in the closing scenes of the play. Richard III has become, as Tillyard states, "the great ulcer of the body politic into which all impurity is drained and against which all the members of the body politic are united."²

On the other hand, Henry, Earl of Richmond, is the redeemer of the nation who restores order and degree, justice and mercy, and who declares his intention to unite the two factions.

In addition to presenting a dramatic commentary upon the Machiavellian views of love and fear, Shakespeare, in Richard III, also treats other issues raised by Machiavelli in The Prince: skill in persuasion, dissimulation and fox-like slyness, and the virtuosity of a villain. Although these characteristic traits of Richard III are sometimes exaggerated to the point of melodrama, they are worth considering in the light of Machiavelli's concept of virtù.

One of Richard's key traits as an aspirant to power is his political awareness of the need to manipulate the appearances of things. This understanding along with his own ambitions moves him to declare, in Act III, scene ii, of 3 Henry VI:

²Tillyard, Plays, p. 208.
I can add colors to the chameleon
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
And set the murderous Machiavel to school.

(2 H. VI, III.ii.191-193)

It is no mere coincidence that these lines allude openly to Machiavelli.
The question is whether the allusion is just "stage Machiavellianism"
or whether Shakespeare is moving beyond the theatrical stereotypes of
the Machiavellian villain and presenting a personal view of hypocritical-
cal Machiavellian methods for obtaining power. There is no certain
answer to this question, but in The Prince, Machiavelli states:

And men, in general judge more according to their eyes than
their hands; since everyone is in a position to observe, just
a few to touch. Everyone sees what you appear to be, few
touch what you are; and those few do not dare oppose the
opinions of the many who have the majesty of the state defend-
ing them; and with regard to the actions of all men, and
especially with princes where there is no court of appeal, we
must look at the final result. Let a prince, then, conquer
and maintain the state; his methods will always be judged
honorable and they will be praised by all; because the ordi-
mary people are always taken by the appearance and the outcome
of a thing; and in the world there is nothing but ordinary
people; and there is no room for the few while the many have
a place to lean on.

Shakespeare probably did not know this passage but he seems to know
what the Machiavellian position is. Richard III understands that as a
rule men do judge by appearances and proceeding on this basic principle,
he utilizes appearance and dissimulation to induce the occasion by
which he rises to power. In Act I, scene iii, Richard outlines the
strategy through which he puts occasion into operation for his own
behalf:

I do the wrong, and first begin to brawl
The secret mischiefs that I set abroach
I lay unto the grievous charge of others.

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*Machiavelli, p. 149.*
Clarence, who I indeed have cast in darkness,
I do beweep to many simple gulls—
Namely, to Derby, Hastings, Buckingham—
And tell 'tis the queen and her allies
That stir the king against my brother.
Now they do believe it, and withal what me
To be revenged on Rivers, Dorset, Grey.
But them I sigh, and with a piece of Scripture,
Tell them that God bids us do good for evil;
And thus I clothe my naked villainy
With old ends stol'n forth of holy writ,
And seem a saint, when most I play the devil.
(II.i.323-337)

In carrying out this design Richard is quick to play-act a strong sense of injustice over the imprisonment of Clarence and the promotions given to the friends of Elizabeth, Queen to Edward IV. Shortly thereafter, by sly maneuvering, Richard delays the order for Clarence's release and appoints two unnamed murderers to carry out the execution. When the death of Clarence is made known, he remarks, playing the role of political moralist, to his future supporters, "This is the fruits of rashness! 'Marked you not/ How that the guilty kindred of the queen/
Looked pale when they did hear of Clarence's death?" (II.i.135-137).

In Act III, Richard, by now in love with his own play-acting, makes a full comic use of appearances by employing two clergymen and the ornaments of religion as a means of usurping the crown. Buckingham insures that the Mayor, Aldermen and citizens who accompany him receive the correct impression. There must be:

Two props of virtue [the two clergymen on either side of Richard] for a Christian prince,
To stay him from the fall of vanity;
And see, a book of prayer in his hand—
True ornaments to know a holy man.
(III.vii.96-98)

Richard, in assuming the appearance of a Christian prince, fakes the appearance of virtue and the Christian virtue of humility, but in
actually it is fear that forces the Mayor, Aldermen and citizens to accept him as an undisputed ruler. Richard is simply applying a Machiavellian principle, that if one does not have the desirable qualities that men would like to see in a ruler, it is important to appear to have them. Initially Richard refuses to accept the crown, play-acting modesty and humility, until he sees he has overplayed his part, whereupon he calls back Buckingham, the Mayor, Aldermen and citizens and addresses them as follows:

Cousin Buckingham, and sage grave men,
Since you buckle fortune on my back,
To bear her burden, whe'er I will or no,
I must have patience to endure the load.

(III.vii.227-229)

Thus, Richard III, hypocrite and dissembler, succeeds to the throne.

His success, however, is less the result of clever use of appearances than of terroristic tactics. In fact, Richard only partially succeeds in being the Machiavellian fox:

... one must know how to disguise this nature [the nature of the fox] well, and how to be a fine liar and hypocrite; and men are so simple-minded and so dominated by their present needs that one who deceives will always find one who will allow himself to be deceived. 

Those whom Richard succeeds in deceiving, like Hastings, are complete fools. Hastings, in Act III, scene iv, declares: "I think there's never a man in Christendom/ Can lesser hide his love or hate than he [Richard],/ For by his face straight shall you know his heart" (III.iv.51-53). But in Richard III there are some "few" who do penetrate Richard's disguise: Queen Margaret, Henry VI's widow, and Richard's mother, the Duchess of York. In their presence, Richard experiences
extreme discomfort. For Richard, his mother, the Duchess of York, represents all the basic human affections which he has rejected. Queen Margaret, on the other hand, represents on one level the political ideas and attitudes which he has accepted and on the other utter ruin and complete isolation, which Richard and his brothers have brought upon her. But neither Margaret nor the Duchess of York has the political influence and power to prevent Richard from succeeding to the throne. As Machiavelli states, "there is no room for the few while the many have a place to lean." What this statement means in respect to Richard and his subjects is now clear. Richard's subjects do not support him; they "lean" upon him, in the sense of inclining to his opinions and desires and conforming to the standard of conduct he dictates, but only so long as it is unsafe to be anything else.

While Richard's effective use of deceit, appearances, and hypocrisy succeed in gaining political power for him, his inflexibility as a villain proves to be the cause of his downfall. He does not have, in the Machiavellian sense, "a mind ready to turn itself according as the winds of fortune and the fluctuation of things command him." Not unsurprisingly, Richard is a static character throughout the play. Through his over-reliance on physical force and fear he bit by bit alienates the nobles, fails to satisfy the commons and, most important, through his repeated crimes, which Machiavelli cautioned the Prince against, he fails to instill a sense of security in his subjects. In Machiavelli's terms, one of Richard's main faults is his failure to consider the reasons why the inhabitants of the kingdom favor him.

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5Ibid., p. 149. 6Ibid., p. 147.
The majority, in accepting him as king, did so because they were afraid to do otherwise. Others, like Buckingham, sought personal gain, which Richard in his rise to power wisely promised, but upon gaining power unwisely refused to fulfill.

In the final scenes of the play, Richard's primary concerns are more narrowly limited to physical force than ever before. Thus, he questions Northumberland in Act V, scene iii, regarding Richmond's military experience and instructs his soldiers that they are facing vagabonds and rascals, not experienced troops. In the light of the military situation, these considerations are not without merit, but Richard disregards the mental and moral dispositions of his troops in his pep talk to them before the battle of Bosworth Field. Richard relies on the one virtue which brought him to power, personal courage supported by armed troops. Toward the end of the play, however, his personal courage begins to fade. The atmosphere of distrust, in which he used to thrive, begins to infect him as he begins to distrust everyone around him. In Act IV, scene iv, Richard accuses Derby of intending to desert him and join forces with Henry, Earl of Richmond. Derby protests, but Richard tells Derby to leave his son George behind as hostage so that Derby will not desert him while mustering men. Richard's distrust continues through Act V, scene iii, in which he stoops to playing the eavesdropper upon his soldiers, "To see if any mean to shrink from me" (V.iii.223). From the time of his statement in 3 Henry VI, "I am myself alone" (V.vi.83), to his statement, "Besides the king's name is a tower of strength" (V.iii.12), Richard has constantly declared his self-sufficiency and self-confidence. Now these strengths prove to be his undoing. The kind of situation Richard finally finds himself in,
with fear dominating all his actions, is accurately described by Machiavelli when he states:

Yet a prince must be cautious in his beliefs and in his actions, nor should he be afraid of his own shadow; and his conduct should be of a sort tempered by prudence and kindness so that excessive confidence does not make him imprudent and excessive mistrust render him intolerable.\(^7\)

In the final scenes of the play, then, we see that there is a limit to which a ruler can be self-sufficient and that, as Machiavelli points out, love and pity do have their place in the ruler's personal as well as public life. Machiavelli insists: "Yet it cannot be called ingenuity [virtù] to kill one's fellow citizens, betray friends, be without faith, without pity, without religion; all these may bring one to power, but not to glory."\(^8\)

It is now time to sum up. In the first tetralogy, Shakespeare has successfully dramatized two extremes. Although Henry VI may be described as a good man, he displays passive virtue and does not actively pursue the good. He demonstrates lack of virtù in the Machiavellian sense and relies weakly upon Divine Providence to the exclusion of any strong human effort. Richard III, on the other hand, actively pursues evil and while demonstrating a certain amount of virtù displays an over-reliance on self. The dispositions of inflexible attitudes of both, Henry VI in respect to Divine Providence and Richard III in respect to self-sufficiency, eventually bring about each king's downfall. In addition, their inflexible, if antithetical attitudes regarding the

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 137. \(^8\)Ibid., p. 69.
use of force, physical and moral or psychological, in civic and martial affairs, are suggestive of Machiavelli's judgment, that "a man who wishes to profess goodness at all time must fall to ruin among so many who are not good." This judgment is as applicable to Henry VI as is the inverse of this statement applicable to Richard III. The good intentions of Henry VI and the evil intentions of Richard III have failed alike, and the tragedy of the times (in the period of history covered in the first tetralogy) appears to be that no one man has been strong enough, physically, morally and psychologically, to rule without opposition. Henry VI lacks force, not only of will, but physical, moral and psychological force adequate to maintain his position, while Richard III, in exercising physical force and fear, effectively destroys the trust and confidence of his followers, who as a result desert him in time of crisis.

^Ibid., p. 127.
CHAPTER III

KING JOHN

In *King John*, which occupies a pivotal position between the first and second tetralogies, Shakespeare treats in depth the issue of self-interest, or, as it is called in this play, "commodity." It is an issue with which John must deal not only as a man and as a king; it is also the basic problem which the other characters must come to terms with in their relationships with country, king, and kinsmen. For this reason and the fact that the four basic concepts introduced by Machiavelli with which I am concerned, receive little if any attention in this play, I shall limit my remarks to the discussion of self-interest.

John is primarily interested in maintaining his position as king; for him the safety of England comes second. The dispute between Queen Elmora, the mother of King John, and Constance, the mother of Arthur, reveals the self-interest of each. Each wants her son to rule. The dispute between Robert Faulconbridge and his half-brother Philip, the Bastard, dramatizes their respective concerns for land, in the case of Robert, and honor, in the case of Philip. King Lewis of France, Lymoges, Duke of Austria, and Cardinal Pandulph, the Pope's legate, all wish to exercise primary influence in England's internal and external affairs. Since all these individuals seek their own interest, they make political alliances accordingly.

The situation King John faces at the beginning of the play is essentially similar to that outlined by Machiavelli in *The Prince*,

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when he says of the prince's subjects:

... as long as you serve their welfare, they are entirely yours, offering you their blood, possessions, life, and children, as I mentioned earlier, when the occasion to do so is not in sight; but when you are faced with it [the occasion when the before-mentioned sacrifices may be required], they turn against you... because friendships that are acquired with a price and not with excellence and nobility of character are bought, but they are not owned, and at the right time cannot be spent.1

This same idea is expressed through the imagery of buying and selling which Shakespeare uses, coincidentally, of course, throughout King John, describing the kind of relationships John has with his friends and enemies. The following example illustrates this point.

When John finally concludes peace with France with the grant of five English provinces and thirty thousand marks of English coin, Philip the Bastard, outraged by the arrangement, pinpoints the real cause of England's lost advantages:

Commodity, the bias of the world;
The world, who of itself is pleased well,
Made to run even upon even ground,
Till this advantage, this vile-drawing bias,
This sway of motion, this commodity,
Makes it take head from all indifference,
From all direction, purpose, course, intent.
And this same bias, this commodity,
This bawd, this broker, this all-changing word,
Clapped on the outward eye of fickle France,
Hath drawn him [John] from his own determined aid,
From a resolved and honorable war,
To a most base and vile-concluded peace.
And why rail I on this commodity?
But for because he hath not wooed me yet.
Not that I have the power to clutch my hand,
When his fair angels would salute my palm,
But for my hand, as unattempted yet,
Like a poor beggar, I will rail
And say there is no sin but to be rich;

1Machiavelli, p. 139.
And being rich, my virtue then shall be
To say there is no vice but beggary.
Since kings break faith upon commodity,
Gain, be my lord, for I will worship thee!

(II.i.574-598)²

It is commodity or self-interest, as the Bastard points out, that upsets what otherwise would be an orderly world. Commodity works like an invisible and erratic magnet which draws men individually and, at times, collectively off course. In diverting men from the proper observation of the limits of order and degree, the world is diverted from "direction, purpose, course, intent." In referring to commodity as "this all-changing word," Shakespeare, according to Tillyard, "means what Pope meant at the end of the Dunciad when he spoke of Dallness quenching light by her 'uncreating word.' As God himself had created the World through the Word, the second person of the Trinity, so Commodity is the evil 'Word' undoing the great act of creation."³ Although the Bastard condemns John for pursuing his own self-interest at England's expense, he also acknowledges that the reason he has not pursued a similar course is that he himself has not been sufficiently tempted to do so. However, his remarks on commodity are ironic since, as later developments in the play substantiate, the Bastard is the only character who observes the principle of degree and suppresses his own self-interest for the good of England. Self-interest, then, leads King John and the Bastard into direct involvement with two of the major problems of the

²William Shakespeare, King John, II.i.574-598, The Life and Death of King John, ed. Irving Ribner (Baltimore, 1962). All citations from King John refer to this edition.

³Tillyard, pp. 219-220.
play: (1) the problem of private versus public morality, and (2) the problem of private versus public interest.

From the outset Shakespeare makes it clear that John has usurped the crown, but in the first three acts he is presented as a well-intentioned and even a strong king who merits the support of his subjects. On two occasions he opposes the claim of King Lewis of France on England's French territories and backs up his opposition with threats of force. His manner of settling the dispute between Robert Faulconbridge and his half-brother Philip the Bastard demonstrates some ability in the handling of family affairs, and in opposing the interference of the Papacy in the internal affairs of England, John represents two principles dear to the hearts of Tudor Englishmen; English nationalism and the supremacy of state over church.

In Act III, however, John has reached a critical point in dealing with the chief problem facing his reign, the claim of Arthur, his nephew, to the English crown and to English territories. Arthur's claim can only mean perpetual civil war which would divide England and leave her prey to foreign invaders. On a personal level, Arthur is a major threat to John's title to the crown and his continued possession of it. It is not surprising that to John, Arthur's death appears to be a political necessity. John's will to retain the crown, regardless of moral and political right and wrong, moves him more and more to speculate upon the necessity of Arthur's death. Faced with this problem, John is troubled with a political and ethical choice. He may yield the crown to Arthur whose dynastic right to the throne is superior to his own or follow the Machiavellian alternative that "it is necessary
for a prince who wishes to maintain his position to learn how not to be good, and to use it or not according to necessity." Moved primarily by his own private concerns and secondly by his concern for English interest, John speculates mysteriously and obscurely upon the necessity of Arthur's death in the presence of Hubert, one of his trusted associates. Hubert interprets John's rambling speculations as an explicit commission to eliminate Arthur and departs to carry out the task. But when actually faced with performing this deed, that is, when faced with living by commodity as John has tempted him to do, Hubert is unable to do so and returns to John with the false report that Arthur is dead. The news of Arthur's death is quickly published and almost immediately John is suspect by the Earls of Pembroke and Salisbury. John himself is terrified at the news and informs Hubert that Arthur's death was indeed not his design. Hubert then quickly informs John that Arthur is alive. In the meantime, however, Arthur attempts to escape from captivity and leaps from the wall of the castle in which he is confined, only to die of injuries suffered in the fall. From the time John learns of Arthur's actual death, his courage and resolution gradually deteriorate, unable as he is to rid himself of a sense of guilt and to clear himself in respect to the charges that are made implicating him in Arthur's death. Just as self-interest led John to speculate upon the necessity of Arthur's death, so the Bastard's self-interest lead him into an internal conflict of private versus public interest when he learns of Arthur's death and is perplexed with

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Machiavelli, p. 127.
doubts concerning John's part in the affair. John as man and king is
destroyed by his involvement in the conflict between public and private
morality, but as John declines, the Bastard rises to meet the occasion
and attempts to persuade John to face the situation squarely and set
his enemies in flight.

In spite of his illegitimate birth, the Bastard is presented as
a kingly type. His situation is similar to that of Talbot in 1 Henry
VI and Warwick in 2 Henry VI. He is perplexed with mixed thoughts of
loyalty and rebellion. In character he also bears a resemblance to
Richard, Duke of York, in the Henry VI plays, for he displays certain
traits of virtù. Like York, the Bastard is adept in employing both
physical force and political shrewdness. As an ambitious individual,
the Bastard outlines how he will conduct himself in the political world:
"... though I will not practice to deceive;/ Yet to avoid deceit, I
mean to learn;/ For it shall strew [i.e., make less slippery] the foot-
steps of my rising" (I.ii.214-216). The Bastard is also an expert
bluffer. While King John's resolution and military forces are in dis-
array, the Bastard confronts King Lewis of France and Pandulph, the
Pope's legate, saying, "Now hear our English king,/ For thus his
royalty doth speak in me" (V.ii.128-129). He demonstrates self-control
and force of will when with Pembroke, Salisbury and Bigot he discovers
the dead body of Arthur. In spite of his perplexing doubts, the Bastard
avoids drawing that appears to be the obvious conclusion, and when
Hubert reappears the Bastard defends him. In addition, the Bastard is
self-sacrificing and puts the good of England above all other consider-
ations. The Bastard, therefore, in supporting King John and suppressing
his own self-interest for the good of England, comes to represent English nationalism and royal supremacy, while King Lewis, Pandulph and others represent a divided England and commodity. The Bastard assures his country of an orderly government through lawful succession. Though John as a man and a king is destroyed, England through the Bastard triumphs.

Irving Ribner, in his introduction to the Penguin edition of the play, states that "the play affirms the inseparability of public and private virtue that only a good man can be king." Ribner oversimplifies. The conflict John faces he never satisfactorily resolves. Self-interest prompts his speculations upon the necessity of Arthur's death and when these are acted upon by Hubert, his downfall eventually comes to pass. The question that remains, in view of John's inaction while considering Arthur's murder, is whether or not the taking of Arthur's life is a political necessity and, indeed, whether political murder is ever justified.

In placing such emphasis on the character and actions of the Bastard, I believe, Shakespeare is setting before us an alternative course of action which John might have pursued. Like Marlowe's Edward II, John moves gradually away from dealing with necessity as a force in political life and begins to consider necessity as a justification for the most expedient course of action. However, I do agree with Ribner's observation that the play also "asserts that a nation can be united only when the king has learned to subordinate his personal desires to

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5Irving Ribner, Introduction to The Life and Death of King John (Baltimore, 1962), p. 18.
the good of his country." But Shakespeare goes beyond Ribner to apply this same kind of admonition to individuals and groups on all levels of society. Here, then, is one point of agreement between the views of Machiavelli and Shakespeare as to the role of self-interest in the state. According to Machiavelli, maintaining the stability of the state is primarily a problem of balancing the various self-interests of individuals and groups. For both Shakespeare and Machiavelli, then, self-interest can help to preserve as well as destroy the stability of the state. The great point of contention between the two as presented in this play is their contrasting views on the issue of private versus public morality. Shakespeare implies that the king must be a good man, but through the Bastard he also implies that public men (or officials) need a reasonable amount of calculation, political awareness, and political realism in dealing with problems of state. To take refuge in the sanctions of divine right, as Constance and John do, is naive and is, in fact, foolhardy in the extreme.

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6 Ibid.
CHAPTER IV

RICHARD II

In the second tetralogy, Shakespeare re-examines issues raised in the first tetralogy such as the role of fortune and the use of force in civic and martial affairs. At the same time he concentrates on other issues such as questions of political necessity and the use of cunning and craft in political affairs. The central political conflict in Richard II centers upon the validity of divine right monarchy as a workable political system and provides the basis for the political action in this play as well as in the three which follow. 1 and 2 Henry IV deal with the consequences of Bolingbroke's activist answer to whether divine right monarchy is an acceptable political system, that is, if to say that divine right does not make might or unquestionable political right. Prince Hal will in time inherit his father's crown, but in 1 and 2 Henry IV he is reluctant to engage in political issues, though by exercising virtù at the Battle of Shrewsbury he demonstrates a new basis of right which we see fully dramatized in Henry V. 1

In Richard II Shakespeare presents two deliberately contrasted characters, Richard II and Henry, surnamed Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford, son of John of Gaunt, and by the end of Act IV King Henry IV. Through this contrast he presents two antithetical views of political life. Throughout Richard II and in 1 and 2 Henry IV Shakespeare relies

1This view as stated above is limited to the political issues in the plays; however, Shakespeare also deals with other issues in these plays such as honor, justice, order, and disorder.
heavily on this technique of contrast to bring into sharp focus opposing views, all of which include attitudes toward the four basic Machiavellian concepts of virtù, fortuna, occasione and necessità. These contrasts are important for in Richard II a dramatic shift takes place from the world of Richard II with its late medieval emphasis upon means, ceremonies, words and appearances, which have become masks for political realities, to the world of Bolingbroke with its emphasis upon ends and actions as the essence of political realities. Little in Richard II as a king suggests approaches to political life which may be described as Machiavellian. But it is essential to understand the basic assumptions Richard II holds regarding political matters, for they are directly challenged by Bolingbroke, who displays many of the traits, attitudes and aptitudes of the Machiavellian prince.

In Richard II Shakespeare devotes much attention to the personal attributes necessary in a king. Thus, as Richard II opens we see Richard playing the part of an undisputed anointed king. His words to John of Gaunt, his uncle, regarding the dispute between Gaunt's son Bolingbroke and Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, are measured, polished, eloquent and formal:

Old John of Gaunt, time-honored Lancaster,
Hast thou, according to thy oath and band [sic],
Brought hither Henry Hereford, thy bold son,
Here to make good the boist'rous late appeal,
Which then our leisure would not let us hear,
Against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?

(I.1.1-6)

"This formality," Derek Traversi writes, "has from the beginning a more than decorative purpose; it reflects a kingship which, alone in all

this series of plays, combines legitimacy with the assertion of a sanc-
tion ultimately divine." In addition, however, this formality also
reflects Richard's affectation for words and ceremony which are not
only his means of asserting his authority, but also mask his own per-
sonal weaknesses and his weakness as king. Richard's handling of the
dispute between Bolingbroke and Mowbray illustrates this point. Owing
primarily to his own self-interest and his unwillingness to exercise
his authority, Richard plays in public the role of a mighty monarch:

We were not born to sue, but to command;
Which since we cannot do to make you friends,
Be ready, as your lives shall answer it,
At Coventry upon Saint Lambert's day.
There shall your swords and lances arbitrate
The swelling difference of your settled hate;
Since we cannot atone you, we shall see
Justice design the victor's chivalry.
(I.i.196-203)

In spite of his assertion of authority, Richard does not "command," and
settles upon another means to end the dispute, one which will free him
of the responsibility of decision.

In actuality, he is himself involved in this dispute due to his
complicity in the murder of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, a
murder in which Mowbray was also an accomplice; furthermore, he fears
Bolingbroke because of his growing popularity with the nobles and com-
mons. The trial--ordeal by battle--which he arranges is then a way of
covering up his own guilt and, also, of playing the role of king as
theatrically as he can. But he prevents the battle from beginning and
publicly banishes both men, Bolingbroke for ten years and Mowbray for

3Derek Traversi, Shakespeare from Richard II to Henry V (Stanford,
life. Realizing, however, the severity of Bolingbroke's sentence in view of his popularity, he again changes his mind and reduces his sentence to six years of banishment; i.e., he plays the role of merciful sovereign.

In avoiding the issue in this manner, Richard demonstrates the primary motive of all his actions, self-interest, the only true Machiavellian trait he displays. He also demonstrates that his actions are more symbolic than real and, in addition, demonstrates characteristics which Machiavelli described with contempt, such as, changeableness, frivolity, cowardliness, and irresoluteness. Nothing in Richard's actions can be characterized as reflecting magnanimity, courage, seriousness of purpose or strength of will, all of which Machiavelli encouraged the prince to display in all his actions; and if it were impossible for the prince to possess all of these qualities, Machiavelli enjoined on him the need to appear to have them. Just as Henry VI's religious declarations are a mask for his passive nature, so Richard's affectation for words and ceremony are a mask for passivity that reveals itself in all its folly in Act III.

Richard's characteristics as a man consequently have a disastrous effect upon his actions as king. Upon his death bed, John of Gaunt tells Richard II that it is Richard, not himself, who lies sick and dying: "Thy deathbed be no lesser than thy land, / Wherein thou liest in reputation sick; . . . / Landlord of England are thou now, not king." (II.i.95-113) What Gaunt means is described in detail by Ross, Willoughby and Northumberland:

Ross: The commons hath he pilled with grievous taxes And quite lost their hearts; the nobles hath he fined For ancient quarrels and quite lost their hearts.
Willoughby: And daily new exactions are devised,
As blanks, benevolences, and I was not what;
But what, a God's name doth become of this?

Northumberland: Wars hath not wasted it, for warred he hath mot,
But basely yielded upon compromise
That which his noble ancestors achieved with blows.
More hath he spent in peace than they in wars.
(II.1.246-255)

In addition, Richard compounds his error in dealing with Bolingbrooke when,
in Bolingbrooke's absence, he confiscates his patrimony even while his
father, John of Gaunt, lives. In spite of York's warning that Richard's
capricious action in this matter will have disastrous consequences in
that in denying Bolingbrooke his right of inheritance he also endangers
that right of others to include himself, Richard replies, "Think what
you will, we seize into our hands/ His plate, his goods, his money, and
his lands" (II.1.209-210). In this and his other actions previously
described, Richard violates a fundamental Machiavellian maxim:

What makes him [the prince] hated above all, as I have said,
is being rapacious and a usurper of the property and the women
belonging to his subjects; he must abstain from this; for the
majority of men, so long as you do not deprive them of their
possessions and honor, live happily; and you have only to con­
tend with the ambitions of a few who can be kept in check easily
and in many ways.\textsuperscript{4}

In ignoring this political principle, Richard not only whets the ambi­
tions of Bolingbrooke, but unwittingly gives Bolingbrooke numerous support­
ers in that Richard causes himself to become hated by the majority
through over-taxation and extravagant waste of public funds.

Richard's primary weakness as a man and a king stems from his
narrow conception of the divine right of kings, which in his own mind
frees himself from responsibility to his subjects and permits him to

\textsuperscript{4}Machiavelli, p. 151.
respond only to his own will. This view not only explains his capricious and self-willed actions but also explains his distorted sense of infallibility and, in a crisis, his complete dependence upon the aid of Divine Providence. As he says in Act III, when Bolingbroke's army is almost upon him and his dwindling forces:

Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm off from an anointed king.
The breath of worldly men cannot depose
The deputy elected by the Lord.
For every man that Bolingbroke hath pressed
To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown,
God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay
A glorious angel. Then, if angels fight,
Weak men must fall; for heaven still guards the right.

(III.i.54-62)

But this is to substitute words for action, to show his reliance on Divine Providence to the exclusion of any personal effort and to state his basic assumption regarding kingship, that divine right makes might as well as unquestionable political right.

What, then, should an ideal divine right prince be like? Shakespeare inserts two normative passages which, although they do not add to the plot, describe an ideal king in terms of the martial and civic aspects of virtù which Richard lacks. This first passage is spoken by the aging Edmund Langley, Duke of York and Richard's uncle, who admonishes Richard II, saying:

I am the last of Edward's [Edward III's] sons,
Of whom thy father, Prince of Wales, was first.
In war was never lion raged more fierce,
In peace was never gentle lamb more mild,
Than was that young and princely gentleman.
His face thou hast, for even so looked he,
Accomplished with the number of thy hours;
But when he frowned, it was against the French
And not against his friends. His noble hand
Did win what he did spend, and spent not that
Which his triumphant father's hand had won.
His hands were guilty of no kindred blood,  
But bloody with the enemies of his kin. 
O Richard! York is too far gone with grief,  
Or else he never would compare between.  

(II.i.171-185)

The Black Prince thus represents an ideal of kingly conduct in peace and war, and the kind of comment York makes on this subject is to re-echo in the words of Henry V in Henry V. Here, Richard II's deficiencies as man and king are immediately apparent.

The second passage which described in another sense the ideal norm of kingly comment is spoken by the Gardener in the allegorical garden scene in Act III:

Go bind thou up yon dangling apricocks,  
Which, like unruly children, make their sire  
Stoop with oppression of their prodigal weight.  
Give some supportance to the binding twigs.  
Go thou and, like an executioner,  
Cut off the heads of too-fast-growing sprays  
That look too lofty in our commonwealth.  
All must be even in our government.  
You thus employed, I will root away  
The noisome weeds which without profit suck  
The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers.  

(III.iv.29-39)

The Gardener not only speaks like a king but acts like one in maintaining order in the garden. Unlike Richard II, he cuts off "too-fast-growing sprays," which like Bolingbroke "look too lofty" in the commonwealth. He also maintains order and degree, and maintains due proportion within the plant kingdom he rules. By means of this political allegory, Shakespeare points up Richard II's inefficient and irresponsible husbandry in his kingdom. Both passages describe aspects of virtù and provide standards by which both Richard and Bolingbroke can be measured.

Like Richard, Bolingbroke is also aware of the importance of appearances. However, unlike Richard, who makes use of appearance and
words for the purpose of self-aggrandizement and to flatter his own
vanity, Bolingbroke makes use of appearances to achieve definite polit-
cical aims. For this, Bolingbroke is feared by Richard:

    Ourself and Busky, Bagot here, and Green
    Observed his courtship to the common people;
    How he did seem to dive into their hearts
    With humble and familiar courtesy;
    What reverence he did throw away on slaves,
    Wooing poor craftsmen with craft of smiles
    And patient underbearing of his fortune,
    As 'twere to banish their affects with him.
    Off goes his bonnet to an oyster-wench;
    A brace of draymen bid God speed his well
    And had the tribute of his supple knee,
    With 'Thanks, my countrymen, my loving friends';
    As were our England in reversion his,
    And he our subjects' next degree in hope.
    (I.iv.23-36)

Richard is not only critical of Bolingbroke for using such means
for gaining popularity with the masses; he is envious because he knows
Bolingbroke has been successful in gaining support which he himself
does not have. Unlike Richard, who through misrule has gained the
hatred and contempt of the common people, Bolingbroke observes a Machi-
avellian principle that "a prince must keep on friendly terms with the
common people; otherwise, in adverse times, he will find no assistance."^ With adverse times ahead for Richard, Bolingbroke recognizes the occa-
sion to make the most of Richard's political neglect, and exercises his
own virtù in such a manner that support of the common people almost
imperceptibly shifts from Richard to Bolingbroke.

Bolingbroke also recognizes that the nobles are dissatisfied with
Richard and exercises his virtù to gain their support. Thus, when Bol-
ingbroke returns to England, he is not only politic enough to continually

^Ibid., p. 81.
insist that he returns only to claim the landed estates that are right-
fully his upon the death of John of Gaunt, but also makes it clear to
his future supporters that their fortunes are tied to his own on a
*quid pro quid* basis. He tells Northumberland, one of his most constant
supporters, "Of much less value is my company/ Than your good words"
(II.iii.19-20), and when joined by Harry Percy, Northumberland's son,
"Hotspur," Bolingbroke is careful to let Hotspur know that Bolingbroke's
success will be his, Hotspur's, too: "And, as my fortune ripens with
thy love,/ It shall be still thy true love's recompense" (II.iii.48-49).
Joined shortly by Ross and Willoughby, he repeats the same kind of
remark twice: "All my treasury/ Is yet but unfelt thanks, which more
enriched,/ Shall be your love and labor's recompense" (II.iii.60-62),
and later, to Willoughby, "Evermore thanks, the exchequer of the poor,/Which, till my infant fortune comes to years,/ Stands for my bounty"
(II.iii.65-68). This dialogue suggests Bolingbroke's understanding of
the role of self-interest in political life and of the *Realpolitik*
typical of political alliances.

Bolingbroke benefits from the disposition of both the nobles and
the commons toward Richard II and does so in Machiavelli's terms:

A principality is created either by the common people or the
nobles, depending on which of these two has the opportunity
(occasione). For when the nobles see that they cannot hold
but against the common people, they begin to build up the
prestige of one of their own and make him prince in order to
be able, under his protection, to satisfy their desires. The
common people, in the same way seeing they cannot hold out
against the nobles, build up the prestige of one of their own
and make him prince in order to have the defense of his
authority.6

6Ibid., p. 77.
In respect to the commons, however, they now look, as Bolingbroke well
knows, to one with greater prestige and authority to represent their
cause.

The nobles and commons, as a result of Richard's misrule and
Bolingbroke's unpopular banishment and confiscation of his estate,
experience divided loyalties. This situation is accurately described
by York when he says:

Th' one is my sovereign, whom both my oath
And duty bids defend; t'other again
Is my kinsman, whom the king has wronged,
Whom conscience and my kindred bids to right.

(II.i.112-115)

York's remarks are representative of all Englishmen who are struggling
with loyalty to the divine right tradition, but who are also aware of
the implicit political evil in it: that a weak ruler, or an evil one,
might inherit the throne and misgovern badly. It is this possible po-
itical horror which this play illustrates. This conflict or precarious
balance of divided loyalties lasts only momentarily. Richard II's mis-
deeds now weigh heavily upon the conscience of nobles and commons alike
so that the fortune of Richard and Bolingbroke reverses itself. Richard
loses the crown; Bolingbroke gains it.

In Act III, scene iv, the Gardener describes allegorically the
role of fortune in the lives of Bolingbroke and Richard II, saying to
the Queen:

King Richard, he is in the mighty hold
Of Bolingbroke. Their fortunes both are weighed.
In your lord's scale is nothing but himself,
And some few vanities that make him light;
But in the balance of great Bolingbroke,
Besides himself, are all the English peers,
And with that odds he weighs King Richard down.

(III.iv.83-89)
The view which the Gardener expresses toward fortune is close to Machiavelli's in that he expresses the attitude that when political change occurs, it is not the result of a completely arbitrary force, but is closely tied to the character of political contestants. As Machiavelli says in *The Prince*:

... let me say that we may see a prince prosper today, and tomorrow come to ruin, without having seen a change in his character or in anything else. This I believe stems, first, from the causes discussed at length earlier; that is, that a prince who relies entirely on fortune will come to ruin as soon as she changes. I believe, furthermore, that he will prosper who adapts his course of action to conditions of the present time, and similarly that he will not prosper who with his course of action conflicts with the times.7

The fortunes of Richard and Bolingbroke do change. Richard remains inflexible, rejecting the "means" that would insure his maintaining his position as king. We might say that he assumes that fortune in the role of providence is on his side because he is king by right of inheritance. In Bolingbroke, contrariwise, we perceive a change from acceptance of things which must be endured to recognition that he can promote change and influence events by exercising his own will.

In Act IV, scene i, occurs another image of fortune, this one used by Richard to describe the changes in fortune of himself and Bolingbroke:

Now this golden crown like a deep well
That owes two buckets, filling one another,
The emptier ever dancing in the air,
The other down, unseen full of water.
That bucket down and full of tears am I,
Drinking my griefs while you mount up on high.

(IV.1.184-189)

Richard's use of this image, however, is far removed from the dispassionate use of the image of fortune by the Gardener. Richard sees

fortune as an arbitrary force over which he has no control, and instead of using this image to describe the reality of things, he uses it to express his own self-pity and political impotence.

In Act III, scene iii, Shakespeare uses an image of the sun to describe the change in the fortunes of Richard and Bolingbroke, as well as to describe the transfer of power which occurs from Richard to Bolingbroke. The sun motif is recurrent throughout the play and indicates change in political fortune. As Richard appears on the castle walls, Bolingbroke says:

See, see, King Richard doth himself appear,
As doth the blushing discontented sun
From out the fiery portal of the east
When he perceives the envious clouds are bent
To dim his glory and stain the track
Of his bright passage to the occident.

(III.iii.62-67)

And York accurately and damagingly comments: "Yet looks he like a king" (II.ii.68--my italics). Richard is now king in appearance only; he relies exclusively upon the doctrine of divine right and his ability to play the part of a divine right monarch. Bolingbroke, however, while admonishing Northumberland to pay his respects to Richard II, adds that he should indicate that Bolingbroke is willing, "even at his feet to lay my arms and power,/ Provided that my banishment repealed/
And lands restored again be freely granted./ If not, I'll use the advantage of my power" (III.iii.39-42). Thus, while Richard relies on divine right and show, Bolingbroke relies on force and Machiavellian dissimulation, for it is clear even to Richard that Bolingbroke will not relinquish the power he has won. Bolingbroke now commands Richard, through Northumberland, to meet him in the base court. Richard replies satirically in a way that underscores Bolingbroke's emerging hypocrisy:
Down, down I come, like glit'ring Phaethon,
Wanting the manage of unruly jades.
In the base court? Base court, where kings grow base
To come at traitors' call and do them grace!

(III.iii.178-181)

After receiving Bolingbroke's ceremonial kneeling to him, Richard exposes Bolingbroke by saying, "Up, cousin up! Your heart is up, I know,/
Thus high at least [touches his own head], although your/ knee be low"
(III.iii.94-96). Thus, Bolingbroke becomes the "rising sun" who outshines Richard II as the "setting sun" in the kingdom.

Bolingbroke, then, by exercising virtù, disguises his acts of dissimulation in order to gain the support of the nobles and the commons and with his own force of will, takes advantage of the occasion presented to him by fortune, in the form of Richard's misrule, and shapes it to his own political desires. He is able steadily to rise to power while cautiously arranging Richard's descent. Unlike Richard III, Bolingbroke is successful, at least temporarily, in making use of appearances. He is also cautious in his beliefs and actions, and his conduct is "tempered by prudence and kindness, so that excessive confidence does not make him impudent and excessive mistrust render him intolerable." Bolingbroke displays the flexibility which Machiavelli deemed so important in exercising virtù. Even at the critical moment when Bolingbroke confronts Richard II in the "base court," when he could take all, he exercises restraint, knowing that in addition to physical force he must also have the "moral" support of the nobles and commons for his reign. Acts IV and V, of course, suggest how queasy this moral support is.

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8Ibid., p. 137.
Bolingbroke does not act on the basis of right, but on the basis of political necessity, and succeeds in persuading others of the rightness of this basis of action. As early as Act I this attitude, which is to become characteristic of Bolingbroke in general, is displayed when Bolingbroke rejects John of Gaunt's consolatory advice regarding banishment: "Teach thy necessity to reason thus: There is no virtue like necessity" (I.iii.278-279). Necessity to John of Gaunt, here, means patiently enduring the inevitable, but to Bolingbroke, necessity comes to mean something entirely different. Gaunt further urges Bolingbroke to imagine his state of banishment to be that which it is not: "Look what thy soul holds dear, imagine it/ To lie that way thou goest, not where thou com'st" (I.iii.286-287). Bolingbroke, however, questions Gaunt's consolations. He is overcome by the stark reality of the situation and says, "0, who can hold a fire in his hand/ By thinking of the frosty Caecus?/ Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite/ By bare imagination of a feast?" (I.iii.294-297). Bolingbroke cannot and will not imagine things to be other than they are in reality. In questioning Richard's judgment, Bolingbroke questions Richard's infallibility and in doing so, rejects in effect the entire doctrine of divine right in respect to Richard II. Thus, Bolingbroke rejects the traditional sanctions of divine right and relies instead upon physical and moral or psychological force and the will to use it.

Immediately after Bolingbroke proclaims his day of coronation, the ideas and attitudes which come to characterize his reign are apparent.9

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9I have not touched upon the deposition scene because: (1) I believe the point has been made clear that Bolingbroke is a usurper. (2) This scene is important in Shakespeare's effort to make Richard a tragic character and tragedy is not my subject. However, in this scene Shakespeare again evaluates the divine right tradition and notes its values, such as respect, tradition, form and ceremonious duty.
During the course of Bolingbroke's inquiry into the death of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, Fitzwater states, "As I intend to thrive in this new world,/ Aumerle is guilty of my true appeal" (IV.i.78-79). The "new world" referred to by Fitzwater is the new world of Bolingbroke, and recognizing that the odds are heavily in favor of Aumerle being implicated in the death of Thomas of Woodstock, Fitzwater, acting out of fear and the kind of self-interest which Bolingbroke ushered in through his usurpation, adds his voice to those of others accusing Aumerle of being involved. In acting in terms of self-interest, Bolingbroke has in effect opened the way for the nobility to do likewise. Throughout the last acts there are other incidents which reveal the character of Bolingbroke's "new world".

In Act V, scene i, Northumberland informs Richard II that he will be taken to Pomfret and that the Queen will be sent to France. The Queen pleads that both be sent to France. Northumberland's reply reflects the temperament and political awareness of his new superior: "That were some love, but little policy" (V.i.84). In the second scene of Act V, Aumerle, son of the Duke of York, is discovered taking part in a conspiracy against the now Henry IV. York, who has betrayed one king, is now extremely fearful and apprehensive about being implicated in betraying another, and rushes to inform Henry IV of his son's action, demanding that he be given a traitor's due. In doing so, York displays the kind of fear which is to become typical of Bolingbroke's reign, which from the start shows the crude power politics. In York's case, Machiavelli's judgment seems to be sustained:

... the prince will always with great ease be able to win over those men who at the start of his principality had been
enemies, the kind that in order to maintain themselves must have support . . . inasmuch as they realize the necessity of cancelling, through their deeds, that bad impression he held of them.\textsuperscript{10}

It is this same kind of fear evidenced obliquely in Henry IV himself, that leads Exton to murder Richard in order to ingratiate himself with Henry. Henry has murmured before Exton, "Have I no friend who will rid me of this living fear?" (V.iii.2). In murdering Richard, Exton, like York, hopes to remain as Henry IV's friend and loyal servant. But through political murder, Henry IV creates a situation wherein the notion that might makes right is easily subjected to both political and moral denunciation. The question, then, remains whether Henry IV can maintain control of the crown he has usurped and whether political murder is necessary in order to maintain his position. Although Henry IV has the support of the commons, he also has to deal with the nobles who have helped him to power, and as Machiavelli points out:

He who becomes prince with the help of the nobles sustains his position with more difficulty . . . for he will find himself a prince surrounded by men who believe they are his equals, and for this reason he can neither govern nor handle them as he would like to.\textsuperscript{11}

In summation, the basic ambiguity which remains as the play ends is that while Richard II ruled with the sanction of divine right, he was also an exemplar of right minus might. Bolingbroke, on the other hand, begins to rule with the might of physical and psychological force, but he lacks the traditional sanctions of divine right. This basic ambiguity remains to plague the Henry of 1 and 2 Henry IV.

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., p. 179. \textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 77.
CHAPTER V

PART I HENRY IV

In the first two scenes of Act I of 1 Henry IV, Shakespeare deliberately contrasts the "new world" of Henry IV with the world of Falstaff. Henry's "new world" is characterized by fear, mistrust, oppressive care owing to the burdensome responsibilities of kingship, and an apprehensiveness of political rebellion. Henry's opening remarks accurately describe the temperament of the court:

So shaken as we are, so wan with care
Find we a time for frighted peace to pant
And breathe short-winded accents of new broils
To be commenced in stronds afar remote.

(I.i.1-4)

Shakespeare's metaphor of peace as a frightened animal is effective in conveying the sense of fear and anxiety that pervades the court, and "care," either as a noun or an adjective, is a word Henry uses incessantly to describe his workaday world and oppressive responsibilities. In contrast to Henry's "new world" we find Hal, Falstaff and his companions in a high state of revelry at the Boar's Head Tavern, which is the world of holiday, far from Henry's world of care and responsibility. As the play develops, Hal's position in the world of holiday is clearly

\[1\] All citations from 1 Henry IV refer to The First Part of Henry the Fourth, ed. Alfred Harbage (Baltimore, 1967—a Penguin Book).

\[2\] In addition to being one of Shakespeare's English history plays, 1 Henry IV is one of Shakespeare's finest comedies. In the Second Tetralogy, Richard II is a tragedy, 2 Henry IV touches upon satire, and the mode of action of Henry V is that of dramatic epic.
defined and entirely understandable. As the heir-apparent, Hal is unwilling to be infected by the gloomy atmosphere of the court or to assume the heavy burdens which his father, though weary of them, is capable of handling in view of the situation he has created.

In his opening soliloquy in Act I, scene ii, Hal links both the comic aspects of the world he now temporarily moves in and the serious aspects of his future by indicating his awareness that the time will come when he will have to reject the world of holiday and assume the burden of kingship. As Falstaff and his companions depart, Hal also acknowledges that, as a result of his association with them, appearances are against him, but only temporarily:

My reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
I'll so offend to make offense a skill,
Redeeming time when men think least I will.
(I.i.201-205)

In contrasting these two worlds, then, Shakespeare not only dramatizes the immediate consequences of Henry's usurpation of the throne, but also, through Hal in particular, dramatizes one of the basic issues in the play, the way in which the discrepancy between appearance and reality ramifies into political life at every stage. For Hal seems here to possess the ability to dissimulate typical of his father.

Henry IV is now faced with the realities of the political situation he has helped to create as man, father, and king. As king, Henry is faced with the political rebellion led by the Percies. Henry's situation is similar to that outlined by Machiavelli in The Prince when he says:

He who becomes prince with the help of the nobles sustains his position with more difficulty than he who becomes prince with
the help of the common people; for he will find himself surrounded by many who believe they are his equals, and for this reason he can neither govern nor handle them as he would like to.\textsuperscript{3}

This passage accurately describes Henry's present dilemma. The Percies not only believe themselves to be Henry's equals, since he rules without the legal sanction of divine right, but believe that in Edmund Mortimer, one of their faction whom Richard II proclaimed heir to the crown, his is a superior claim to the crown than Henry's. This situation is made increasingly worse by Henry's refusal to ransom Mortimer, who has been captured by the rebellious Welshman, Owen Glendower, in the king's war in Wales. While Henry recognizes the threat Mortimer and the Percies pose, at the same time he refuses to deal with them drastically, that is, by following Machiavelli's methods completely in order to solidify his position. He does not do so because as man Henry, unlike Richard III, has a conscience which even now troubles him. It is his guilty conscience which moves him to insist publicly that he will undertake a crusade in the Holy Land, although we are continually in doubt as to whether he ever intended to carry out this design. Politically, however, Henry's constant reiteration of this intention sets him in a favorable political and moral light, as he well knows. In dramatizing Henry's problems in these two respects, that is, \textit{vis-à-vis} the nobles who are now planning to use the same means he used to obtain the crown, and his problem of conscience and his sense of disillusionment, Shakespeare appears to be calling into question Henry's Machiavellian methods in obtaining political power and is quietly critical of the resulting atmosphere of fear and mistrust which Henry has created.

\textsuperscript{3}Machiavelli, p. 77.
As father, Henry feels most acutely the moral breakdown that has occurred within the political realm, through the apparent riotous behavior of Hal, about which he learns through hearsay.

In Act III, scene ii, when Henry formally confronts Hal, he is openly critical of his conduct:

God pardon thee! Yet let me wonder, Harry, At thy affections, which do hold a wing Quite from the flight of all thy ancestors. Thy place in council thou hast rudely lost, Which by thy younger brother is supplied, And art almost an alien to the hearts Of all court and princes of my blood. (III.ii.29-34)

Henry's criticism, however, is based upon his own experience, his own political use of appearances and his own conception of honor. He re-views in part for Hal his own political past:

By being seldom seen, I could not stir But like a comet, I was wond'red at; That men would tell their children, 'This is he!' Others would say, 'Where? Which is Bolingbroke?' And then I stole all courtesy from heaven, And dressed myself in such humility That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts, Loud shouts and salutations from their mouths Even in the presence of the crowned king. (III.ii.46-54)

Henry's comments have a certain merit for he realizes that Richard II in showing himself off too much and keeping base company was very soon, as he tells Hal, "Heard, not regarded" (III.ii.76). However, in Machi-avelli's terms, there are at least two things of which Henry IV is not aware, or to which he gives little consideration. In The Prince, Machi-avelli writes:

One who becomes prince through the support of the common people, however, should maintain their friendship, which should be easy for him, since the only thing they ask is that they not be oppressed.⁴

⁴Machiavelli, p. 81.
This Henry IV has failed to do. In Henry's words he "stole all courtesy" and "did pluck allegiance" from men's hearts. Henry's primary fault, however, has been his hypocritical pursuit of power.

Hotspur, in particular, fulminates against this aspect of Henry's character. He describes Henry as "this vile politician" (I.iii.240), and "this king of smiles" (I.iii.245), and remarks about his own earlier encounters with Henry, when he was plain Bolingbroke:

Why, what a candy deal of courtesy
This fawning greyhound then did proffer me!
Look, 'when his infant fortune came to age,'
And 'gentle Harry Percy,' and 'kind cousin'—
O, the devil take such cozeners!—God forgive me!
(I.iii.249-254)

Thus, Henry has achieved political success, but his manipulation of appearances, his hypocrisy, have failed to create any lasting alliance between himself and those who helped him to power. Yet as a king Henry in other respects has been successful and acted with resolution. He meets directly the attempt by Glendower and the Percies to destroy the geographic integrity of England and is successful in rallying his supporters to meet this challenge. Henry is also successful in avoiding the political evils that brought Richard II into hatred and contempt, and as a father displays a real concern for the welfare of his son's future.

Unlike his father, Hal does not pretend to the courtly tradition and its sanctions; in fact, he ridicules them. As Henry Percy ("Hotspur") in Richard II reports after Henry IV's coronation, Hal has declared:

... he would unto the stews
And from the commonest creature pluck a glove
And wear it as a favor, and with that
He would unhorse the lustiest challenger.
(R. II, V.iii.16-19)
Hal, therefore, unlike his father rejects blatant hypocrisy early in life. In doing so, he follows a political principle like that which Machiavelli set down in *The Prince* when he says:

"... the prince must be prudent enough to know how to escape infamy of those vices that would lose him his state, and be on his guard against those that will not lose it for him, if this be possible; but if it prove impossible, he need not be troubled about foregoing them. And furthermore, he must not be concerned with incurring the infamy of those vices without which it would be difficult to save his state; because taking all carefully into consideration, he will discover that something that appears to be a virtue, if pursued, will result in his ruin, while some other thing that appears to be a vice, if pursued, will bring about his security and well being."

In respect to vices which would lose him his state, Hal rejects two which are typical of Henry IV and the court, hypocrisy and vanity. What appear to be virtues, as attending to court matters and pursuit of his father's concept of honor, at this time would result in Hal's moral and political ruin. Indeed, what Shakespeare shows in the Hal of the Boar's Head Tavern scenes is a young man full of high spirits, fully aware that Falstaff and his cronies are trying to use him for their own purposes, and learning to know the lower class world at first hand.

Although Machiavelli pays no heed to honor as a virtue either in public or private life, he does, as I have shown earlier, consider glory and reputation as two things the prince must consider in all his undertakings. In 1 Henry IV, honor is one of the major themes of the play, and inasmuch as it involves Shakespeare's concern with the qualities of an ideal king and involves aspects of the martial spirit of *virtù* and reputation which are of major importance to Machiavelli, it is worth careful consideration.

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5Tbid., p. 129.
In Act I, scene i, Henry IV laments that he has not a son like Hotspur, "who is the theme of honor's tongue" (I.i.81), and in Act III, scene ii, he invidiously holds Hotspur up to Hal as one who embodies his own ideal of honor and the martial spirit. Honor to Henry IV means military glory or the reputation for martial ability and is more closely associated with Machiavelli's secular concepts of glory, good public reputation and the merely martial aspects of virtù. For Henry IV, honor has the political value of what we today call a public image. The image can keep nobles and commons alike in awe, as he indicates to Hal, "Opinion, that did help me to the crown" (III.ii.42).

For Hotspur honor has some touches of Henry IV's ideas of glory or reputation; however, for Hotspur it implies physical courage to the extent of foolhardiness in the face of extreme odds on the battlefield, death being imminent. Honor represents the reward for exertion of a man's greatest strength, but in Hotspur it is romantic excess and proves to be a sign of his greatest weakness. Hotspur's concept of honor is perhaps best characterized in his own words when he first refers to abstract honor, saying:

By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honor from the pale-faced moon,
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
Where fathom line could never touch the ground,
And pluck up drowned honor by the locks,
So he that doth redeem her thence might wear
Without corrival all her dignities;
But out upon this half-faced fellowship!
(I.iii.201-208, my italics)

Hotspur's use of words such as "leap" and "dive" and "pluck" describes the thrust and drive and single-mindedness with which he pursues honor, and in this passage he also declares his belief in the individualistic
nature of honor as a reward not to be shared with others. However, Hotspur's over-valuation of honor is accurately criticized by Worcester after listening to Hotspur's tirade, just quoted, "He apprehends a world of figures here,/ But not the form of what he should attend" (I.iii.209-210). Hotspur's romantic excess progressively causes him to lose touch with political and military reality. This point is best illustrated before the Battle of Shrewsbury when without the forces of his father and uncle, Henry and Thomas Percy, and those of Glendower, Hotspur takes on the numerically superior forces of Henry IV. In spite of the odds, Hotspur remains jubilant and declares:

My father and Glendower being both away,
The powers of us may serve so great a day.
Come, let us take a muster speedily.
Doomsday is near. Die all, die merrily.

(IV.i.131-134)

Nevertheless, Hotspur's reputation for honor is not wholly without merit and in this respect he far outshines Hal. In Henry IV, Lady Percy, now a widow, reminds Hotspur's father of his son's merit and bitterly accuses him of abandoning his son at the Battle of Shrewsbury:

He was indeed the glass
Wherein the noble youth did dress themselves.
He had no legs that practiced not his gait;
And speaking thick, which nature made his blemish,
Became the accents of the valiant,
For those that could speak low and tardily
Would turn their own perfection to abuse,
To seem like him. So that in speech, in gait,
In diet, in affections of delight,
In military rules, humors of blood,
He was the mark and glass, copy and book,
That fashioned others.

(2 H. IV, II.iii.21-31)\(^6\)

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\(^6\)All citations from 2 Henry IV refer to The Second Part of Henry the Fourth, ed. Allan Chester (Baltimore, 1967—a Penguin Book).
Whereas Hotspur represents the romantic excess possible in the pursuit of honor and the martial spirit, Falstaff represents its opposite. This is not only evident from his ignoble performance at Gad's Hill which he defends later by arguing that he was "a coward on instinct" (II.iv. 258), but also at the Battle of Shrewsbury when he declares, "What is honor? A word./ What is that word honor? Air—a trim reckoning!" (V.i.33-34). On the battlefield Falstaff, unlike Hotspur, is careful to avoid any situation that might endanger his life: "Give me life; which if I can save, so; if not, honor comes unlooked for, and there's an end" (V.iii.58-60). In the great scene in which Hal confronts Hotspur in a fight to the death, Falstaff plays dead when attacked by the Douglas, and upon realizing that Hal has killed Hotspur he claims the honor for the death saying, "The better part of valor is discretion, in the which better part I have saved my life" (V.iv.118-119). In contrast to Hotspur, then, Falstaff both in word and deed displays only the counterfeit for honor; life is preferable to honor, especially when it involves risking one's life. Yet he finds the reputation for honor to be a vendible commodity.

Hal, however, rejects both Hotspur's excess and Falstaff's defect. He acts instead a role that in retrospect seems to fall between the foolishness of Hotspur and the cowardliness of Falstaff. Hal's defeat of Hotspur represents a pragmatic use of force in which honor or the reputation for it is a windfall kind of result divorced from false modesty and inordinate desire for praise. Having earned honor by saving his father's life and taking Hotspur's, Hal in a spirit of jest lets Falstaff assume the honor image in public. To Hal honor seems to mean
action that involves total integrity. A public image for being honorable, he does not seek.

From a spectator's point of view, we realize Hal is without the traditional sanctions of divine right because of Bolingbroke's usurpation of the throne, and that the old symbols of hereditary kingship having vanished, new ones must be created in order to hold the nobles and commons alike in awe. We also realize that Hal must make a complete and dramatic break with the unattractive aspects of Henry's regime. Although Henry IV has successfully maintained the geographic unity of England, the questions remain, what kind of success is that which he has achieved and wherein does it involve the question of honor?

Before the Battle of Shrewsbury, in his confrontation with his father in Act III, scene ii, Hal, aware of his father's Machiavellian manipulation of appearance, appeals to this aspect of his father's character by describing how he plans to exchange his reputation as a roisterer for the martial honor of defeating Hotspur in combat:

For the time will come
That I shall make this northern youth exchange
His glorious deeds for my indignities.
Percy is but my factor, good my lord,
To engross up glorious deeds on my behalf;
And I will call him to so strict account
That he shall render every glory up,
Yea, even the slightest worship of his time
Or I will tear the reckoning from his heart.  
(III.ii.144-152)

Hal, then, like his father, is aware of the political importance of reputation. To his father it appears that Hal intends to use appearances, as he did himself in the past, to acquire the good opinion of others; however, Hal's procedure is not Machiavellian.

At the Battle of Shrewsbury the issues of honor and the martial aspects of virtù are resolved. Understandably Henry IV is primarily
interested in winning a military victory. To do so, he counterfeits the appearance of himself by attiring several of his followers in his kingly attire. Once again, Henry IV is consistent in playing the role of a dissimulator, although his move has merit as a military tactic, but while scoring a military victory he is again no more successful in securing a lasting reputation for honor than in the past.

Hal, on the other hand, risks his life for his father and does not overtly seek honor in Henry IV's sense of glory or reputation. When Hal confronts Hotspur, he says:

I am the Prince of Wales, and think not, Percy,
To share with me glory any more.
Two stars keep not their motion in one sphere,
Nor can England brook a double reign
Of Harry Percy and the Prince of Wales.

(V. iv. 62-66)

Hal, then, in opposing Hotspur is not seeking honor in the sense of glory or reputation, but is recognizing the political realities of the situation. Hotspur will not be ruled and the victory of him and his faction divided England. Upon defeating Hotspur, Hal, in an un-Machiavellian fashion allows Falstaff to take the glory of the conquest.

Honor for Hal, then, "comes unlooked for" and to Hal means the capacity to summon up courage enough to risk one's life for a just course, such as the order and the geographic integrity of England. No other alternative free of hypocrisy is available. For Hal, employing might in the service of right and by so doing lending legitimacy to the Lancastrian line of kings is genuinely honorable. Hal, therefore, overcomes two major defects in his father, the resort to hypocrisy and the excessive use of force and fear, to insure his position as king. Hence, while Hal recognizes the need for physical and moral or psychological force,
he establishes genuine honor as the obverse of Machiavelli's conviction that the psychology of power demands that hypocrisy (by tradition considered the worst of public vices) be considered a political virtue.
CHAPTER VI

PART II HENRY IV

The central issue in 2 Henry IV, so far as this study is concerned, involves the transfer of political power from Henry IV, who acquired it by force and dissimulation, to Hal who acquires it by right of hereditary succession and—it can be implied—by merit. At the time of the transfer, the need for justice as crucial to maintaining political order and the stability of the kingdom comes into the foreground. The need for justice, in so far as Machiavelli is concerned, is secondary to the need for political stability and the security of the state, and a just order is that which achieves these ends regardless of the means taken to secure them. In 2 Henry IV, however, through Hal, Shakespeare dramatizes the concept only order based on justice will promote true political stability and the security of the realm. The need for justice is everywhere obvious since in 2 Henry IV the lack or absence of justice in the kingdom at large and in subject and king has produced corrupt situations which are readily apparent on the various levels of the plot.

In 1 Henry IV the Percies' rebellion, as one form of injustice initiated in response to the injustice of Henry IV's usurpation of the crown, meets defeat at Shrewsbury, but defeat seems at the beginning of 2 Henry IV to be only a temporary set-back. In retrospect Morton recognizes that Hotspur lost as the result of two major causes: (1) those who fought with the Percies soon recognized the personal nature of their dispute with Henry IV; and (2) this recognition combined with
their queasiness about the justice of rebellion against an anointed king caused them to fight in a constrained manner. Now the rebels seek a convincing moral justification for revolt. As Morton indicates, the Archbishop of York "turns insurrection to religion" (I.i.201) by declaring Richard II a martyr and thereby transforming, at least verbally, the rebellion into a holy war. In this ironic way, Shakespeare begins to center attention on the theme of justice.

With the help of his sons, Prince Hal and Prince John, Henry IV moves to quell the rebel uprising and reestablish the political stability of the kingdom. Hal is employed in Wales, and the victories he assists in are merely reported in Act III. In Act IV Prince John and the Earl of Westmoreland confront Hastings, Mowbray, the Archbishop of York and the rebel forces at Gaultree Forest. (The Earl of Northumberland has conveniently fled to safety in Scotland.) The rebels claim that their appeals for justice at the hands of Henry have been disregarded and that the wrongs they suffer outweigh any offenses they have committed. Yet Westmoreland justifies Henry's disregard to neglect of these matters in Machiavellian terms:

> O, my good Lord Mowbray,  
> Construe the times to their necessities,  
> And you shall say indeed, it is the time,  
> And not the king, that doth you injuries.  
> (IV.i.103-106)

Necessity, then, serves as a basis not only for justifying action but for justifying the absence of justice. Westmoreland does, however, accept a list of the rebels' grievances and returns shortly thereafter with Prince John, who swears that:

> ... these griefs shall be with speed redressed,  
> Upon my soul, they shall. If this may please you,  
> Discharge your power unto their several counties,  
> As we will ours.  
> (IV.ii.59-62)
Satisfied with such assurances, the rebels disband their forces, whereupon Prince John executes the most overt piece of Machiavellian treachery in the entire sequence of Shakespeare's English history plays by arresting Hastings, Mowbray and the Archbishop of York for high treason. The lack of justice on both sides is apparent in Mowbray's question, "Is this proceeding just and honorable?" (IV.iii.110), and in Westmoreland's reply, "Is your assembly so? (IV.iii.111). Prince John's treachery rivals that of Cesare Borgia at Sinigallia. Yet in spite of his breach of faith and mockery of justice, Prince John experiences no qualms of conscience as he declares:

"Strike up our drums, pursue the scattered stray, God, and not we hath safely fought today. Some guard the traitors to the block of death, Treason's true bed and yielder up of breath."

(IV.ii.120-123)

On the public level of the play, then, overt acts of injustice flourish and seem to have proved their value in terms of Machiavellian political realism. On an individual level the presence and absence of justice is dramatized through the three encounters between the Lord Chief Justice and Falstaff. Their conflict, personal and theoretical, also dramatizes the choice Hal will have to face in respect to justice when he assumes the responsibilities of kingship toward the end of the play.

As early as Act I, scene ii, in 1 Henry IV, we begin to gain an

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1 In The Prince, Machiavelli described Cesare Borgia's conference at Magione in the district of Perugia with his rivals of the Orsini family. Having been assured of Borgia's good intentions through his presentation of clothes, money and horses to the Orsini's representative, Signor Paulo, members of the Orsini family appeared at Sinigallia where Borgia finished off them and their leaders and forced their followers into his friendship. (See p. 55).
understanding of Falstaff's negative attitude toward justice as he inquires of Hal:

But I prithee, sweet wag,
Shall there be gallows standing in England when thou art king? and resolution thus dubbed as it is with the rusty curb of old father antic the law? Do not thou, when thou art king, hang a thief.

(I.i.i.53-57)

Falstaff trusts that his acquaintance with Hal will entitle him to special consideration and that Hal will reject "old father antic the law," presumably the Lord Chief Justice and what he represents.

In 2 Henry IV, the differences between Falstaff's interpretation of justice and that of the Lord Chief Justice become razor sharp and provide a major clue to the structure of the play. Hal is being pulled in one direction by Falstaff toward injustice and in the other toward justice by the Lord Chief Justice, or at least Falstaff and the Lord Chief Justice think so. During their first encounter, the Lord Chief Justice makes a point of warning Falstaff that he lives in great infamy, that his financial means are meager while his waste is great, that he has misled the prince, and that Falstaff may thank the unquiet times for the dismissal of the action against him for his part in the Gad's Hill robbery. In reply to the Lord Chief Justice's questions and accusations, Falstaff is deliberately evasive, cheeky, insolent and entirely on the defensive. He no longer is the merry subversive of 1 Henry IV; now he flatly and insolently refuses to be ruled. The Lord Chief Justice breaks off this confrontation by warning Falstaff, "Wake not a sleeping wolf" (I.i.i.1h5-1h6).

Upon their second encounter, as Falstaff attempts to avoid paying Hostess Quickly for services rendered, the Lord Chief Justice
pinpoints two of Falstaff's major defects as they affect personal justice: (1) his sophistry—"Sir John, Sir John, I am well acquainted with your manner of wrenching the true cause the false way" (II.i.104-105); and (2) his conception of justice as an expression of his own self-will and self-interest. Falstaff responds to this accusation saying, "My lord, I will not undergo this sneak without reply. 'You call honorable boldness impudent sauciness. If a man will make curtsy and say nothing, he is virtuous" (II.i.117-119) and attempts to excuse his behavior in that he is employed in the king's service. The Lord Chief Justice, however, points out, "You speak as having the power to do wrong" (II.i.124), indicating that regardless of his position, Falstaff, like Hal, is also subject to the law.

In both these scenes Shakespeare suggests just how far Falstaff is outside the normal bounds of law and order. He also suggests the detrimental effect Falstaff's attitude can have upon an ordered society based on justice. Through these scenes Shakespeare also foreshadows that Falstaff can not be allowed to continue his kind of conduct much longer if order and justice are to prevail.

The Lord Chief Justice's interpretation of justice is best characterized in his treatment of Hal for striking him while performing his duties as the king's justicer. This offence (only reported in the play through Falstaff), the Lord Chief Justice took not as an insult

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2This event was dramatized in the earlier and anonymous play, The Famous Victories of Henry V. The earliest printed edition of this play is dated 1598, although the consensus is that it was composed prior to 1588. The play was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1594, but there is no surviving edition of this date if one was ever published. Shakespeare could be sure, however, that his audience was familiar with The Famous Victories.
to himself personally but to his office and to Henry IV whom he represents, and so he imprisoned Hal for a brief while. This strong action not only demonstrates his courage and lack of self-interest, but also demonstrates his absolute impartiality in administering justice and upholding the law.

Injustice on an individual level, as well as in the kingdom, is also dramatized through Shakespeare's characters, Justices Shallow and Silence. Together these two represent justice, aged, enfeebled and nearly impotent, but worse yet, by them power and authority are employed in the service of appetite and self-interest on the local parish and county level. This point is well illustrated in Shallow's comment to his servant Davy regarding Falstaff: "Yes, Davy, I will use him well. A friend in court is better than a penny in purse" (V.1.27-29), and Shallow scoffs, in effect, at impartial administration of justice when he dismisses the suit of William Visor, a friend of his servant Davy.

Davy urges:

An honest man, sir, is able to speak for himself, when a knave is not. I have served your worship truly, sir, this eight years, and if I cannot once or twice in a quarter bear out a knave against an honest man, I have but a very little credit with your worship. The knave is mine honest friend, sir. Therefore, I beseech you, let him be countenanced.

(V.1.39-45)

Shallow, whose name accurately characterizes his manner of dealing with legal matters (as well as with life as a whole) dismisses Davy's plea, basing his judgment solely on hearsay evidence and his own opinion which, according to Shallow, is just.

Falstaff is fully aware of the self-interested motivations of Shallow, which he takes to be a "normal" form of corruption. This point is illustrated when with Shallow and Silence, Falstaff impresses men
from Gloucestershire for military service. He allows Mouldy and Bulcalf
to buy their freedom, and presumably he will pocket most of the money
himself. While a desperate advocate for life, if it is his own, he
justifies the probable deaths of those he recruits for military service
as he justifies his own gain, on the basis of necessity. Hence he has
no qualms about fleecing Justice Shallow: "If the young dace be a bait
for the old pike, I see no reason in the law of nature but I may snap
at him [Shallow]. Let time shape, and there an end" (III.i.307-310).
To Falstaff, of course, the "law of nature" means only the jungle law
of survival of the fittest, not a system of moral absolutes.

When in Act V, scene iii, Falstaff learns of Henry IV's death,
his reaction dawns him as a political adventurer whose only thought is
personal gain. His proclamation, "Let us take any man's horses; the
laws of England are at my commandment, Blessed are they that have been
my friends, and woe to my lord Chief Justice!" (V.iii.132-135), is an
accurate summary of his self-willed and self-interested interpretation
of justice and proves to be the preface to his impending rejection by
Hal. Indeed, the injustice evident in the kingdom as dramatized through
the words and actions of Prince John, and in the individual as demon­
strated in the words and actions of Falstaff and Justice Shallow, is
only a preface to Hal's public dismissal of Falstaff—a dismissal harsh
and thorough, but necessary if Hal is to exemplify justice in any ideal
sense both as a king and man.

The reasons why Hal must reject Falstaff and his desire to man­
ipulate justice for his own benefit become apparent throughout the play.
Hal has gradually grown more and more disenchanted with the world Falstaff
represents as he has become more intensely aware that the burdens and pressures his father presently bears will soon be his own.

From his opening soliloquy in Act I, scene ii, in 1 Henry IV to his final rejection of Falstaff in 2 Henry IV, Hal's actions, in word and deed, foreshadow the final choice he will make in respect to justice. In Act II, scene ii, of 2 Henry IV, Hal enters into a conversation with Poins that reveals a deep-seated love for his father and true concern for his father's illness. At the same time, Hal demonstrates his awareness that past appearances are against him:

By this hand, thou thinkest 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. (II.iI.41-46)

Conscience and love for his father, then, set Hal gravitating away from Falstaff and his world, and while not meeting precisely his father's expectations, he suggests his intention to at least fulfill his father's hopes that he will be a good king.

These intentions and the need for them become evident in the scenes at the Boar's Head Tavern. In 2 Henry IV, Falstaff's world has lost its old vitality and holiday energy and has degenerated into a world of riot, debauchery and disease, drunken prostitutes and full chamber pots. Mistress Quickly is now the mistress of a bawdy house and Doll Tearsheet, a prostitute presented without glamor, is the beloved of Falstaff who is now plagued with the pox and the gout and is financially desperate. Furthermore, in 2 Henry IV there are no intimate scenes between Hal and Falstaff as in 1 Henry IV. The only encounter between Hal and Falstaff in the first four acts—the big Boar's Head
Tavern scene—is an at-arms-length one. Hal appears disguised as a
drawer to play a prank on Falstaff; the merriment, such as it is, is
cut short when Hal is called to return to the court at once. He departs
willingly enough:

By heaven, Poins, I feel me much to blame,
So idly to profane the precious time,
When the tempest of commotion, like the south
Borne with black vapor, doth begin to melt
And drop upon our bare unarmed heads.
Give me my sword and cloak. Falstaff, good night.

(II.iv.337-342)

Gradually, then, Hal moves from the world of holiday, which has deter-
iorated in both a physical and moral sense, to the world of royal cares
and responsibilities of his father, Henry IV.

In Act III, scene i, we meet Henry IV for the first time. He
is overwrought with the burdens of state. The past weighs heavily on
his conscience and this, in combination with the political turmoil he
has been dealing with, causes him to exclaim:

O God! that one might read the book of fate,
And see the revolution of the times
Make mountains level, and the continent,
Weary of solid firmness, melt itself
Into the sea! . . . 0, if this were seen,
The happiest youth, viewing his progress through,
What perils past, what crosses to ensue,
Would shut the book, and sit him down and die.

(III.i.45-56)

Henry's attitude is one of despair. His confidence regarding his ability
to master the unpredictable and chaotic fluctuations of fortune through
exercise of virtù, in the sense of force of will, seems thoroughly
shaken. Knowing that his usurpation of the throne was neither legally
right nor morally justified, Henry nevertheless tries to justify it:
"God knows, I had no such intent,/ But that necessity so bowed the state/
That I and greatness were compelled to kiss" (III.i.72-73). Although
Shakespeare at no time condones Henry's usurpation of the crown, it is difficult to deny that in *Richard II* he does suggest the reasons for Henry's usurpation. While suggesting these reasons, however, we are never one hundred percent certain just as to why Henry did usurp the throne. Shakespeare, then, deliberately clouds the issue where Holingshed, on the other hand, does not. Throughout the play, however, Shakespeare implies strongly that a certain kind of political necessity did exist. It is this which Henry alludes to in an attempt to salve his conscience. Thus, in the second tetralogy Shakespeare acknowledges that the concept of necessity is a force which exerts strong influence upon the course of history, so that owing to this plus the greater emphasis he places upon the influence of character, the influence of fortune and Divine Providence are far less evident than they were in the first tetralogy.

The issue of necessity, delayed till this point in the play (III.1), appears to be fully resolved neither in Shakespeare's mind nor in the mind of Henry IV. While Henry's supporters urge him to accept the idea that he was only the servant of historical necessity in overthrowing Richard II, Henry simultaneously questions necessity as his basis of action: "Are these things necessities?" (III.1.93). But he is too weary from too many burdens and too many nights of insomnia to respond to the question. Instead, he reacts typically, almost automatically, by accepting necessity as a political reality: "Then let us meet them like necessities./ And that same word even now cries out on us" (III.1.94-95). The word "necessity" as opposed to justice cries out a kind of warning: that any aspirant for power may lay claim to necessity as
justification for his political actions. The rebels who have opposed
Henry IV also have accepted necessity as justification for their revolt
against him, so that here Shakespeare provides a critique of the Machi-
avellian notion of necessity, dramatizing the ultimate weakness in the
claim that necessity is ever an absolute justification for the self-
willed seizure of power, regardless of the cause.

In Henry's death-bed scene (III.v), the transfer of power from
Henry IV to Prince Hal finally takes place, to be followed by Hal's
choice of justice and law, rather than of self-willed rulership which
his father, his brothers and the Lord Chief Justice have feared. Un-
aware that Henry still lives, Hal removes the crown from his father's
pillow and places it upon his own head. Upon waking and finding both
Hal and his crown gone, Henry IV upbraids Hal, who enters again, and
accuses him not only of stealing the crown which he could in a few hours
have possessed without offense, but of not caring for him as father or
king. Henry IV fears Hal has indicated his adoption of the standards
of Falstaff's world by this gesture. Formally, yet personally, Hal
repudiates his former self and declares that his intention in taking
the crown was only "to try with it, as with an enemy" (IV.v.166). For
Hal the crown has come to represent not the glory of kingship but the
oppressive cares of political responsibility which absorbed the energy
and life of his father. It also represents his inheritance which others
may seek to deprive him of. The crown is an "enemy" which Hal describes
as "polished perturbation! Golden care!" (IV.iv.22), which by its
"weight" or through the attraction of what it represents, may deprive
the wearer not only of energy and life but also from the very position
it symbolizes.
At last, and for the first time, Henry recognizes Hal's sincerity and now, reconciled, he confesses his Machiavellian approaches to taking and maintaining power. And he advises Hal not to reject such methods during his own reign:

It seemed to me
But as an honor snatched with boisterous hand,
And I had many to upbraid
My gain of it by their assistance. . . .
And all my friends, 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 them 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.

(IV.v.191-214)

Henry IV, then, though he acknowledges his Machiavellian tactics, insists to the end that such methods are effective. And if we are honest, we cannot totally disagree with him. In retrospect, it cannot be denied that Henry IV has been a successful king and that he is no tyrant, even though the quality of his success remains questionable. Henry's very dependence upon necessity as a basis of right and hypocrisy as the overt expression of self-interest and the will to power suggests that Hal's choice of justice and the ultimate sovereignty of English law is preferable to Henry's easy acceptance of Machiavellian means and ends. This choice, already represented in the conflict between Falstaff and the Lord Chief Justice, Hal, now Henry V, makes publicly in Act V, scene ii. The fear and mistrust which characterized his father's regime pervades the court and is worsened by the general uncertainty as to how Hal will conduct himself as king. Hal clears the air at once, as he says:
Brothers, you mix your sadness with some fear.
This is the English, not the Turkish court.
Not Amurath, an Amurath succeeds,
But Harry, Harry.

(V.11.46-49)

As king, Harry V assures his brothers and the nobles of the court that he will be just. In respect to the future welfare of the kingdom, symbolized in the Lord Chief Justice, Hal proceeds more slowly. When criticized by Hal for sending him to prison, the Lord Chief Justice reminds the new king of the duties incumbent on the chief civil administrator of the law, and as an official representative of Henry IV, and declares, "I am assured, if I be measured rightly, / Your majesty hath no just cause to hate me" (V.11.65-67). Hal not only publicly accepts the Lord Chief Justice's argument as just and right; he also accepts him as his father:

You are right, Justice, and you weigh this well.
Therefore still bear the balance and the sword...
You shall be as a father to my youth.

(V.ii.102-116)

Hal's rejection of Falstaff and injustice as it exists—or may exist—in the individual is just as complete and even more dramatic. It is equally rigorous:

I know thee not, old man...
Presume not that I am the thing I was,
For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,
That I have turned away my former self.

(V.v.48-59)

While Hal's action is sudden in its execution, it has been well prepared for throughout the play. In rejecting Falstaff, Hal not only rejects the world of political misrule and moral anarchy which Falstaff has come to represent, Hal also rejects, in effect, the Machiavellian view of man as basically selfish and indifferent. Hal calls upon Falstaff to
reform, and considering the standards which Hal himself intends to
strive for: honor and justice, public and private, his request is a
just one. Hal's position in this respect is not a weak advocacy of
love. It is rather a rejection of self-interest as the only standard
by which to gauge the welfare of the state, and it is a genuine concern
for the common weal. Hal has, moreover, in 1 and 2 Henry IV, demon-
strated virtù in the sense of martial and civic ability as well as in
the sense of strength of will. His virtù, however, is tempered with
a firm moral consciousness, so that in this respect Henry V differs
radically from Machiavelli's ideal prince. This difference has not,
in my judgment, been adequately understood, but it needs to be if Henry
V is to be understood as a political figure, not just as a military
hero.
CHAPTER VII

HENRY V

In Henry V Shakespeare focuses squarely upon "warlike Harry," both as a man and as a king and ruler of his people. In so doing he dramatizes the seeming incompatibility between the Christian virtues Henry displays as the "mirror of all Christian Kings" (II.Chrus.6) and what we can best describe as his Machiavellian-like virtù.

We first learn what the new Henry V is like through the comments of other characters, namely the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely. The Archbishop describes Henry V in almost extravagant terms:

Never was such a sudden scholar made;
Never came reformation in a flood
With such a heady current scouring faults;
Nor never Hydra-headed willfulness
So soon did lose his seas—and all at once—
As in this king.

(I.1.32-37)¹

The Archbishop attributes this sudden change in Henry V, from the wayward son of Henry IV to an ideal king, to a kind of miraculous conversion. In this regard Shakespeare follows the popular legend of Henry's conversion set down by Hall and Holinshed in the sixteenth-century chronicles of English history; however, as we have seen in 1 and 2 Henry IV, Shakespeare mitigates our sense of a miraculous conversion by showing instead the steady, perhaps calculated, growth of Hal in 1 and 2

Henry IV into the mature king of Henry V. The Archbishop continues to
describe Henry V:

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 rend'red you in music;
Turn him to any cause of policy,
The Gordian knot of it he will unloose,
Familiar as his garter.

(I.1.38-47)

Again these virtues were attributed to Henry V by Hall and Holinshed in
the chronicles of English history. Yet Henry V also appears to meet
Machiavelli's standards of the ideal prince as a man of "unusual abili­
ties." As Machiavelli says in The Prince: "And above all, a prince
should strive in all his actions to give the impression of the great
man of outstanding intelligence," At another point Machiavelli states:
"It is also most helpful for a prince to furnish unusual evidence of
his ability in regard to internal politics." It is apparent that
Henry V succeeds in creating these impressions; however, these impres­
sions may be only coincidentally Machiavellian, for as Felix Gilbert
points out, Renaissance humanists introduced catalogues of princely
virtues to the large body of contemporary literature on rulers, and
both Machiavelli and Shakespeare were no doubt aware of such lists.

The fact remains, however, that regardless of Shakespeare's sources,
Henry V is a king who displays virtù in the sense of martial and civic

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2Machiavelli, p. 185. 3Ibid., p. 187. 4Ibid.

5Felix Gilbert, "The Humanist Concept of the Prince and The
ability. Yet the description of Henry V rendered by the Archbishop pertains primarily to Henry's verbal articulation of such matters, and it will be remembered that Machiavelli's concept of virtù is primarily a concept of action. Therefore, before we determine to what extent Henry V exhibits Machiavellian virtù, we must review his actions in the martial and civic affairs of the kingdom he now rules.

The first problem Henry V is confronted with involves a particular question of justice: whether the proposed war with France over Henry's titles to certain dukedoms as well as to the crown and seat of France is in fact a just war.

In Act I, scene ii, Henry is seeking both legal and moral justification for the war. He first admonishes the Archbishop to be entirely truthful as to the consequences of war, and then declares:

Under this conjuration speak, my lord;  
For we will hear, note, and believe in heart  
That what you speak is in your conscience washed  
As pure as sin with baptism.

(I.11.29-32)

It is difficult to determine at this point whether Henry's interest is entirely sincere. Having been offered earlier a large sum of money by the Archbishop as a war grant in exchange for the quashing of a bill for confiscation of church property, urged by the Commons, it is difficult to believe that Henry looks upon the Archbishop as a totally impartial judge. In response to Henry's inquiry, however, the Archbishop produces the appropriate dynastic claims, after which Henry insists, "May I with right and conscience make this claim?" (I.11.96). In doing so Henry forces the Archbishop to take the moral responsibility for the decision. The Bishop of Ely affirms the Archbishop's judgment with
patriotic affirmations of traditional rights, but it is the Archbishop who introduces the advantageous side effects of the war that appear to move Henry from a disposition for discussion and debate to an attitude of decisive resolution. The Archbishop says:

Therefore doth heaven divide
The state of man in divers functions,
Setting endeavor in continual motion;
To which is fixed an aim or butt
Obedience; for so work the honeybees,
Creatures that by a rule of nature teach
The act of order to a peopled kingdom.

(1.11.183-189)

For the Archbishop, then, the war will have two advantageous by-products: (1) full restoration of obedience to the crown, which in turn will be a consequence of (2) the restoration of order and degree within the kingdom. To these arguments the Archbishop adds a convincing third, the restoration of the commissas of the realm:

As many arrows loosed several ways
Come to one mark;
As many several ways meet in one town,
As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea,
As many lines close in the dial's centre;
So may a thousand actions, once afoot
End in one purpose, and be all well borne
Without defeat.

(1.11.209-214)

Henry replies:

Now are we well resolved, and by God's help
And yours, the noble sinews of our power,
France being ours, we'll bend it to our awe
Or break it all to pieces.

(1.11.223-226)

By Christian standards, Henry's cause is dubious (at least from a twentieth century point of view). He is not the attacked but the attacker; however, the great jurists of the sixteenth century believed
Henry's claim was just. In gaining the legal justification and moral backing he seeks, Henry is both politically shrewd and cautious, exercising the utmost prudence and self-control. Although the moral basis of his decision remains questionable, his decision on a political level, in view of the internal and external gains he may acquire, appears sound.

Prepared now with the legal and moral backing he sought and fully supported by the members of his court, Henry receives the ambassadors of France and attempts to set their fears aside by declaring:

We are no tyrant, but a Christian king,
Unto whose grace our passion is as subject
As is our wretches fatt'red in our prisons.
Therefore with frank and with uncurbed plainness
Tell us the Dauphin's mind.

(I.ii.242-246)

In these remarks, Henry makes two points worthy of note. Again, he makes reference to his Christian character as king. References of this kind, appeals to Divine Providence and descriptions of his actions and those of his countrymen as in accordance with God's will, become characteristic of nearly all of Henry's formal utterances. We do not know whether Henry is acting in accordance with Machiavelli's principle:

A prince, therefore, should take great care never to say a single thing that is not infused with the five qualities mentioned above; he should appear, when seen and heard, to be all compassion, all faithfulness, all integrity, all kindness, all religion. And nothing is more essential than to appear to have this last quality.'

He does in fact, however, appear so on a significant number of occasions which at times moves one to question his sincerity. At the same time,

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7Machiavelli, p. 149.
however, there is no indication that Henry is not sincere, as there is in *Richard III* in the asides and soliloquies of Richard himself.

In regard to Henry's claim that his passion is "as subject/ As is our wretches fet't'red in our prisons" Henry describes himself correctly to a certain extent; but he is also given to righteous indignation, so that his father's earlier description of Henry to his brothers, "being incensed, he's flint" (2 H. IV, iv.iv.33), foreshadows this trait visible in Henry only in *Henry V*. This characteristic and its significant consequences are best illustrated when one of the French ambassadors makes the mistake of referring to Henry's past:

There's naught in France
That can be with a nimble galliard won;
You cannot revel into dukedoms there.
(I.ii.252-254)

With this insult the ambassadors precipitate Henry's anger by presenting him with a "tun of treasure" (I.ii.256), tennis balls. Henry's reaction is instantaneous; passion is no longer fettered, and through Henry's righteous anger his will and what he believes to be the will of God fuse together:

But this lies all within the will of God,
To whom I do appeal, and in whose name,
Tell you the Dauphin, I am coming on
To venge me as I may, and to put forth
My rightful hand in a well-hallowed cause.
(I.ii.290-294)

In this instance we see Henry, man and king, his dual role fused for a single purpose. By seeking first to obtain legal and moral sanction for his cause and, second, the full support of his followers, Henry achieves a unifying effect on a national level, as the Chorus comments:

Now all the youth of England are on fire,
And silken dalliance in the wardrobe lies.
Now thrive the armorers, and honor's thought
Reigns solely in the breast of every man.
(II.Chorus.1-4)
Through Henry's well planned moves, then, order, degree and the commitas of the kingdom are restored. Honor is no longer an individual matter, as it was with Hotspur, but is now a national goal.

In Act II, scene ii, Henry is obliged to deal with the problem of justice on a local political basis. Like the Archbishop of Canterbury in Act I, scene i, the Earl of Cambridge describes Henry's basic reputation in dealing with civic problems and questions of justice:

Never was monarch better feared and loved
Than is your majesty. There's not, I think, a subject
That sits in heart-grief and uneasiness
Under the sweet shade of your government.

(II.ii.25-28)

Henry, then, in Machiavelli's terms, achieves an ideal reputation by being both loved and feared. Moreover, Henry not only succeeds in following his father's advice in making his father's friends his friends, but also succeeds in making his father's enemies his friends, as Lord Grey declares: "Those that were your father's enemies/ Have steeped their galls in honey and do serve you/ With hearts create of duty and of zeal" (II.ii.29-31). Henry V, then, succeeds where his son will ultimately fail, and his success can be attributed either to his virtù in the Machiavellian sense or his real ability to play the part of the Christian peacemaker.

After Cambridge and Grey verbally affirm Henry's reputation for being just and his ability to create amity between factions, Henry displays the virtue of compassion by pardoning a man who railed against his person, attributing such abuse to excessive consumption of wine. Grey pleads that the man receive the death sentence nevertheless, but Henry replies:
If little faults proceeding on distemper
Shall not be winked at, how shall stretch our eye
When capital crimes, chewed, swallowed and digested,
Appear before us?

(II.ii.54-56)

In respect to justice, then, Henry demonstrates a proportionate tempering of justice with mercy. Having admonished Scroop, Cambridge and Grey in this manner, Henry then exposes their treasonable activities against the crown and condemns them:

You have conspired against our royal person,
Joined with an enemy proclaimed, and from his coffers
Received the golden earnest of our death;
Wherein you would have sold your king to slaughter,
His princes and peers to servitude,
His subjects to oppression and contempt,
And his whole kingdom into desolation.
Touching our person, seek we no revenge,
But we our kingdom's safety must so tender,
Whose ruin you have sought, that to her laws
We do deliver you.

(II.ii.167-177)

Once again Henry is careful to make clear that the entire kingdom is involved, that the crime of Scroop, Cambridge and Grey is a crime against the state and that he seeks no personal revenge. Henry also introduces the concept of necessity in that as king he must look to the security of England, but necessity when used in Henry's sense is not justification for self-willed action. It is justification for action in meeting circumstances which Henry must come to terms with if he is to preserve the stability and the security of the kingdom. It is the business of the monarch to preserve his own life for the good of the realm.

While this incident involves the question of justice, it also involves the questions Machiavelli raised concerning cruelty and compassion. Henry is not compassionate just where politically he can afford to be; he refuses to be petty and let trivial issues lead to
harsh judgments. However, he is also aware of the adverse effects the actions of Scroop, Grey and Cambridge and others could have upon his intended designs in France. He is careful to appear both just and merciful, but he has always in mind his wider objectives. As a political and military leader he appears to be acting in line with Machiavelli's principle:

... a prince must not concern himself with the infamy of cruelty when it comes to keeping his subjects united and obedient; for with just a few displays of cruelty, he will turn out to be more compassionate than those who, through excessive compassion, allow disorders to arise from which spring forth murder and ravaging; because these usually hurt the community in general, while those executions that come from the prince hurt one in particular.  

While Henry's action in Act II, scene ii, do not fit this principle exactly in that his decisions are supported by law as well as by his followers, he appears to be aware of something similar to it as he says:

We doubt not a fair and lucky war,  
Since God so graciously hath brought to light  
This dangerous treason, lurking in our way  
To hinder our beginnings.  

(II.i.184-187)

Henry's conduct in the above instances earns for him justifiable and moral backing for the war and reveals a number of important aspects of his character as man and king. While aware of the consequences of war, he is also aware of the gains he may acquire by means of war: the restoration of order and degree and the securing of the committas of the realm maintained so cautiously by his father. He displays virtù, in the sense of the force of will through which he directs the efforts of others toward the achievement of his own political aims, by convincing

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8Machiavelli, p. 137.
them that his will is in line with God's will. He also exhibits virtue in the sense of capability in civic affairs by supporting order based on justice. He is also prudent in gaining the full support of his followers before he acts on the public level and gives effect to the law by employing both physical and moral force. In doing so, Henry keeps his subjects oriented toward the achievement of his own political aims.

In Act III, scene 1, the action of the play shifts from the English court to France, where Henry assumes command of his troops before Harfleur. Here Henry declares:

In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility,
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger.

(III.1.3-6)

With these words, Henry defines two distinct patterns of conduct he will pursue and which consequently call for a flexible kind of ethic, one which can suit itself to war and peace. During the battle at Harfleur, Henry demonstrates this ethic in practice as he threatens the governor and townspeople of Harfleur: "If I begin the batt'ry once again, / I will not leave the half-achieved Harfleur/ Till in her ashes she lie buried." (III.iii.7-9) Henry goes on to describe at length the pillage, rape and desolation that will take place if the town does not surrender and is careful to point out that the resulting devastation will be the citizens' responsibility, not his. But when the governor does surrender the town, Henry admonishes Exeter, "Use mercy to them all" (III.iii.54). On a later occasion Henry demonstrates that, if necessary, he will risk the accusation of cruelty to maintain the discipline of his troops in his effort to unify England and France under his authority; he orders the execution of Bardolph, one of his former companions at the Boar's
Head Tarera, for robblog a elmroh and admmlahea h is troops:

We would have all such offenders so cut off. And we give ex­press charge that in our marches through the country there be nothing compelled from the villages, nothing taken but paid for; none of the French upbraided or abused in disdainful language; for when lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom, the gentler gamester is the soonest winner. 

(III.vi.103-109)

In this manner, Henry avoids being hated by those he conquers and in Machiavelli's terms appears to be aware that "what makes him [the prince] hated above all, as I have said, is being rapacious and a usurper of the property and the women belonging to his subjects." While solidifying his reputation for compassion, Henry depends upon his willingness to use force in its most inclusive sense while observing an ethic of consequ­ence to achieve his military and political goals.

Up to this point Henry appears to be a tough and efficient ruler demonstrating in a detached manner Machiavellian virtù. At the Battle of Agincourt, however, Henry displays his personal qualities and his conscience as a man when faced with the awesome responsibilities of power. Henry is not unmindful of the sacrifices and hardships his men are undergoing. On the night before the battle he circulates, in dis­guise, among his men to bolster their spirits and to share their burdens.

The Chorus comments:

His liberal eye doth give to everyone,  
Thawing cold fear, that mean and gentle all  
Behold, as may unworthiness define,  
A little touch of Harry in the night.  

(IV.Chorus.44-47)

In these remarks the Chorus draws our attention to Henry's personal touch as leader and his acknowledgment of the interdependence of himself and his troops.

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Machiavelli, p. 137.
While walking alone through his camp Henry encounters three soldiers who mistake him for a soldier of their own rank. In the course of his discussion with Williams, Bates and Court, Henry reveals his own conceptions of the responsibilities of kingship, each of which has its bearing on the nature of kingship, his cause in France and the question of honor. Henry declares to Bates:

His [the king's] ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness he appears but a man; and though his affections are higher mounted than ours, yet when they stoop, they stoop with the like wing. Therefore, when he sees reason of fears, as we do, his fears, out of doubt, be of the same relish as ours are. Yet, in reason, no man should possess him with any appearance of fear, lest he, by showing it, should dishearten his army.

(IV.1.101-107)

In these remarks, Henry insists that three factors set himself above his subjects: ceremony, higher affections and a certain impersonality that requires that he not display publicly lower affections such as fear.

At the same time Henry acknowledges that in being a man the king shares the same fears and pains as other men. Meeting his subjects on the common ground of their humanity, however, the differences between them appear owing to divisions of responsibility. Henry concludes: "Every subject's duty is the king's, but every subject's soul is his own" (IV.1.166-167), and Williams adds, "'Tis certain, every man that dies ill, the ill upon his own head—the king is not to answer for it" (IV.1.176-177). In this scene, Shakespeare dramatizes, in a most un-Machiavellian-like fashion, that king and subject not only have definite responsibilities to each other, but that each is accountable to God individually for the manner in which he carries out his responsibilities. There is no indication here that Henry is being insincere. Through this personal confrontation of Henry with his subjects, then, personal responsibilities...
are defined and order and degree on a personal level are once again affirmed.

As a man and king, Henry is also aware of the potential vanity which attends the position he holds, and while he realizes the importance of maintaining the respect of others, he declares:

O Ceremony, show me thy worth!  
What is thy soul of adoration?  
Art thou aught else but place, degree, and form,  
Creating awe and fear in other men?  
(IV.i.230-233)

Like his father, Henry is aware of the unremitting responsibilities of kingship and the heavy burden of care attendant upon those responsibilities. Being feared and wondered at, then, is not as glorious as his subjects think. He comments wistfully on the sleep and rest any of his subjects may enjoy:

The slave, a member of the country's peace,  
Enjoys it; but in gross brain little wots  
What watch the king keeps to maintain the peace,  
Whose hours the peasant best advantages.  
(IV.i.267-270)

Before the Battle of Agincourt Henry also demonstrates his consciousness of his father's injustice in usurping the throne from Richard II, and prays: "Not to-day, O Lord,/ O, not to-day, think not upon the fault/ My father made in compassing the crown!" (IV.i.278-280). Henry also cites his acts of atonement for his father's sin:

I Richard's body have interred new; . . .  
Five hundred poor I have in yearly pay,  
Who twice a day their withered hands hold up  
Toward heaven to pardon blood;  
And I have built two chantries,  
Where sad a solemn priests sing still  
For Richard's soul.  
(IV.i.281-289)

While demonstrating virtù, then, Henry also lives by certain Christian
virtues such as mercy, self-sacrifice, and generosity. Such virtues, however, personal and public, appear in direct contrast with Henry's conduct in the undertaking and prosecution of the war in France.

Shortly before the battle, Exeter informs Henry that they are outnumbered five to one and Henry finds himself in a position somewhat similar to that of Hotspur. Honor is at stake and Henry declares to Westmoreland: "But if it be a sin to covet honor, I am the most offending soul alive" (IV.iii.26-29). Initially this remark seems to be a Hotspur-like devil-may-care attitude, but the situation is different. More is at stake than the personal honor after which Hotspur strove. England's honor and the order, degree and committas in England lie in the balance. Henry confronts great odds, odds which are now unavoidable. He knows what can be gained and lost by unavoidable battle and is willing to take the risks. He has earlier indicated his Falstaffian ability to see through vanity to reality; now he demonstrates his father's awareness of responsibility. In leading his men at Agincourt all his personal and public attributes work together, so that as a leader he has the magnanimity essential for the leadership he needs to exemplify.

During the battle Henry once again displays virtù and ethical flexibility when, on the verge of victory, he recognizes that the French are about to attack again his battle-weary forces and commands: "Then every soldier kill his prisoners!" (IV.vi.37). Such conduct may be unbecoming to a Christian king but Henry here responds to military necessity instantaneously and appears to have no qualms of conscience. When victory is achieved, however, Henry declares: "Praised be God and not our strength for it!" and once again, and finally, we are left
with a sense of the incompatibility between Henry's Christian virtue and his Machiavellian-like virtù.

Act V, scene ii, depicts the courtship of Henry V and Katherine of France. Although Henry has in mind the political advantages implicit in such a marriage, of all the courtship scenes and marriages dramatized in Shakespeare's history plays, this scene is marked by the most genuine sentiment and human consideration. As suitor Henry rejects hypocrisy and vanity, declaring to Katherine, "I speak to thee plain soldier" (V.ii.148), and when Katherine questions whether she could love an enemy of France, Henry is witty and affectionate in his reply:

No, it is not possible you should love the enemy of France, Kate; but in loving me you should love the friend of France, for I love France so well that I will not part with a village of it—I will have it all mine. And, Kate, when France is mine and I am yours, then yours is France and you are mine. (V.ii.168-173)

Frequently, Henry punctuates his remarks by insisting that he is a soldier, a description he feels fits him best, but Henry finally acknowledges that in time the harsh and hard aspects of his war-like character will be tempered by the softer affections of love.

King Charles of France consents, of course, to the marriage. Through marriage, a symbol of unity based on the sixteenth-century analogy of the well-ordered state to the well-ordered family, the two kingdoms are united, as Henry declares: "God, the best maker of all marriages/ Combine your hearts in one, your realms in one!" (V.ii.343-344).

Throughout the play Henry demonstrates both Christian virtue and something very like Machiavellian virtù. As king he does not fit the exact requirements for the ideal king of the humanists or the ideal prince of Machiavelli. In addition to being the fierce lion and the
cunning fox of the humanists, Henry also displays the symbolic attributes of the classical figure of the pelican, those of self-sacrifice. The combination of Christian virtue and classical virtù would not perhaps satisfy a fundamentalist advocate for either a humanistic or Machiavellian approach to civic and martial affairs, but whatever defects the character of Henry V may present, his ability and success as a king far surpass that of his historical predecessors and his successor as Shakespeare depicts them in his English history plays.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

By now it should be clear that Shakespeare, in the first tetralogy of English history plays, deals with Machiavelli's key concepts of fortune, occasion, necessity and virtù, as well as with the allied issues Machiavelli raised in the process of developing these concepts in The Prince. Whether Shakespeare ever does so deliberately or not we cannot tell. In King John and in the second tetralogy, Shakespeare re-examines these concepts and issues. As we review the plays in the second sequence, we witness a gradual but clear move by Shakespeare to deal with these Machiavellian concepts, seriously and in depth as if he were testing their relative merits and deficiencies. This re-examination and the conclusions to which it leads can best be seen, I believe, by comparing Henry V to his dramatic rather than his historical predecessors.

Unlike Henry VI, Henry V does not rely solely upon, nor does he believe he is the pawn of fortune or Divine Providence. At the same time Henry V does not deceive himself into believing that he is the master of fortune or demonstrate an inflexible attitude toward fortune and providence like Richard III. Henry's attitude toward fortune and providence appears to be akin to Machiavelli's view that "fortune is the arbiter of half our actions, but that she still leaves the other half, or close to it, to be governed by us." Unlike Richard II,

1Machiavelli, p. 209.

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Henry accepts the "means heavens yield" (R. II, III.i.28), and while sharing his father's view that by exercising his will he can, to some extent, control the outcome of events, he also demonstrates that he does not share his father's view that through force alone he can bend fortune to his will. As Shakespeare dramatizes through Richard II, Henry IV and Henry V fortune is closely tied to character, and of all the kings Shakespeare portrays, Henry demonstrates the most flexible attitude and awareness of what he as a man and king can and cannot do in respect to fortune and Divine Providence.

While acknowledging his limitations in respect to fortune and Divine Providence, Henry is quick to take advantage of the occasions fortune presents and at the same time is most prudent in creating occasions which show him publicly to the best advantage. Like Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, Henry rejects the "ambition of the meaner sort" (1 H. VI, II.v.123) in taking advantage of and creating occasions; however, his actions reveal that he creates these occasions not solely for self-aggrandizement, but to gain respect for himself as well as the position he holds, a respect which is necessary to hold his subjects in awe and to maintain order and degree in the kingdom. Although Henry's inheritance of the throne is relatively assured, he seems to prepare himself for that acceptance of the crown by noting the vices and political defects which rendered his father's regime insecure and unstable, though Shakespeare never shows him analyzing his father's career. Henry's actions in this respect are radically different from those of Richard III and members of the factions of Lancaster and York in 1, 2 and 3 Henry VI, who create and attempt to create occasions for themselves.
While Henry's self-interest is involved, he does not act solely in terms of self-interest and like the Bastard in *King John* demonstrates his willingness to subordinate self-interest to the general welfare of the kingdom.

The concept of necessity is given more dramatic emphasis by Shakespeare in *King John* and the second tetralogy. As mentioned earlier, Henry rejects Machiavelli's concept of necessity as a basis of right and chooses instead justice. The question of necessity is raised in terms of political murder in *King John*, and Henry IV also deals with the issue of necessity in maintaining his position as king. It is primarily through his father's experience that Henry sees (or at least we see) the defects of Machiavellian necessity as a basis of right for insuring the stability and security of the kingdom. Through the Percies' rebellion and the actions of his father and supporters, Henry appears to realize necessity, as a basis of action is highly illusory and can be claimed by anyone. At the same time, Henry recognizes necessity as a force with which he must deal. At Agincourt, Henry demonstrates his readiness to abide by military necessity in killing the French prisoners in order to stabilize and insure his own uncertain victory. The problems raised in relation to necessity never seem to be satisfactorily resolved (any more than they are resolved in experience) and in dramatizing these problems through Henry in particular Shakespeare illuminates the dilemmas involved in political and military leadership.

Of the four concepts introduced by Machiavelli, Shakespeare devotes a good portion of his dramatic art in these historical dramas to portraying the presence and absence of *virtù* in the kings and aspirants to kingship. In this respect Shakespeare moves full circle, beginning
in 1 Henry VI to portray the absence of virtù, to Henry V in which Henry demonstrates virtù in a fully developed and refined form, one that moves beyond Machiavellian thought. Unlike Henry VI, who lacks the force of will and ability to impose upon his kingdom the order for which he longs, Henry V demonstrates his willingness to use force yet avoids using it excessively or relying on it as completely as do Richard III and his father in his subtle manner. Before employing force Henry makes sure that he has the moral backing of his subjects and uses force in accordance with the law which gives him the authority to do so. In dealing with his enemies, however, Henry demonstrates his willingness to use force in its most inclusive sense, observing in these instances an ethic of consequence. Henry, therefore, displays his father's realistic views in dealing with the realities of the political and military problems he faces. Like his father, Henry is also prudent and cautious, but unlike his father he avoids hypocrisy in its subtler form, as well as the blatant hypocrisy of Richard III. At the same time, Henry is successful in the use of appearances and knows only too well that his subjects are inclined to judge by appearances. But Henry is not only a king in appearance like Richard II, he is a king in reality, accepting and dispatching the responsibilities of kingship.

In Henry V Shakespeare portrays a king who lacks the traditional symbols and sanctions of divine right authority as received through an unbroken line of succession. Shakespeare dramatizes, however, that complete reliance upon Divine Providence or upon the persuasions of the divine right theory are insufficient in themselves to insure that the king will be able to maintain the stability and security of the kingdom. To attain these objectives, a willingness to use physical
and moral or psychological force, political awareness and the ability to calculate the means to and desirability of political and personal ends are shown to be essential to the character of the king. While Henry demonstrates that justice is more effective than political legerdemain, honor is more effective than hypocrisy, and love is more effective than fear in maintaining the loyalty of his subjects, Henry also demonstrates that the effective king must be not only a good man, but also a man well endowed with political ability—with virtù.
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