

**T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**



**THE ART OF POWER:
THE INFLUENCE OF MACHIAVELLI ON ELIZABETHAN DRAMA**

**MASTER'S THESIS
MİKAIL ÖZPİRİNÇ**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE and LITERATURE
MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM**

OCTOBER, 2019

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Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. ÖZ ÖKTEM

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information in this thesis document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results, which are not original to this thesis.

MİKAİL ÖZPİRİNÇ



FOREWORD

I would like to express my endless respect and gratitude to my supervisor Assist. Prof. Dr. Öz ÖKTEM for her inspiring advice on my study. Without her never-ending patience and kindness, I would not have been able to complete my thesis. It was a privilege to work on my thesis under her guidance.

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October, 2019

Mikail ÖZPİRİNC

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THE ART OF POWER: THE INFLUENCE OF MACHIAVELLI ON ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

ABSTRACT

Niccolo Machiavelli famously outlined the traits of an ideal ruler in his two most well-known books, *The Prince* and *Discourses*. The collection of his thoughts came to be known, and disparaged, as Machiavellianism, and remains a long-lasting area of fascination for literary and particularly dramatic output. Although Machiavelli is accepted as the founder of modern politics, his subject not limited to the area of governance, but extends into many aspects of social life, including human relations, religion and personal interest.

William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe's translations of Machiavellian thought to the Elizabethan stage plays a huge role in the way in which Machiavelli as a Renaissance thinker evolved into the notorious figure we know today. From teacher of princes, he came, through misinterpretation and misquotation, to be known as 'the teacher of evils'. The characters created by those playwrights and which brought the name of Machiavelli such notoriety are commonly understood to be the "Machiavellian villain, stage villain or supervillain" by scholars of the Elizabethan stage. For the purposes of this thesis, this thesis gathers these appellations under a single and new title, that of the *Machia-villain*, a figure who stands for solely the darkest side of Niccolo Machiavelli's dictums.

Key words: *Machiavellian villain, Elizabethan Drama, Machia-villain, Barabas, Marlowe*

GÜÇ SANATI: MACHIAVELLI'NİN ELIZABETH TİYATROSUNDA ETKİLERİ

ÖZET

Niccolo Machiavelli, bir yöneticinin sahip olması gerektiğini iddia ettiği prensiplerini en iyi bilinen iki kitabı, *Prens* ve *Söylevler*'inde ifade etmiştir. Düşüncelerinin bir toplamını oluşturan Makyavelizm ise gelecekte de edebiyat alanında sonsuza dek sürecek bir konu olarak kalacaktır. Modern siyasetin kurucusu olarak kabul edilmesine rağmen, eserleri sadece siyaset ile sınırlı kalmamış, toplumdaki bireyler arası etkileşime, dinden kişisel çıkarların incelenmesine kadar sosyal hayatın bir çok yönü ile ilgilenmiştir. Ancak, Shakespeare ve Marlow'un yanlış yorumları ve aktarımları onun diğer aydınlar, drama yazarları, okurlar ve tiyatro izleyicileri arasında kötü bir şöhrete kavuşmasına ve 'kötülerin öğretmeni' olarak bilinmesine yol açmıştır. Oyun yazarları tarafından yaratılan karakterler kitaplarda, oyunlarda, makalelerde ve dergilerde "Makyavelci kötü, tiyatro kötüsü ya da süper kötü adam" olarak adlandırılmıştır. Bu yakıştırmalar, Niccolo Machiavelli'nin sadece kötü ve karanlık tarafını ifade eden, ortaya atmış olduğu yeni bir terim, Makyavel-şeytan terimi çatısı altında toplanacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Makyavel Kötü, Elizabeth Tiyatrosu, Makyavel-şeytan, Barabas, Marlowe*

1 INTRODUCTION

Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) was an Italian politician, thinker and author. He declares his maxims for being a successful ruler in his most well-known book *The Prince* (1513). The immense influence of the text was clear from its inception, as from its earliest years it was listed in the “Index Librorum Prohibitorum” by one of the greatest European power-holders of that period, the Church. It was translated into Latin, French and finally English, more than one hundred years later in 1640 (Meyer, 1897, p.2). Nevertheless, the influence of the text was so substantial that when *The Prince* was first translated into English, Machiavellianism – the cluster of ideas through which Machiavelli theorized his principles of politics and his perception of the operations of state and government was already a familiar notion to the Elizabethan culture of England. From his time until today, the arch-manipulating and fraudulent characters in the seminal literary and dramatic works from the period have been stigmatised as Machiavellian in their villainy. However, as Carol L. (1972) emphasizes, the perverted ideas upon which the Elizabethan villain hero is based reflect a vilification of Machiavelli's ideas (pp. 1-2). This is all to say that, villain characters in the Elizabethan period were fomented in a pot that perverted the Machiavellian principles, which in turn maligned the ideas of the Italian thinker for centuries to come.

Elizabethan drama is filled with characters that fit with “the end justifies the means” motto of Machiavellianism. At the same time, the political thoughts of Machiavelli are shown as black, perverse and corrupt. What emerges from this preoccupation, however, is in fact the centrality of Machiavellian ideas to the propaganda machine of the Tudor dynasty, where they are invariably presented as an opposite to what ought to be defined as legitimate and honourable rule. However, when we consider that Machiavelli’s primary concern in providing a blueprint for the ideal prince was for the benefit of country or kingdom, these Elizabethan villains with dark personalities, to my claim, are not appropriately named as Machiavellian villains. Rather, it is this thesis’s central tenet that Shakespeare’s Richard in *The Tragedy of*

Richard III or Marlowe's Barabas in *The Jew of Malta* are in fact new character types which remake the established dramatic stereotypes of evil villains, common in medieval archetypal theatre, in combination with the Florentine's ideal figure of the prince in order to an entirely new type of dramatic character. For the purposes of this thesis, we shall call this new character type Machia-villain.

A Machia-villain character differs from the so-far-accepted Machiavellian villain in that the character traits are derived from twisted interpretations of the doctrines of the Florentine and focus predominantly on the darker side of his reflections. What a Machia-villain is concerned with is just his own glory and interest; Machiavelli himself would never approve of such an approach. Machiavelli's prince may do evil in conducting his duties, but the ends must justify the means and those ends are always the larger goal of his country's welfare. For the Elizabethan Machia-villains, the means are frequently evil but cannot be justified by the ends. Shakespeare's Richard III, who has been interpreted as the arch Machiavellian villain, is a natural tyrant through and through, and the ends which he pursues are entirely self-serving. He was born this way, and needs no motivation to persecute other characters in the play but that which he was born - a natural predilection toward evil. For Richard, anyone standing between him and his interest could be his victim. Yet, as we shall see, this level of ruthlessness and could only be justified by Machiavelli if it was to the benefit not to the individual, but to the collective.

Marlowe's Barabas is cut from similar cloth, though Marlowe's reference to Machiavelli is much more overt than Shakespeare's with the ghost of the Florentine opening the play. Nevertheless, it is a misinterpretation of Machiavelli's ideas that characterises Barabas's actions in the play. Like Richard III, Barabas is better understood as a Machia-villain type, not a true Machiavellian, as he does not exhibit any positive behaviour to the other characters in the play. While the Florentine's figure of the prince indeed poses an obligatory tyranny, it must be seen to bring an overall benefit to the people over whom the prince rules; Barabas, by contrast, exploits his subjects for the benefit of himself, and when he is done with them, they are disposable. Furthermore, it is a common point for Machia-villains that their villainy has no limits, not even that of family feeling. Barabas cares only for his gold and his personal interest, so much so that he does not even regret killing his own daughter. Richard likewise slaughters his nephews and wife to gain the throne.

Physical appearance is one way in which Machia-villains are also distinguishable from Machiavelli's princes. While Machiavelli rejects the significance of appearances, and does not describe the princely figure, drawing attention rather to the importance of actions and behaviour, both Marlowe and Shakespeare 'mark' their characters with a physical expression of their internal malevolence: both Barabas and Richard grotesque to the point of deformity. Keeping in mind that the playwrights are interested in creating entertaining characters, and have no interest in accurately representing Machiavellian ideas, however much they may draw on them, it is likely that they intend to combine the evil personalities of their heroes with physical ugliness in order to arrest the audiences' attention. Shakespeare used Richard's deformity, which was proven to be true in 2012, to spread fear in the eyes of the audience. The scholars and dramatists of Elizabethan period considered the darkness of Machiavelli and the grotesqueness of Richard to be equal. In the same manner, in creating Barabas in a stereotypically anti-Semitic mould, Marlowe chimes with the prejudices of an English audience ready to understand the figure of the Jew as always-already marked, evil and hated, as England's history of anti-Jewish action and sentiment establishes.

Machiavelli's target readership was the princes and rulers of Europe. For this reason, probably the most distinguishing difference between a Machiavellian villain and what this thesis terms a Machia-villain is that the former is supposed to be a ruler, a prince or candidate to rule. However, Machia-villain does not have to be a member of a ruling family as in Marlowe's Barabas. Barabas does not show any trace of desiring that sort of power and leadership throughout the play. Rather, Barabas is a merchant whose initial motivation for malevolence is money, but as the play progresses, becomes more and more motivated by vengeance, bound up with his Jewish identity and his perception of the lack of justice in a society caught between the anti-Semitic Christian West and the Ottoman East. Thus the Jewish Barabas wears a Machiavellian mask.

The Prince, written while Machiavelli lived in seclusion far from politics and state affairs, is relatively a short "little book" which is also terse and incisive; Machiavelli's Discourses is, in terms of form and substance, weightier (Machiavelli, 2018, p. 11). Yet they are equally clear and definitive, have been read for centuries and continue to be seen as primers in politics and as peaking people's interest in the

operations of power (Berlin, 2013, p. 26). According to Gilbert, Machiavelli's work is a mirror for princes; an average and ordinary book of its era; a prototype of a genre of political writing that had both clear "echoes" of the political philosophy of the past and was at the same time quintessentially modern. In both style and content, *The Prince* has come to be recognised as an extraordinary example of a Renaissance text. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli shows us the path which has never before been trodden by any man and his methods and dictums are all empirical (Berlin, 2013, p. 36). The book Machiavelli named as "little" became his masterpiece. Machiavelli himself had not hoped for this level of interest in his work, nor had he expected his *The Prince* to create such a great impact on modern politics. Rather his purpose was to regain a position of influence with the Medicis that he had once enjoyed – hopeful of drawing the Medicis' attention so that having once been valued by the ruling Florentine family he would be able to regain his position of trust and prove that he was still useful for the republic (Wu, 2001, p. 15).

It was not Machiavelli who invented what has come to be known as Machiavellian style politics, or the first to suggest using cunning and deceit in dealing with power, yet he converted politics into a science that people focused on, in terms of the art of governing and in terms of safe-guarding the welfare of the republic. After so many years serving as a politician for his country, his perspective is able to penetrate with x-ray precision the malfunctioning or defective parts in the system of government. He collects his findings in his books in which he ends up with an idea that only an absolute ruler may provide the security a country needs to thrive. Thus Italy, still a broad collection of many principalities, may yet find its peace in an absolute monarch and Machiavelli leads would-be politicians and leaders in the way of the throne, and, once the throne is achieved, advising them about what is required in order not to lose the power they seize. To secure unity, a ruler, Machiavelli suggests, should not be reluctant to use force. Power had erstwhile been a phenomenon which descended from father to son; however, according to Machiavelli and his doctrines, it was more significant to make use of endeavour and intelligence. Taken all together, the latter is seen as an art which requires trickery, lies, hypocrisy, and cunning to be fundamentally effective. The precepts of Machiavelli also show that traditional moral values can be virtuously ignored when it comes to the public's welfare. As disorder and weakness make the society open to internal and external enemies, it can be

justified for a ruler to take evil steps when necessary. Machiavelli takes inspiration from the chaotic condition of Italy, which having lost the centralising force of the Roman Empire, had for centuries struggled without a regular army or a centralized management under a single ruler. For Machiavelli, Italy is the main field, but for all who have read Machiavelli since this time, Italy functions rather as simply an example, as throughout centuries monarchs, presidents and politicians from all corners of the world have adapted the Florentine's teaching in their politic careers.

Machiavelli is, indeed, often referred to as the founder of "modern politics", which is lexically and semantically defined against "traditional" (Mansfield, 1981, p. 18). His suggestions are marked by their acceptance of both physical harm and manipulation of others as tools by which one can achieve and maintain power. His ideas contrast markedly with the traditional models of inheriting political power patrilineally as such have been interpreted as fundamentally modern. As he has knowledge of history, he is capable of making comparison between his time and previous times so that he may prophesise about the future of Italy.

Accordingly, in the first chapter, I will develop an introduction to the political ideas of medieval age which gave birth to true Machiavellianism in order to be able to understand the concepts which Machiavelli deals with. Machiavelli's negative thoughts surrounding politics in the medieval age, provoked by his understanding of the period as one in which the Church manipulated both kings and societies, is explored. For Machiavelli, the Medieval period marks a dark period for Europe in that every aspect of life was based on the Church and the Bible, which posed obstacles for the encouragement of free-will, science, individualism and secular thinking. In his eyes, the power that the Church held was so repressive that even the kings had to rule their kingdoms in fear of being excommunicated from the Church. In such a period as this it would be fanciful to talk about improvement and evolution in humanity. What Machiavelli contends in his works is that all traces of this Dark Age must be removed. In *The Prince* and his *Discourses* Machiavelli thus clearly divides the line between politics and theology.

The atmosphere of Italy in which Machiavelli developed his views on politics is also discussed in this chapter. The central motivation for Machiavelli in his philosophy was that he was not happy with the contemporary condition of Italy. He clearly believes and claims that Italy is not then assuming her rightful place in the politics of

Europe. Although Italy was the birthplace of the Renaissance and was relatively richer than her neighbouring countries, the domineering attitude of the Church in Rome and the overall lack of a central power to preserve the unity of the Italian nation weakened the country. Furthermore, Machiavelli contended that Italy needed to arm herself from the military threats coming from her neighbours by founding a regular army. His military concerns were dealt with more fully in *The Art of War*, which was published in 1521.

The publication of his books rendered Machiavelli a sensation. The frank and audacious nature of his insights meant that his influence could not remain limited to Italy. Although the publication of his books was painful due to prohibitive restrictions placed on him by Rome, Machiavelli's fame spread throughout Europe. His books were translated into French and Latin in less than half century, and another concern of the first chapter focuses on how and why Machiavellianism reached England and became such a preoccupation for the Elizabethan dramatists some hundred years later. Indeed, as chapter one will show, even before the Elizabethan period, Machiavelli was known by English scholars and playwrights; however, the evidence suggests that until the English translation was published in England, what they understood of his philosophy was an inadequate and twister misinterpretation. These misconceived interpretations were much influenced by the readings of Innocent Gentillet and Bishop Stephen Gardiner, both of whom blackened the reputation of the Florentine largely in responding to the desires of the Vatican (Rathe, 1965, pp. 186-187). Certainly, these figures helped contribute to the notoriety of Machiavelli in Tudor England. Providing the necessary historical background, the English monarchy and the Wars of Roses, as a crucial historical event, are also part of the discussion in this chapter.

Throughout the next two chapters, I will focus on two Elizabethan plays, which present manipulative and cunning characters as their anti-heroes and prove how they fit with the definition of the *Machia-villain* outlined above. By analysing their personalities and the actions causing them to be understood as malignant and hypocritical, Marlowe's Barabas in *The Jew of Malta* and Shakespeare's Richard in *The Tragedy of Richard III*, the thesis unpacks the relationship of these two characters to the traits outlined in Machiavelli's *Prince*. Likewise, theories of utilitarianism and pragmatism are referred to in the thesis as they, when considered

in certain aspects, are in harmony with the main philosophy explored in this thesis, Machiavellianism. In addition, a comparison between the perverted perception of Machiavelli by Elizabethan scholars and playwrights such as Marlowe and Shakespeare, and Machiavelli's ideal prince figure in his *The Prince* will be drawn. Marlowe's thoughts on English society and religion as reflected in his characters are part of the analysis here. Moreover, some elements of Marlowe's biography are included in order to provide context to his way of thinking. In a similar endeavour, in the analysis of Shakespeare's Richard III, who has been depicted as a quintessential Machiavellian anti-hero, some background concerning the historical Richard III will be included in order to provide a context for the notoriety Shakespeare's Richard has generated. This has become particularly relevant in the wake of the renewed interest in Richard of York provoked by the discovery of his lost grave in 2012. Similarly, Marlowe's thoughts on English society and religion and the reflections of these thoughts on his characters are also studied. Biographical facts about Marlowe are a part of the thesis to show the elements that formed his way of thinking.

The conclusion summarizes the teachings of Machiavelli in different aspects of life, and the reason why Elizabethan scholars and dramatists had a tendency to introduce Machiavelli as "the teacher of evils". I will also conclude that the characters such as Barabas and Richard III have been mis-defined as Machiavellian villains, and that this misnomer has occurred because of the intentional misinterpretation of these characters' creators, Marlowe and Shakespeare.

2. NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI AND HIS TEACHINGS

As a European phenomenon, the Renaissance was a “rebirth movement” covering almost every aspect of cultural life, but particularly literature, thinking around economics, art and architecture, all of which broke out at the beginning of the fourteenth century in Italy and spread around the rest of Europe. For some scholars, the Renaissance is seen as regarding ancient history as the source and inspiration for intellectual and artistic flourishing, as set against the middle ages, often understood to be a dark age and to mark the first roots of corruption in society and governments. At the same time, others have questioned the extent of the Renaissance’s accomplishments: Russle (1945), for instance, argues that the Renaissance failed to bring with it any genuinely new philosophic insights; nevertheless, he also states that the Renaissance raised a very significant political thinker: Niccolo Machiavelli (p. 465).

Many scholars who have followed Machiavelli argue that ultimately he is a humanist who is seeking to ameliorate the negative impacts upon society and citizenship as a result of the faults he sees. Some say that Machiavelli is a confused moralist who supports an argument whereby political ‘ends justify the means’ at the expense of moral degradation, and that he is essentially an author who separates ethics from politics. To Berlin (2013), he is nothing more than a passionate patriot who desires the salvation of his country (p. 56). Although it is also debatable whether Machiavelli is most accurately defined as a philosopher, a writer, a theoretician or a historian, having a pinch of every trait places Machiavelli in a unique position among his contemporaries. Kocis (1998) suggests that the best word to define him is “reformist” (p. 21). Bearing in mind that he is an authenticated politician and political thinker, Machiavelli’s reputation today still carries with it the implications that the Elizabethans set forth – that his ideas are essentially malevolent or, in Elizabethan terms, that he is a man who is inspired by the devil, who leads men to their downfall and who is, worst of all, an apostate (Berlin, 2013, p. 35). To understand Machiavelli

and internalize his doctrines, the periods, the perspectives and conditions which shaped him must be taken into consideration.

At the time when Machiavelli lived, Italy was made up of five city-states; Florence, Rome, Milano, Naples and Venice, all of which were affiliated to the Holy Roman Church although they were effectively independent. The southern part of the country was controlled by Naples; Rome and the surrounding areas belonged to the Church; north of Rome was the Florentine territories; on the northern borders to the west was the Dukedom of Milano, and to the east was Venice and its territories. From time to time, some smaller cities like Siena, Pisa and Genoa gained their independence, which shows how Italy was composed of small parts. Those city-states were governed by republic or dukedom and kingdom, and sometimes tyranny by the family who had the ruling power. There was a policy of maintaining an equilibrium of power between those five city-states, which provided for the citizens comfort and ease and meant that the Italian territories in general were auspicious places for reforms and innovation. This atmosphere was also encouraged by the fact that it was also an impressive trading bloc.

Although it was understood to be a country of comfort and culture, none of the city-states possessed sufficient power to rule the country single-handedly. This was almost solely down to the fact that none of them had a regular army. As a consequence, when conflict arose, it was fought by mercenaries who had no motivation other than to fight for the highest bidder (Bertrand, 1945). These “sellswords” were not trustworthy and had no moral conviction about the actions they were engaged in. Without the fellow-feeling that an army of volunteers, citizens and patriots inspires, the fundamental ground for any of these states was shaky and unstable.

Having no regular army left the Italian city states in situation of significant disadvantage, a fact which Machiavelli returns to again and again in his writings (Machiavelli, 2018, p. 74). In attempting to illustrate the gravity of Italy’s military situation, Machiavelli argues that the invasion of Florence was not about the power of France but about military inadequacy and the weakness of Florence. As it was not possible to suggest a political alliance, Italy being too far from securing her own unity, she was therefore unable to be a voice of authority in the policy of the continent. Hence, Italy was not the master of its own destiny. After the fall of

Constantinople (Eastern Roman Empire), Italy became a centre of attraction for scholars, scientists and artists. However, due to the fact that military development of Italy fell behind with the improvements in economy, art, architecture, literature and trade, palmy days for Italy did not last long. It of course whet its neighbours' appetite, which then ended up with French invasion in 1494. Even worse, the other city-states did not help the rest of the country as their military postures were no different.

At this same point in history, the hugely significant geographical discoveries being made in terms of the discovery of the Americas caused the significance of Mediterranean trade to fall through the floor. This fluctuation in the fortunes of Italy indicates that her fate was subject to events, beyond her control and rather in the hands of her neighbours and the vagaries of world politics. It was in this period that Niccolo Machiavelli was born. It was also the period when one of the most famous figures of Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci, lived. Those years were accepted as relatively peaceful times, despite the ongoing skirmishes and conflicts between city-states and it is generally supposed that Machiavelli had a peaceful early life and education at Florence University as a son of an advocate and a religious poet (Machiavelli, 5). When he was twenty-five years old, Florence which at that time was governed by the Medici family, was invaded by the French troops. The ruling power was dismissed, and the government changed. Machiavelli was selected as the Secondary Secretary of the state, which helped him to pay an official visit to France, Germany and the Vatican where he learned how to be a politician in the field. In other words, this position gave him an unrivalled training opportunity in statesmanship.

Machiavelli's fortunes suffered a setback with Florence's invasion by Spanish troops. In quick succession, the Medicis resumed their position of power again and Machiavelli was dismissed from his political role as an officer for the previous government. This point marks a change in Machiavelli's career and the beginning of hard times for Machiavelli that had a lasting impression on him. In the following years he wrote manuscripts such as *The Prince* in order to encourage the new rulers to bring welfare to Italy's citizens and, personally, in the hope that he might regain the favour of the Medici family, as he was living in seclusion during those years. In laying the foundations for the birth of modern politics, he simultaneously opines on

two important phenomena: firstly, the maleficence of medieval age and secondly the disciplines of religion. For Machiavelli, the problem of the medieval age is that it encourages conditions that led to the strengthening of the Church. What was problematic about the Church, for Machiavelli, was its inability to function for the good of the people and its entirely self-interested motives.

Machiavelli, as a politician who had inspiring ideas about the future of Italy and its princes, and as a historian who had studied the medieval age, kept warning about the danger, disorder, injustice and evil that that period represented. The medieval age is accepted as the period of time between the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the beginning of the Renaissance. As such, it is a vast period of history that is characterised by its dependence on the agricultural economy, feudal power structures and a general lack of centralization in terms of power in politics; the void at the centre is filled with Christianity, which institutionalises itself within the socio-cultural life of medieval Europe. There is no real space for a centralized political power to exist during the medieval age, in the way that Empire had previously. The depth and extent of Machiavelli's knowledge is indisputable: it can be clearly understood from his writings that Machiavelli is well-versed in the history of Ancient Rome and Greece. Indeed, his *History of Florence and of the Affairs of Italy* charts an impressive narrative of the city and the country that shows he is well-versed in the history of Italy since the Empire. Machiavelli was interested also in the Ottoman Empire sufficient to take the measure of it, which indicates that he keeps up with the political developments not only in Italy or Europe but in also in Asia and Ottoman territories (Machiavelli, 2018, p. 20). This awareness, combined with his experience as a politician, allows Machiavelli to mine both known and unknown events from the Roman period and from across the Middle Ages so as to combine his findings into a perspective which can help all countries and kingdoms achieve greater prosperity and happiness for their people. Part of that blueprint is fidelity to the doctrines of Roman and Ancient Period, as he admires the governmental system of the Romans. Erwin likened Machiavelli's move here to the situation of a young man who rebels against his parents and seeks for help from his grandparents (Panofsky, 1944, p. 209). The more he praises the Romans' style of society, government, army and culture, the less he finds to praise in the Medieval Age.

Machiavelli's criticism of the abuses of the Church was not isolated, but it was relatively new. It was not until the end of medieval age that accusations against the Church began to emerge, and the institution of the Church itself was brought into question (Wu, 2001, p. 7). St. Augustine wrote a book named *The City of God* (AD 426) in defence of the Church, in which he described two cities, one of which was the *City of God* and second of which was the *City of Man*, the aim of which was to warn people about the consequences of both. In *The City of God* the whole of the citizens are good Christians who live peaceful lives and follow God's path, while the citizens of the *City of Man* are composed of people from different religions and are sinful. It was the people of the city of God who receive God's mercy and salvation because the unbelievers, pagans or those of different religions are not allowed into heaven (Wu, 7). St. Augustine praises the Church's teachings and writes in order to motivate people into choosing the spiritual life over the earthly pursuits of the instead of the *City of Man* which is full of greed, sordidness and struggle for power. By contrast, writing some centuries later, Machiavelli (2018) heaps opprobrium on the Church itself, and launches a visceral attack:

We, Italians, owe thanks to the Vatican and priests for your infidelity and devilish actions. Yet, we, too, owe another and bigger thanks; it is that they are the reason for our collapse as a nation. It is them that have kept and have been keeping Italy disunited. (p. 38)

Machiavelli's views on religion and claims of the need for reformation made him infamous among his contemporaries, and frequently castigated as an atheist. In addressing the issue of religion, Machiavelli identifies two different qualities of religion, one of which is beneficial for humanity and the other of which brings catastrophe and disorder in the society. Machiavelli accuses the Church of being the reason why the glories of the Roman period were lost and accuses the Church as posing a continuing obstacle to the unity of Renaissance Italy. In his analysis of Machiavelli's position regarding religion, Berlin (2013) argues that Machiavelli is a man who does not accept the principles of Christianity because he cannot accept the threat to political unity and centralisation which he sees the Church as posing; and in Hegel's view, Machiavelli is a man of genius who functions what the Church must serve and who is aware of the need for uniting a group of competing principalities into a coherent whole (p. 30). Moreover, he also takes an aversion to Christianity as it fails to create a sense of patriotism among the people of Italy. Howsoever this may

be, Machiavelli can be credited with bringing a pragmatic approach to religion, and presenting the people with a choice of how to live their lives: according to the ancient or the medieval age. Although he is not fully against that kind of religion which the medieval age imposed for centuries, he does suggest that religion must be nothing but a tool to keep citizens together. Furthermore, as long as religion serves for the benefit of people, Machiavelli argues, it does not have to lean on morality and truth (Berlin, 2013, p. 37).

It is a well-known fact that Machiavelli disliked the clergy for what he saw as an abuse of religion and for providing a cover for bad characters. Hence, many scholars emphasise the anticlerical aspect of his philosophy (Korvela, 2006, p. 44). To Machiavelli, his criticism of Christianity comes from his conviction that it does not sufficiently deal with earthly affairs. Instead, Christianity underestimates the world we live in, the effort and courage required to create a better social system and instead praises spiritual virtues such as passiveness, humility and austerity. He claims that such a religious structure is too far from being a basis for a powerful and virtuous state. It exhorts laziness instead of courage; sufferance instead of struggle.

In the middle ages, the political philosophers underline that moral principles in managing the public affairs are of utmost importance. For a prince to be a good ruler, being seen to be a pious and observing Christian is paramount. The theologians and thinkers had speculated the supremacy of Christianity over paganism and nihilism, the peace between Christianity and Platonism, and the balance between the Church and monarchy (Wu, 2001, 6). Nevertheless, defining what it meant to be a good ruler capable of implementing a better social system was actually not chief among their interests at that time. What they were concerned with, however, was professing that Christianity was the supreme power. Indeed, what they were chiefly interested in was not only a Christian ruler, who would resign himself to the law of God, but a superior figure still in the governmental system, higher than the king himself: the spiritual leader of a people; the bishop (Wu, 2001, p. 10).

So that spiritual and earthly things may be kept distinct, the ministry of this kingdom is entrusted not to earthly kings but to priests, and especially to the Highest Priest, the successor of Peter, the Vicar of Christ, the Roman Pontiff, to whom all kings over Christian peoples should be subject as to Christ himself. (Sigmund, 1988, pp. 27-28)

Returning to the possibility of reform, Machiavelli (2018) concludes by saying that the current perception of religion must be rearranged according to virtue, rather than idleness (p. 105). From the medieval age, medieval subjects were extolled to follow Jesus's path and words of God, which brought the Church into a superior position in society and even gave it political influence. Until the institutionalization of the Church, the idea of equality among people and believers had been adopted. However, over time, the relationship between Church and State evolved to the extent that the Church's autonomy became the Church's superiority. Responding to these incursions, England's Henry IV demanded that Pope Gregorius VII should abdicate his title; this episode was brought swiftly to a halt, however, when Henry IV was made to apologize to the Pope and pledge his loyalty to the Church after he was excommunicated. This proves that the Pope had great power and authority over the medieval kings and the republics.

In Italy, however, from twelfth century, the city-states emerged and they started to play a significant role in politics besides their commercial and trading importance. Furthermore, the power of the population brought about the birth of public consciousness in Italian society (Poggi, 1978, p. 37). A key turning point occurred in 1296 when a new power struggle broke out between Pope Boniface VIII and King Philip of France regarding the taxation of properties belonging to the Church. In this event, it was the king who won the power struggle and the Pope was expelled to Avignon where the papal capital was located between 1309-1377.

This event is seen as very important as it triggered the first curtailing of the Church's power, which had at that point been at its peak. Hence, starting with the fourteenth century, kings and politicians began to regain parts of the sovereignty bit by bit. This is also important as it happened just before the perception of the "I" - the "individual", "state" and "interest" grew stronger, thus sowing the seeds for the philosophical flourishing of the Renaissance. Over time, European rulers gradually checked the domination of the Church, and began to behave like free kings and queens. Thus, the key notes of the Renaissance and the principles of freewill began to become clear and spread around Europe until the seventeenth century.

Many scholars come to an agreement about the negative definition of human nature in Christianity and Machiavellianism. Although the pessimist approach to human nature seems like a common point for the Church and the Florentine, the difference is

that Machiavelli handles the matter within a materialist perspective rather than a spiritual one (Althusser, 2010, p. 7). He examines the evil in the material behaviour of human actors – in deeds, not in spirit. As for a quotation from Bible, “summoning the crowd again, Jesus told them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: Nothing that goes into a person from outside can defile him but the things that come out of a person are what defile him”(Bible Mark 7:14-23). These lines from the Bible argue that humanity has sinning nature, and suggest that to get rid of this sinning nature and lead a virtuous life, individuals ought to stay away from material wealth and physical desires. For Machiavelli, the elevations of such teachings within the Church have had the effect of glorifying humble and contemplative individuals over secular ones in an attitude that has made the world "effeminate" and "disarmed" heaven (Machiavelli, 2018, p. 31).

Human nature is sinful, and humanity cannot be liberated without God's mercy. As an outlet of his negative thoughts about human nature, Machiavelli also states in *The Prince* that it is possible to generalize humans as ungrateful, uncertain, lying, deceitful, and greedy by nature. On the contrary to the Church's judgement on the temperament of humans, Machiavelli also claims that people must accept their nature as they cannot be blamed for being selfish, cruel or dishonest. As the moral extents of communal and worldly life cannot be governed only by intelligence, Machiavelli argues, demanding more and running after one's desires does not make people inherently bad; rather, these traits of nature are bestowed upon humanity as "divine inspiration" by God. Helvetius says “as the physical world is ruled by the laws of movement, so the moral universe is ruled by the laws of interest” (Pavone, 2019, para. 1).

Interest, a key idea in Machiavelli, is defined in the simplest way as benefit or advantage. To a moral theorist, Gauthier, self-realized individuals are not necessarily in contradiction with morality, interest and reason, in other words, acting in one's self-interest is not by definition a matter of concern in his book, *Morals by Agreement* (1987); likewise, some scholars of moral philosophy also report “interest” as “the personal preference” (Kraus and Jules, 1987, p. 717). Between those two ideas, cited by Benditt (1975), Brian Barry defines human interest as “the things which increase the opportunities so that man can obtain what he desires” (p. 249). Dealing with human interest necessarily provokes questions surrounding individual

free-will: humans who make up the public and the nations ought, it implies, to be considered as independent individuals who are justified in seeking for their own self-interest, and those ideas and perception of interest mentioned above ought not to be fully denied. Although Machiavelli does not name his own thoughts in terms of individual interest, his prescription of the characteristic features of an ideal ruler clearly reveals its relevance to his overall position (Hirschman, 1977, p. 13, 62).

Machiavelli defines the human as a creature that cares about his security, comfort, fame and honour (Strauss, 1958, p. 287). Furthermore, human nature dictates that individuals run after a new passion as soon as they have obtained the previous one. In other words, the energy of humanity is to consistently demand things and this inevitably leads to power struggles due to the fact that it causes a conflict of interests. Thus, competition between individuals is inevitable. Indeed, Machiavelli puts competition at the forefront of the human condition rather than solidarity and argues that in fact humans are not social by nature. On the contrary, he argues that humans are in fact egotists by nature and born with a propensity towards egotism which can lead to evil actions; nevertheless, if the conditions allow it, he may yet be socialized into caring about the rest of community (Strauss, 1958, p. 279). To achieve this transformation, force, violence and any necessary instrument are to be utilized. While Machiavelli (2018) discusses human desires, he states that “humans are ambitious and suspicious by their nature, and when the matter comes to their fortune, they cannot use these feelings temperately” (p. 208). Machiavelli holds the view that humanity has two significant passions one of which is lust for power, and the latter one is unbounded greed, which must be tolerated as it has been in their blood since birth.

Machiavelli promotes a “philosophy of power” and “politics of power” for princes, and he puts human at the centre of that power. Machiavelli’s political science is born in his understanding of human nature. To him, the human is always-already conditioned to demand more, which brings to mind that he, too, is capable of doing anything evil including inflicting physical harm for the sake of his own desires, as is a prince. However, this capability is not limitless and at this point, the thing that matters is power. Power plays a key role in Machiavelli's writings and is conceived of very specifically:

For when men are no longer obliged to fight from necessity, they fight from ambition, which passion is so powerful in the hearts of men that it never leaves them, no matter to what height they may arise. The reason of this is that nature has created men so that they desire everything, but are unable to attain it; desire being thus always greater than the faculty of acquiring, discontent with what they have and dissatisfaction with themselves result from it. This causes the changes in their fortunes; for as some men desire to have more, whilst others fear to lose what they have, enmities and war are the consequences. (Machiavelli, 2018, p. 20)

For a new prince, a new kingdom is “full of dangers”, so Machiavelli takes side with the idea that it is safer for a prince to be cruel and feared rather than being gracious and loved; otherwise, the prince fails to maintain law and order in the society and this soon causes chaos in the realm, with an increase in the rate of murder, usurpation and anarchy. This same position also makes the ruler more vulnerable, he argues, as “men are less hesitant about harming someone who makes himself loved than someone who makes himself feared” (Machiavelli, 2018, p.56). Being such a prince who is formidable and feared thus increases the chance of a prince to live longer and reign longer and, by consequence, improve the lot of his citizens.

In addition, having some acting talents to facilitate the appearance of being a good prince or enabling him to hide his deficiencies is also beneficial for a successful prince (Wu, 2001, p. 21). Accordingly, a ruler should behave as if he had those good manners and qualities and yet, like a fox he should act “a great hypocrite and a liar”. For Machiavelli, humans have an essentially animalistic nature, and thus, if they have to make a choice among the animals, they had better choose the lion and the fox as the lion beats the wolves and the fox possesses cunning enough to survive against traps and intrigue. Indeed, such behaviour does not violate ethical values, as “men are a contemptible lot and will not keep their promises to you”, so neither should the prince (Machiavelli, 2018, p. 59). Machiavelli uses the example of Manlius to illustrate his point. Manlius was punished by Roman Empire as he seemed to help people, which was welcomed and found justified by Machiavelli in that he pretends to be good while he actually aims to attract supporters for himself and then establish his tyranny. Manlius was compelled first by his own human nature and then by his desire to rule ruthlessly so as not to leave any possibility for a private ambition. His tyranny serves for the public interest no matter how bloody it is.

And I know that everyone will confess that it would be most praiseworthy in a prince to exhibit all the above qualities that are considered good; but because they can neither be entirely possessed nor observed, for human conditions do not permit it, it is necessary for him to be sufficiently prudent that he may know how to avoid the reproach of those vices which would lose him his state; and also to keep himself, if it be possible, from those which would not lose him it; but this not being possible, he may with less hesitation abandon himself to them. (Machiavelli, 2018, p. 76)

In one of his epistles he wrote when he was in France, Machiavelli expounds on the need for swift and decisive actions in leadership. He declares "as the opportunities are non-permanent, one needs to decide fast, yes or no, but in a fast way" (Chabod, 1965, p. 127). This is a common theme in his writings where he argues that as opportunities are short-lived, the decisions to take them need to be made quickly; in the same vein, he suggests that most often, the matter of options can almost always be reduced to two, which we can see by the way in which he presents opposite in terms of this "or" that. The principles of politics are unchanging, he states, as are the principles of nature, he states. Hence, Machiavelli approaches political events and phenomenon in much the same way a doctor approaches a patient. If the politics is the medicine he is the doctor himself (Chabod, 1965, p. 129).

In pursuit of this, Machiavelli arrives at the most well-known part of his philosophy, the idea that the value of a ruler can be judged by engaging with the question of whether the ends justify the means. Thus, in *The Prince* he writes: "his works and his intention had to be judged by the end" (Machiavelli, 2018, p. 406). By way of example, Machiavelli suggests that princes they should rather be a miser than a spendthrift as a generous ruler can waste his budget in the pursuit of generosity (Wu, 2001, p. 20). The knock-on effect of such spending, he argues, inevitably saddles the citizens with heavy taxes, which will undoubtedly "offend many and reward few" (Machiavelli, 2018, p. 53) and cause dissatisfaction among the people. Instead, "[i]t is wiser to live with the reputation of a miser, which produces reproach without hatred, than to be forced to incur the reputation of rapacity, which produces reproach along with hatred" (p. 55). Here, Machiavelli not only exemplifies that argument that the ends should indeed justify the means, but also that it is inevitable for a prince's actions to be judged in this way.

Here we obviously can mention the fact that, in Machiavelli's philosophy, Christianity does not have a monopoly on the concepts of good, evil and justice. On the contrary, they are the results of socialization and important values when it comes to the politics of governance. Berlin (2013) regards society as a battlefield of interests between and within the groups (p. 37). Following Machiavelli, Berlin also suggests that every human follows their own path of self-interest, and that governments or princes are needed because societies must rely on someone to control the public order, to bring peace and stability, and to found the required social structures which enable men to reach their desires. Those interests make a ruler essential in a society, and the leader's primary purpose is thus to maintain citizens interests and their rights. To Machiavelli, the ruler who comes into existence as a result of common interest must know how and when to use his power and when to avoid utilizing it, so he needs to act according to necessity. Thus if necessity requires brutal force and cruelty, then it should not be eluded.

In his writing, it can be clearly seen that he sometimes displays incongruous ideas. For instance, he is highly pessimistic about the condition of Italy whereas he is overly optimistic about a prince's capacity to redeem the situation of an entire country. In substance, his pessimism derives from his experiences as a result of Florence's fluctuating fortunes and influences; in writing about this particular attitude, critics of Machiavelli such as d'Entreves (1967) put it down to a psychological pessimism, not a theological one (p. 41). *The Prince* in many ways offers Machiavelli an output for his pessimistic thoughts about human nature and optimistic thoughts about a prince: thus he argues that it is not wrong for a prince to break his word when conditions change because, above all, humanity is always highly unpredictable:

This is to be asserted in general of men, that they are ungrateful, fickle, false, cowardly, covetous, and as long as you succeed they are yours entirely; they will offer you their blood, property, life, and children, as is said above, when the need is far distant; but when it approaches they turn against you. (Machiavelli, 2018, p.81)

The Italian Renaissance had an undeniable influence on England's literary production during these years, particularly as many examples of classical literature were translated into English during the Tudor period. Machiavelli's works, though modern, were also translated in to English, proof that Machiavelli's reputation

reached in England long before his books arrived. According to Grady (2002), Machiavellian policy was known of in the Elizabethan period (p. 29). All his doctrines about the medieval age, religion and his personal interests soon caused him to be known as an ill-minded politician who had produced scandalous books thought to be written by Satan, the publication of which was prohibited by the Church. The metaphor of the lion and the fox in which Machiavelli combined brute force and cunning as the most important characteristics of a prince profoundly annoyed the Roman Catholic Church. He also disturbed the Church by revealing that rulers such as Ferdinand of Aragon and Alexander VI who hid under the cloak of religion (Machiavelli, 2018, pp. 7-8). Indeed, Machiavelli was seen as an explicit threat to the authority of the Church for presuming to raise up powerful and effective leaders while questioning the practices of the Church itself.

The Elizabethan period introduced Machiavelli to the English people as a dramatic character, which helped to enhance the fame of the Florentine and also aided the spread of his political ideas. However, it is important to remember that poor translations also helped to bring about misperceptions and inaccuracies about Machiavelli and his thinking. Moreover, commentaries on Machiavelli's work such as Bishop Stephen Gardiner's treatise to King Philip II and Innocent Gentillet's *Contre-Machiavel* will have played a part in shaping the playwrights' understanding of Machiavelli's thoughts and significance. In his treatise, Gardiner plagiarised Machiavelli in an attempt to guide King Philip about how to rule England after Mary's death, an eventuality which was never realised with the crown passing to Elizabeth I (Chadwick, 2014, para. 3). Gentillet's work was more influential, however, as it came to be a main source of knowledge about the Florentine in the last part of the sixteenth century. In his work, Gentillet mentioned fifty maxims under three main sections: 'of Counsell; of Religion; and of Policie' (Hitchman, 1975, p. 14). He claimed that he took those maxims from *The Prince* and *Discourse*; however, Machiavelli's ideas were both cherry-picked and distorted by Gentillet. Nevertheless, Irving Ribner (1954) concludes that while the influence of Gentillet was significant, the Elizabethan playwrights would most likely have come up with their Machiavellian creations regardless:

We can only conclude that the *Contre-Machiavel* was merely one of the many church attacks upon Machiavelli which helped foster an

already existent misconception. That it was about the most important of these attacks is possible, but its influence in the creation of the "Machiavel" could not have been as great as that which scholars have attributed to it. Marlowe's Barabas and Kyd's Lorenzo probably would have been created whether or not Gentillet had ever written. (p. 46)

It was Gabriel Harvey who first introduced Machiavelli's works in English to English writers at the University of Cambridge in 1573 by writing a poem which was composed under the influence of Gentillet (Weissberger, 1927, p. 589). He followed the fashion to pour infamy on the Florentine in his poem *Epigramma in Effigiem Machiavelli*:

Let no one think to govern who does not know my rules,
nor think he has gained wisdom who does not know them
well. My talk is only of kingdoms and sceptres, of camps
and wars. In my hand I bear a sword and my tongue is
sprinkled with a thousand poisons. My motto is and always
has been: "Ambition; either Caesar or nothing." Milk
is food for babes, I feed on blood. Blood is nothing, torture
is nothing: let lowly minds perish. I alone have wisdom,
I live, and triumph by myself. Fraud is my greatest
virtue; the next is force. I know no other gods. (Boyer, 1964, p. 36)

This scornful aping of Machiavelli's thoughts is a prime example of the way in which Machiavelli was presented to an English Elizabethan audience. In one way or another, Elizabethans read Machiavelli, Roe (2002) states, but "were they reading original Machiavelli or were they reading an author with a Machiavellian reputation?" (p. 9). This repeated misinterpretation caused the Florentine to earn a notoriety among the readers of the Elizabethan period. Chapter XVII of *The Prince* in particular, where Machiavelli suggests being cruel under certain circumstances and Chapter XVIII about keeping and breaking the promises were sources of fear for Elizabethan readers, and caused them to perceive *The Prince* as a guidebook for tyrants and demonic rulers. Indeed, he developed a reputation as the "devil incarnate" (Meyer, 1897, p. 10). Thus, the playwrights of the Elizabethan period did not create Machiavellian heroes, and the audiences did not witness truly Machiavellian characters on the stage. Rather his ideas were personified in villains and anti-heroes, demonic figures like Marlowe's Barabas and Shakespeare's Richard. This negative image of Machiavelli also had an impact upon the way in which Italian culture was perceived in England. From the arrival of these translations and the

distorted versions of Machiavelli's books, the positive perception of Italy and Italians was drastically changed (Redmond, 2009, p. 242). Catherine de Medici's role in this change of attitude was also linked to her connection with Machiavelli (Hitchman, 1975, p. 12).

It was only after the death of Henry II in 1559 that Machiavelli's name and renown had become known in France, and it was only since then that the business of government was carried on here 'a l'italienne or 'a la Florentine. It was notorious that the books of Machiavelli had been as frequently in the hands of the courtiers, as a breviary in those of a village priest. The author of the Latin translation of Gentillet's work, which appeared in 1577, directly accused Queen Catherine of being the devil's chosen instrument for spreading the poison of Machiavelli in France. (Meinecke, 1957, p. 51)

The first French translations of Machiavelli's books were published in 1553 and in 1560 the Latin translation was released in England. It took longer for the ordinary people of England to become acquainted with Machiavelli, but the aristocratic and learned classes of England were able to familiarise themselves with Machiavelli from the latter part of the 1500s. Thanks to William Caxton's contribution to literature by bringing the printing press to England in the fifteenth century, written literature enjoyed a sharp rise in popularity in England. However, England needed to wait for another century to read original Machiavelli in English.

Alongside the burgeoning cultural developments in England was the challenge of governance in this period. According to the doctrine of the 'Divine Right of Kings', the king is the representative and hand of God on earth. Furthermore, as kings are the aides of God, any rejection and rebellion against them is considered an act against God himself. The transition of political power in England from the ancient feudal nobility to the aristocrats who were aiming to carry England as a nation to a better position in commerce and sea power was triumphantly performed by Tudor monarchs.

Sydney Anglo (1966) claims that there were scholars who weakly tried to relate the interpretation of Machiavelli in England to the challenges faced by the Tudors (p. 129). A potential point of agreement, for instance, between Machiavelli and Henry VIII was their approach to religion and particularly the power of the Catholic Church. It is possible that Henry, like Machiavelli, wished to see a separation

between religion and politics, although it is more likely that he simply wanted to control the power that the Church had by usurping it for the Crown. Henry VIII is known as a notorious ruler, variously understood to have been majestic, destructive and manipulative, but he was not impious (Wooling, 2008, p. 2). His need to secure the kingdom with a male heir, his newfound desire for Anne Boleyn, his fears that his first marriage to Catherine of Aragon was illegitimate and Rome's refusal to grant him the annulment he desperately wanted led to the extraordinary step of breaking England's relationship with Rome and establishing the Church of England. In decisiveness, strength and ruthlessness, Henry VIII was not dissimilar to Machiavelli's ideal prince and indeed, similar to the suggestion of Machiavelli in terms of being loved or feared (Machiavelli, 2018, p. 99), Henry was a king who was feared more than loved. It is claimed that 72,000 people were executed during the reign of King Henry VIII. Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard, two of his wives, were among those who were executed.

The Tudor dynasty continued to many problems in foreign, domestic, religious and dynastic politics when Elizabeth I acceded the throne (Richards, 1999, p. 141). Although her gender was among those matters, it was certainly not the primary concern and few sought to unseat her on account of her sex. She was "the only right heire by blood and lawfull succession," and the last of Henry's progeny to survive after the deaths of Edward VI and Mary I. The officers of the queen swore "trew fayth and allegiance to our soverain lady", proving her equal in power to that of the king (Richards, 1999, p. 142). Despite courting many suitors over her lengthy reign, the queen did not marry, which enabled her to rule the country alone and not to suffer the dilution of her divine power. She herself was convinced that she was "by God's permission a bodye politique to governe". It was reported at the time that the whole of London embraced and accepted her as their new queen (Richards, 1999, p. 143). However, according to the letter of John Knox on 20 July 1559, there were still some potential threats against the legitimacy of Elizabeth.

Although Queen Elizabeth aimed to maintain the Tudor dynasty, and her period is regarded as a golden age for England, in the background England actually faced many turbulent political manoeuvres. The fight between Catholics and Protestants was heated and the both parties struggled to tip conditions in their favour. Elizabeth being the daughter of Anne Boleyn, the Roman Catholic Church did not approve her

legitimacy. Moreover Elizabeth undertook to overturn the anti-Protestant legislation enacted by her sister, Queen Mary and, in a further show of religious favour, sent her armies to the Netherlands to back up the Protestants against the Spanish. Thus, after these overt supports of the Queen for the Protestants, the Privy Council declared that the Queen's authority must be limited to the cases that were not in matters of religion.

Elizabeth continued to face challenges from Rome. On May 5 1560, Pope Pius V wrote to her informing that she must immediately return to the Catholic Church and declare her loyalty. If not, she was threatened that Papal indulgence and official pardon would be granted to any power attempting to attack her (Shires, 1947, p. 225). She refused, and in response the Pope founded a spy ring between Rome and England to resuscitate support for Catholicism in England and, ultimately, to dethrone her. The Queen withstood pressures by arresting spy-priests, shutting down monasteries and founding a counter spy web to counterpunch against Rome's aggression. Three years later she was excommunicated by the Catholic Church, which openly supported the rebellion of Mary Stewart, or Mary Queen of Scots, against her.

In this climate, the statesmen and people of England were forced to make a choice between the queen and the Roman Church. In 1588, the Spanish Armada, known as the last foreign challenge aiming to unseat the queen, was blessed by the Pope himself (Shires, 1947, p. 228). These multiple plots against Elizabeth, however, had little to do with religious and were primary about power and politics.

On this backdrop, Elizabethan drama thrived, and Elizabeth herself took a keen interest in the output of the dramatists of the age. She was alert to the fact her Elizabethan theatre was playing a part in her own story. Referring to a revival of *Richard II* commissioned by the Earl of Essex on the eve of the Essex rebellion, a play which charts the deposition of a king, she famously claimed: 'I am Richard II. Know ye not that?' (Greenblatt, 1983, p. 3).

...what made Elizabeth I so anxious was not so much a retrospectively and clearly ascertained effect of the staging of ... but the fact of the play having Richard II been appropriated – been given significance for a particular cause and in certain 'open' contexts. (Dollimore, 1994, p. 9).

In the event, the Essex rebellion was crushed, but such political tactics and public events were perceived and lived daily by the Elizabethans who often were able to associate what was going on the stage with real political life, despite the censorship operating in that period. According to Greenblatt and Dollimore quoted by Veenstra (1995), “a literary text is not merely a piece of writing but exists in and as its effective history (p. 174). It gains significance the moment a relation between the literary or historical writings and referential realities is elicited” (Dollimore, 1994, p. 197). Hence, both historical and literary works actually speak with one voice. The interaction between literary works, history and politics in this period in particular was so close that the ‘textuality of history’ and the ‘historicity of texts’ could not help coinciding with each other. He also states that a text is a kind of an output of a negotiation that is between a writer, an institution and society. Besides of the possibility to influence upcoming new texts, the text as a book or play on the stage may serve to strengthen the authority or delegitimise it. No matter what sense Machiavelli’s books are taken into consideration, as a writing of philosophy, history or politics, they have served as a handbook for kings and queens, princes and politicians since the day when it was written. His blackened doctrines have also been used as a weapon to propagandize or delegitimise the kings and governments throughout the history.

3. MARLOWE'S MACHIA-VILLAIN

Niccolo Machiavelli effectively draws a utopian road map for rulers about how a prince can prepare for, capture and hold on to power in the face of every eventuality. Marlowe, like his contemporaries, learnt his Machiavelli from those who defamed him. Until Greene introduced Machiavelli's name abstractly in literature in 1583, Machiavelli had been known only as an author. When considering that Greene was a student at Cambridge in 1579 and Marlowe was in the following year, we can surmise that the literati students of Cambridge were already familiar with the Florentine (Meyer, 1897, p. 25). As we have seen, Machiavelli had a bad reputation in the sixteenth century for standing in opposition to the theocentric and political teachings of the established powers. Thus a distorted version of Machiavelli's teachings was used as the working ground for the scholars and playwrights of the Elizabethan period. Yet there was often nuance in the playwrights' use of Machiavelli: thus Christopher Marlowe used Machiavelli as a mirror on which he could reflect the hypocrisy and anti-Semitism of English society while at the same time creating an arch *Machia-villain* in the figure of Barabas. The analysis of *The Jew of Malta* set forth in this chapter continues the central argument of this thesis – that Elizabethan dramatists used a caricature of Machiavelli's doctrines when creating their *Machia-villains*, which encompass only the darkest interpretations of Machiavelli's teachings. Moreover, I will also argue that these villain characters, like

Barabas in this chapter, are not truly Machiavellian figures, as it is important to remember that Machiavelli was setting up a blueprint for rulers. Barabas's motivation does not fit this blueprint, as his motivation is first only personal interest and then vengeance; Barabas is thus a false disciple of Machiavelli, and the Ghost of Machiavel a false teacher of Machiavellianism. Finally, as none of these *Machia-villains* survive to enjoy their successes, and are each met with divine justice, they are thus failed followers of Machiavellianism: were they true Machiavellians, they would survive to enjoy the fruits of their success.

Barabas is the main *Machia-villain* character - the eponymous *Jew of Malta*; however, he is not the only character in the play to display Machiavellian traits. Ferneze, the governor of Malta, conveniently and ironically misuses religion in order to manage the shifting power play on the island. That he takes credit for religious words and then abuses them also proves that Marlowe keeps track of Machiavellian principles through his characters. But in the play, Ferneze represents the true Machiavellian ruler, and Barabas is the embodiment of a *Machia-villain*. Yet Marlowe bids the ghost of Machiavel open the play with words praising him and his teachings, and makes a Jew the main character of the play so that he can profit from the anti-Semitic attitudes which thrived in Elizabethan England, and thereby create a sensational play. Yet the whole cast seems to embody Machiavellian aspects at some point in the play. Hence, hypocrisy of any kind, lust for power and money and the attitude toward removing anyone who gets in the way of another's desires are common ground for every character in the play, with the exception of Abigail.

Censorship in Elizabethan drama meant that dramatists frequently manipulated historical facts in order to design characters which did not offend the queen. Nevertheless, Marlowe utilized historical events – like the Ottoman siege of Malta, and phenomena – like the prejudicial attitude towards Jews in English society to form the backdrop of his exploration of the implications of Machiavellian behaviours. The play is also an exploration of the wider theme of self-interest, greed and avarice in the society of Elizabethan period.

Although Barabas and Machiavelli share the same idea of will to power, Machiavelli's books address an audience of would-be princes and kings, those with aspirations to govern, not those with no claim to throne or government. In the play we see Barabas as a rich and avaricious merchant who has nothing to do with ruling

Malta. This difference is significant: Machiavelli justified certain behaviours for government, not for commerce. Climbing a peak in order to secure a position of power is, for Machiavelli, what justifies a privileging of self-interest and personal desire. But on Marlowe's Malta, we have a society which has created its own *Machia-villains*, who believe that power interchangeable with financial superiority. Marlowe's play explores what happens when Machiavelli's values are transported from politics to finance.

Christopher Marlowe was born in Canterbury, a son to an ordinary shoemaker. He was born in the same year, 1564, as Shakespeare but made his name on the Elizabethan stage before him. His life story is somewhat sensational by contemporary standards: he is claimed to have served as a spy, and also not to have died but have lived undercover as the ghost writer of Shakespeare (Hoffman, 1955, p. 3). His unusual way of life effected his perception of religion, politics, society and individuals down to the microcosmic level, as realized in *The Jew of Malta*.

Both Marlowe and Machiavelli were accused of atheism, and it is ironic that he studied in Cambridge with the scholarship that was granted to him by Archbishop Parker Funding on the condition that he would serve a priest after his education (Caldwell, 1967, p. 3). When he graduated, he had only six more years to live, and within those years, he wrote five more plays that are chronologically *The Jew of Malta* (1589), *Dr. Faustus* (1592), *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (1593), *The Massacre at Paris* (1593) and *Edward the Second* (1594). While Marlowe was still a student at the university, he also wrote his remarkable play *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587).

As we have argued previously, in *The Jew of Malta*, Marlowe exploits the misinterpretation of Machiavelli to create Barabas. In an attempt to create a Machiavellian character, from Janssen's perspective, Marlowe closely analysed Machiavelli's advice for a prince, and spots a strong conflict between personal desire and conscience; between self-interest and morality (Machiavelli, 2018, p. 23). In so doing, Marlowe managed to form his own *Machia-villain* character, Barabas, who wears the mask of Machiavellian principles. When we put aside that non-princely figures are not the candidate rulers and politicians for whom Machiavelli wrote his books, we can allow that these characters can be called *Machia-villain* as long as they pursue their desire for power, personal interests and money with, crucially, no thought for the public good.

In fact, Marlowe and Machiavelli share many ideas in common, including their approaches to religion. Both Marlowe and Machiavelli were castigated as atheists in their lifetimes. Machiavelli's approach to religion is always pragmatic, as he regards it as nothing more than a common point and tool for unifying people together. Marlowe, however, went further in his criticisms of religion:

Fell (not without iust desert) to that outrage and extremitie that hee denied God and his sonne Christ and not only in word blasphemed the trinitie, but also (as it is credibly reported) wrote bookies against it, affirming our Sauour to be but a deceiuer, and Moses to be but a coniuer and seducer of the people, and the Holy Bible to be but vaine and idle stories, and all religion but deuce of pollicie. (Beard quoted by Kocher, 1946, p. 40)

This quotation is taken from Thomas Beard, Marlowe's contemporary and the author of *The Theatre of God's Judgement* (1597). His Marlowean sources are still unknown, but nevertheless his accusations against Marlowe for atheism are significant indicators of the playwright's reputation (Kocher, 1946, p. 29). However, to Rowse (1964), Marlowe follows a secular manner, and implies in his plays that religions are just tools that were formulated to control and manipulate weak people and societies throughout the centuries (p. 204).

Howsoever this may be, Marlowe forms his characters under the influence of the Renaissance and the development of individualism, the philosophical innovations of this period rather than following the dogmatic teachings of the Church. Therefore, Machiavelli, as a thinker of the Renaissance, is an obvious source. In his analysis of the playwright's works, Kocher (1946) asserts that in addition to the influence of Machiavelli, Marlowe also synthesizes within his characters the villains from older theatrical conventions, like "Senecan tyrants" and the "vice" of the morality plays (p. 195). Thus, Marlowe introduces his *Machia-villain* character, Barabas to the Elizabethan stage and charts a transformation of the rascal into villainy in the context of a serious and tragic play.

In 1589, Marlowe wrote *The Jew of Malta* and it was performed on the stage in 1592 for the first time. However, two years after its stage debut, the case of Jewish doctor Lopez who attempted to poison Queen Elizabeth (Kohler, 1909, p. 10) awoke the English theatre audiences' interest, and led the play to be performed thirty-six times until 1596. A result of the anti-Semitic fervour sparked by the affair, people established a mutual relation between the Jew doctor and Marlowe's Jew, Barabas.

The play deals with the adventures of Barabas, who is flaming with vengeance and willing to do anything and everything in the pursuit of gold. As *The Jew of Malta* opens, the ghost of Machiavelli appears and expounds on the hypocrisy of people who deny his doctrines. He introduces his fellow, Barabas and demands that the audience to be nice to him. Barabas, a Jewish merchant, boasts about his wealth and riches, which he is soon to lose since Ferneze, the Governor of Malta, has a plan to make the island's Jews pay the taxes levied by the invading Turks. Luckily, he is able to save half of his fortune thanks to his daughter, Abigail. Nevertheless, Barabas burns with vengeance, and leads the Governor's son to death with the help of his slave, Ithamore. He plots to poison Abigail, the nuns who have taken over his house, and the friars. Barabas and Ithamore then break their alliance and, to keep his murders secret Barabas pays a ransom demanded as a result of the promiscuous Ithamore's weakness towards the courtesan Bellamira, to whom he tells everything and who, in turn, tells Ferneze everything she has learned from Ithamore. Barabas is sentenced to death, but instead of a burial, the presumed corpse of Barabas is thrown outside of the city walls as an insulting punishment; however, he is still alive and decides to switch allegiances and help the Turks to capture Malta. Then Barabas makes a new deal with Ferneze in an attempt to return his former glorious days, but is thwarted in his attempts at restitution and ends up dying a painful death in a boiling cauldron, which had prepared for someone else.

The play starts with a prologue in which ghost of Machiavelli speaks about his long journey from the Alps of France to Malta, and onto the stage in England. He introduces himself:

Albeit the world think Machiavel is dead,
Yet was his soul but flown beyond the Alps;
And, now the Guise is dead, is come from France,
To view this land, and frolic with his friends.
To some perhaps my name is odious;
But such as love me guard me from their tongues,
And let them know that I am Machiavel,
And weigh not men, and therefore not mens words
Admired I am of those that hate me most. (Prologue, 1-9).

It is important that the ghost of Machiavelli opens the play as it positions him as the presiding genius of the play; some critics have read this dread opening as presenting Machiavelli as a horrifying disease, coming to England from the east, Italy (Bawcutt, 1970, p. 36). Furthermore, Marlowe equates Machiavellianism with Judaism in the

eyes of the audience. Machiavelli enters and cynically introduces himself on the stage and talks about the Duke of Guise who is a disreputable and hated figure since he was responsible for the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre. Marlowe, through the ghost of Machiavelli, utilizes figures of utmost evil as their examples. Then, as if he already knew that the crowd hates him, he lets them know that he is Machiavel. He defends himself and his doctrines by saying that those who profess to hate him are his most ardent followers, and they are hypocrites when they deny their real feelings about him, a trait which is also, to him, a part of human nature. In addition, he does not care about what they think about him. In his reading of the play, Bawcutt argues that Marlowe chose the harshest and the most cynical way of opening in order to shock the audience and make clear from the outset of the action that Machiavelli (2018) approves the utmost extreme evil of humanity (p. 48). Marlowe's intention at the beginning of the play is that the presence of Machiavelli strikes terror into the heart of the theatre-goers, no matter how limited and superficial the knowledge of Machiavelli the audience has.

The ghost of Machiavelli goes onto give an example of humanity's hypocrisy by citing that it was his very principles that the Papacy adopted when they succeeded in capturing the Vatican. He adds those who did not follow him were poisoned by those who did utilize his teachings.

Though some speak openly against my books,
Yet will they read me and thereby attain
To Peter's chair; and when they cast me off,
Are poisoned by my climbing followers.

(Prologue, 10-13)

From the hypocrisy of humanity, he moves to religion: "I count religion but a childish toy, / And hold there is no sin but ignorance." (Prologue, 14-15). Wearing the mask of religion marks the ultimate form of deviousness in the play and indeed is its central theme. From the lines of the prologue by the ghost Machiavel to the Governor of Malta, the approach to the religion is full of deceit and dishonesty with Machiavelli's point that religion is that it is just a tool to control other men and hide one's own interest repeated again and again in the course of the play's action. Indeed, such is the religious hypocrisy in the play and so incisive is Machiavel's desire to expose it that the character's attitude appears as not merely impious but, for an observant if hypocritical Elizabeth audience, diabolically atheistic.

Many scholars place Marlowe and his characters somewhere between atheism and deism just as they do the same for Machiavelli. According to Bawcutt (1970), the late 1580's are the years when the fame of Machiavelli began to spread not only among the authorities dealing with politics and religion but also among ordinary people who are willing to show up at the public theatres as audiences. Additionally, he hypothetically claims that Marlowe, as a savvy dramatist would have been aware of this penchant for Machiavelli among the public and wrote *The Jew of Malta* so as not to miss out on the popularity of the Florentine (p. 40).

The ghost finishes the prologue by explaining the reason why he visits England. He is before the audience to introduce a Jew who has made a fortune and whose bags are full of gold and precious stones purely by acting according to Machiavellian tenets. Barabas, Gauss says, is an example of a stereotyped Machiavelli who is egotistical, lustful and villainous (1980, p. 14). He holds great power in his hands thanks to fraud and force; yet, he is devastated by his destiny that he was foolish enough to think he had control of. The ghost exits by requesting that the audience to behave without prejudice towards the Jew, ignoring the fact that he is an acolyte of Machiavel.

I come not, I,
To read a lecture here in Britanie,
But to present the tragedy of a Jew
Who smiles to see how full his bags are crammed,
Which money was not got without my means.
I crave but this. Grace him as he deserves,
And let him not be entertained the worse
Because he favours me.

(Prologue, 28-35)

Marlowe chooses Malta as the setting of the play for its geographical position in the centre of everything, a microcosm caught between Europe and the Middle East – and further to the Far East – and limited by the Mediterranean Sea (Editorial Board, 2017). The ghost of Machiavel already gives us prior knowledge about Barabas and his fortune, and he opens with the information that he has many ships carrying different products ranging from oil to wine; from silk to spice.

So that of thus much that return was made;
And of the third part of the Persian ships
There was the venture summed and satisfied.
As for those Samnites and the men of Uz
That bought my Spanish oils and wines of Greece,
Here have I pursed their paltry silverlings.

Stephen Greenblatt claims that in the plays of both Marlowe and Shakespeare, the figure of the Jew was a palimpsest for the worst excesses of society and that as such they function differently from non-Jewish characters, to whom more individual agency is attributed (Greenblatt, 1973, p. 203). For Marlowe, the figure of the Jew acts as a cipher for sinfulness, weirdness and indeed evil in his period and his society. Christians for the Elizabethan period were encouraged to be prejudiced against the Jews from a religious standpoint, and their most consistent contact with them was often in the Bible, from which sprang myths and horror stories which affirmed that they were a cursed nation due to their role in the crucifixion of Jesus (S.A. 322). European anti-Semitism could be extremely coarse and dehumanising: thus a German wood-engraving known as *The Jewish Pig* pictures a scene in which the Jews suck the breast of a pig and eat its stool. In another painting from the same period, a group of Jews are shown as poisoning a well with the urine of a Satan, a highly popular anti-Semitic trope. In a complex manoeuvre Marlowe satirises his society's stereotyping of the Jew by using a hyperbolic illustration of Barabas's vicious misdeeds.

Marlowe's play is also an important indication of how Christian society dominated the culture and society of England and Europe at the time and as part of that indeed suppressed the Jews. Marlowe wrote his play almost three centuries after Jews were first expelled from England, so as to criticise his society's indulgence in religious strife and ethnic tensions. He staged his Jew in a *Machia-villain* manner in a *Machia-villain* island where every character in the play, excluding Abigail, runs after money. In making Barabas a successful merchant, Marlowe taps in to the anti-Semitic consensus about the wealth of the Jews. This is done without recourse to the historical explanation that Jews were structurally excluded from specific areas of public life, such as politics and state affairs and that, barred from these professions, it was inevitable that many Jews would end up in trade, and it becomes a major source of wealth for those involved (Luther, 1543, p. 59). Abstracted from these conditions, Marlowe draws such an example of a rich Jew in front of the eyes of the audience, and intends to prove Machiavelli right about his ideas about the relationship between power and money. In the first scene, Barabas circumstantiates the sources of his wealth:

Give me the merchants of the Indian mines
That trade in metal of the purest mold,
The wealthy Moor, that in the eastern rocks
Without control can pick his riches up
And in his house heap pearl like pebblestones,
Receive them free and sell them by the weight,
Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,
Jacinths, hard topaz, grass green emeralds,
Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,
And seldseen costly stones of so great price.
(1.1. 19-28)

Machiavelli warns rulers that excessive mammonization can be harmful (2018, p. 99). Yet all goes well for Barabas, and every ship adds more money into his fortune. His eyes sparkle with joy when he says it is trouble to count this trash, meaning his money, and thus Marlowe conveys the stupendous wealth of the merchant” so that the audience understand his life and happiness depend entirely on his gold.

Although Barabas’s fortune comes from the goods that he sells Christians, religious hypocrisy rises to the surface when Barabas looks down on them. He is a Jew living in Christian Malta, but nevertheless presents himself as superior:

These are the blessings promised to the Jews,
And herein was old Abrams happiness.
What more may heaven do for earthly man
Than thus to pour out plenty in their laps,
Ripping the bowels of the earth for them,
Making the seas their servant, and the winds
To drive their substance with successful blasts?
Who hateth me but for my happiness?
(1.1. 105-113)

Barabas relates wealth with Jewish identity, celebrating it as a birth right and a gift from God. “Rather had I, a Jew, be hated thus, Than pitied in a Christian poverty;” (1.1. 115-117). As long as his ships carry gold for him, he does not care that people hate him and prefers to be a rich and “envied” Jew rather than a “pitied” Christian (Prologue, 27). He just desires that Christian rulers give them the “peaceful” conditions necessary to run his business (Ford, 1969, p. 167). Yet, shortly after Barabas’s braggadocios speech so the bad news of the Turks coming to Malta in order to collect their accrued taxes is related. While feigning to comfort others, Barabas takes precautions against the possible Ottoman invasion by hiding a part of his fortune and by stating in a soliloquy: as long as Turks do not touch him, his

money and Abigale, his daughter, he does not pay attention about who is the ruling power on the island (1.1. 153-156). The words of Barabas are a synopsis of his egomania, in that he would be content to see the entire world burning, as long as he is alive, and in possession of first his money and then his daughter.

Ferneze, the Governor of Malta and faced with the threat of Turkish taxes declares that the Jews of the island will provide the funds that the Turks demand by leaving relinquishing half of their fortune. Only Barabas strongly objection to the situation on the basis he did not acquire his wealth easily (1.1. 98-99). This objection however ends up costing him dearly as in response *all* his money is expropriated and his house is taken from him to convert it a monastery. Ferneze's move here is specifically counselled against by Machiavel, as he warns that the ruler should not try to capture the money and belongings of his people:

No, Jew; we take particularly thine
To save the ruin of a multitude,
And better one want for a common good
Than many perish for a private man.
(1.1. 100-103)

From the point of view of Ferneze, a Machiavellian politician, it is a necessity to sacrifice one man for a common good. However, to Barabas, Ferneze's move is no different than theft, which is yet a great sin in Christianity, which always encourages the humble, patient and just life. This represents the hypocrisy of religion on Ferneze's side when he scoffingly preaches to Barabas about covetousness, and then abuses the religion for turning himself out to be righteous (1.1.127-128).

Barabas cries that when Ferneze steals his children's hope, and touching his money is just equal to killing him. He yells:

And now shall move you to bereave my life.
.
.
Why, I esteem the injury far less,
To take the lives of miserable men
Than be the causers of their misery.
You have my wealth, the labor of my life,
The comfort of mine age, my children's hope,
And therefore never distinguish of the wrong

(1.2. 144, 147-149)

Machiavelli (2018) warns that it is a precarious move when a ruler decides on confiscating his people's possessions since it is much easier for them to bear the sorrow of their fathers' death than to be seized of their inheritance (pp. 81-82). After it is certain that Barabas will lose all that he has, he desperately pleads with his martinet to tell him whether they have an idea of killing him in their minds or not. Ferneze responds with contempt saying he never blackens his hands by spilling Jewish blood (1.2. 145-146). Seemingly, Barabas saves his life but loses everything. Nevertheless, he is in such a mood that he would rather keep his gold and properties than keep his life. Thus, these are the seeds of Barabas's wrath.

Marlowe makes a remarkable comparison between two forms of religious hypocrisy displayed in the play. The first hypocrisy is that Christians of Malta do not follow the teachings of Christianity although they say they are Christians. The second hypocrisy is that although the Jews do not believe in Christianity, they often dissemble and claim to believe in order to improve a hostile situation. The latter incidence of hypocrisy is thus less sinful, and that is why Barabas asks Abigail to pretend to be a Christian until they can regain their riches. Thus, for Marlowe, the greater of these two sins of hypocrisy is the first, the one that lies to one's own self.

As good dissemble that thou never meanst
As first mean truth and then dissemble it.
A counterfeit profession is better
Than unseen hypocrisy.

(1.2. 300-303)

Barabas opts to abuse religion for his own purpose, a decision which he registers with the audience by saying "religion hides many mischiefs from suspicion" (1.2.282). Moreover, advises Abigail to pretend to be a sinful creature who, keen to atone for past misdemeanours, visits the monastery which was once their house — and profess her desire to become a nun, thus enabling Barabas to reach his hidden money. Just as Machiavelli suggests that having personal virtue is not compulsory for a prince, but to seem pious is a necessity, Barabas directs Abigail in the same direction, which opens doors for a fresh start for Barabas and Abigail. "O, my girl: My gold, my fortune, my felicity, Strength my soul, death to my enemies!" (2.1.50-52). Thus he manages to recapture the power he needs to take his revenge from Christians that steal his wealth.

As we have seen, Machiavelli routinely encourages princes to remove all obstacles standing before them by using their cunning. The sequential development of a Machiavellian character's career is thus predictable, much like his personality. In the plays which foreground a *Machia-villain* figure, they are always distinguished from other characters by way of being more intelligent, sneaky, hypocritical and blood-thirsty. Thus Boyer (1964) states: "The hero commences his tragic career out of hatred and revenge, pursues his plot by guile, but oversteps all bounds of justice and reason in the cruelty of his deeds, and finally taken in his own toils and destroyed" (p. 52). These lines are just a simple summarization of the trajectory of a *Machia-villain* character in dramas in the Elizabethan age from the introduction of the character until his cursed end. In a similar vein, no matter whether their actions are justified, *Machia-villains* expect no approval for their upcoming evil actions. All that matters is the ends that they pursue – the distinctly un-Machiavellian ends of wealth and personal interest. Thus, after recovering his gold, thanks to his daughter, Barabas spins an elaborate web of intrigue to this achievement of this aim.

Machiavelli mentions that vengeance is necessary on the condition that it provides an advantage. He advises princes to do what they are required to do, and to avoid the extreme. Yet Barabas is not checked by such concerns. The next stop on his long journey of personal interest is Ferneze's son, Lodowick who is deeply in love with Abigail. However, Lodowick has a rival in Don Mathias who is also in love with the daughter of Barabas, which brings a perfect and doubly-profitable plan to Barabas's mind. Although Abigail has feelings for Mathias, she is asked to pretend to love both of them so that Barabas is able to take his revenge on Ferneze and, more broadly, the Christians by directly targeting the Ferneze family name. His evil plot begins with those two men, but Barabas's plot is complicated by Lodowick's being so well-known as the son of the governor, and his own notoriety on account of his previous wealth. Taking into account the prominence of both men, Barabas concludes that it is risky to kill him unless the murder is committed professionally and with duplicity. That is the moment when Barabas realises he needs a co-conspirator. Thus Ithamore, a Turkish slave, enters the action, whose sole role is to undertake Barabas's dirty work. At their first encounter, Barabas enacts a quasi-swearing of allegiance ceremony, compelling Ithamore thus:

First, be thou void of these affections:

Compassion, love, vain hope, and heartless fear.
Be moved at nothing. See thou pity none,
But to thyself smile when the Christians moan.
(2.3. 174-177)

It is such a mordant moment in the play that in many productions the audience is left feeling that Barabas is ventriloquizing true diabolic evil. Yet this behaviour in terms of means is fully coherent with Machiavellian doctrine: for Machiavelli, the fundamental criteria are not being good or behaving well, but knowing when to stop or to change course or strategy; knowing with whom to make an alliance or with whom not to; whom to choose to eliminate and how along the way. Barabas is faithful to those ideas in the play by making an alliance with Ithamore and inciting Don Mathias and Lodowick to murder one another.

The alliance with Ithamore is a crucial one for Barabas, as to have an ally who he can completely and unquestioningly control allows him to fully exploit his *Machiavillain* tendencies. For Ithamore, his alliance with Barabas allows him to rid himself of slave market and free himself up to perform acts of violence with pleasure. Meanwhile the scale of Barabas's vengeance escalates, as he is shown taking pride in his diabolical activity by killing sick people, who he unhappily comes across groaning under walls as he walks the area at night; going about and poisoning wells; keeping the sexton's arms so busy with digging graves and ringing dead men's knells; and serving as an usurer and filling the jails with bankrupts in a year (2.3. 179-206). Ithamore tells his own story so freely and willingly that his response resembles a competition of malignancy between the two villains. Thus the Turkish Ithamore takes delight on setting Christian villages on fire; chaining galley slaves; serving as an hostler at an inn and at nights secretly stealing travellers' chambers, and there cutting their throats; strewing powder on the marble stones where the pilgrims kneeled; and laughing a-good to see the cripples go limping home to Christendom on stilts (3.2. 208-217). Thus, when he mentions his potential, it is obvious that the presence of Ithamore will dynamize the rest of the play. This is despite the fact that, we do not have evidence to prove whether Ithamore is telling the truth or telling tall tales to impress his new demonic master.

As Machiavelli (2018) asserts, promises are just a weapon to be used and when such a promise no longer serves its purpose, there is no wrong in breaking it, either (p.

529). Sowing discord between two young lovers, Barabas takes his second step with the help of his new ally, Ithamore. He writes a letter issuing a challenge to Don Mathias as if the letter was from Lodowick. Although Abigail is not willing to be a part of his father's plan, Barabas deceives his daughter by saying It is no sin to deceive a Christian, for they themselves already hold it a principle (2.3. 309-310). She unintentionally causes deaths of two young men in a duel which they kill one another, and in a state of remorse, she turns towards Christianity, arguing that there is no love on earth, pity in Jews, nor piety in Turks (3.3. 47-48). Losing his temper with his daughter, Barabas disinherits her and declares that Ithamore is his only heir and promises that half of his fortune will be on his service when the time comes for him to pass away. This promise serves to motivate Ithamore more, and to manipulate him around for a while since Barabas has not finished with him yet, and he still needs him to conceal the deaths of Lodowick and Don Mathias.

Marlowe depicts a world of greed and hypocrisy –the reflection of the *Machiavillains* world in which they operate where beauty and kindness –as symbolised in the figure of Abigail– cannot live on (Bawcutt, 1970, p. 48). At the peak of his cruelty, Barabas is so blind and avaricious that he still prioritises his wealth and interests even before his own daughter. All he cares about is money, in Janssen's analysis (1972), a hierarchy of value in order of priority: his fortune, himself, then his daughter, Abigail (p. 23). This valuation is made clear once Barabas is faced with a choice that leaves him stirring poison into the porridge that he prepares to kill his daughter Abigail:

And with her let it work like Borgia's wine,
Whereof his sire, the Pope, was poisoned!
(3.4. 94-95)

In his reading of the *Discourses*, Bawcutt (1970) finds that Machiavelli recommends the use of poison as a weapon, so in this way Barabas's resort to poison is in keeping with his Machiavellian traits (p. 33). Poisoning is also a very common literary device which not only enables the dispatch of characters but also communicates the assassin's duplicity (p. 33). Poisoning often allows the perpetrator to escape blame and capture, as it works by distancing the assassin from the victim. Extraordinarily in *The Jew of Malta*, it allows for a massacre with all the nuns in the monastery being murdered the same time, a mass slaughter allowing Barabas to take revenge on his

daughter for having joined the convent sincerely. Murdering quickly, leaving no trace and walking secretively away is most efficacious for Barabas. From that moment, Barabas calls Ithamore a friend, no longer a servant (3.4. 41-42).

In that period, simply being a Jew was enough for Barabas to create antipathy among the audience. Yet Marlowe compounds the way in which he plays with censure in the play by confronting the audience with scathing attacks on general hypocrisy, firstly that of the friars who are expected to lead and recommend a virtuous life, but also almost all of characters show such moral weakness that Barabas starts to emerge as merely the encapsulation of the general moral degradation of the Maltese society (Greenblatt, 1973, p. 203). Hence, in the eyes of the audience, Barabas begins to be seen as one villain among many, a moral point which acts as a leveller and allows Marlowe to question the validity of the audience's hostility towards Barabas based purely on his religious identity.

Over the course of the following forty hours, all the nuns die: yet, Abigail has a little more time to confess his father's villainy before she departs this life. Here Marlowe wants us to be a witness to the vulgarity of the friars, as Bernardine takes the opportunity to mourn the loss of Abigail chiefly on account of her sexual status: "Ay, and a virgin too; that grieves me most" (3.4. 41). Within the rules of the convent, the nuns are already expected to neither marry nor save their virginity. However, Bernardine's grief shows his duplicity and it can be inferred that he had an intention of sexually abuse Abigail later on. Moreover, the intentions of the friars are also called into questions when they fail to report Barabas and Ithamore to the authorities on Malta, nor directly to Ferneze whose son is one of Barabas's victims; instead, they choose to go to rich Barabas. At his place, they reveal that they know he murdered Lodowick and Don Mathias. As an example of how *Machia-villainy*, Barabas cries crocodile tears and states he is ready to convert to Christianity in order to gain God's mercy. This move stuns both Bernardine and Jacomo, at which point they are drawn into a contest of hypocrisy before the audience as they battle for Barabas's spoils. Forgetting his sinful and evil actions, they think only of the endowment Barabas promises to bestow on his chosen monastery: the obvious manipulation of religion by Barabas does not seem as repellent in this set-piece as the friars' religious hypocrisy. It allows Marlowe to thus display the friars' true

colours and critique the false piety and sanctimonious nature of much religious practice.

Machiavelli signifies that opportunity has a short life and a prince must make the most of it so as not to miss a chance. Not realising that the hunter becomes the hunted, Bernardine and Jacomo leave Barabas's place full of hope and full of desire for gold. Like the winds of desire that bring Turks to Malta (3.5. 3-4), the same winds bring the two friars to Barabas. The outcome is inevitable: Bernardine dies at the hands of the Turk Ithamore, and Barabas profits from the situation doubly by stating he cannot convert to such a religion in which even a priest can kill someone (4.1. 188-190) and by witnessing the murder for which Jacomo cannot go to Ferneze to report Barabas and Ithamore.

Machiavelli warns about the changeable temperament of men and states that men think little of switching allegiance and changing their masters once circumstances change. He regards people as fickle, unreliable and short-sighted creatures:

as long as you benefit them, they are entirely yours;
they offer you their blood, their goods, their life, and their children...
when the necessity is remote, but when it approaches,
they revolt. (Machiavelli, 2018, p. 81)

What this amounts to is a pragmatic view where what is best is to be aware that human nature is innately sinful and that social interactions are always-already based on common interests, and when those interests no longer converge, that same interaction will come to an end. Falsely thinking that nothing can now thwart his path to personal enrichment, another unexpected obstacle shows up for Barabas, this time from the only ally who he genuinely seems to trust; who Barabas loves as himself and who he designates his heir (4.3. 47-48); who knows every single sin of Barabas and partakes of those sins with him. Ithamore initially acts as Barabas's right hand man: if Machiavel is assumed to be the grandmaster of Barabas— as the ghost of Machiavelli implies in the prologue— we can say that Barabas is the grandmaster of Ithamore. After a period of apprenticeship, Barabas's protégée that out to be an expert and they form an evil alliance.

As we have seen, Barabas acts the *Machia*-villain in pursuit of money, personal interest and revenge upon the Christians, whose primary sin was to seize his assets, lock, stock and barrel. Marlowe is less clear about Ithamore's motivation. Ithamore himself does speak about his past criminal actions, and we have no reason not to

believe in his words as he murders Bernadine, without impunity and poisons the nuns in the monastery without remorse. He is, moreover, one among many *Machia-villains* in the play, including the friars, the courtesan and her pimp; as we have seen, with the exception of Abigail, almost every character in the play carries with them some of the characteristic features of a *Machia-villain*.

In addition to knowing Ithamore's essentially villainous nature, we also witness the ease with which Bellamira is able to seduce Ithamore with lustful words, as the words of Pilia-Borza demonstrate when he describes him as a base slave and as being "driven to a nonplus" (4.2. 16-17). In return, he will prove his *Machia-villain* spirit by starting blackmailing Barabas and demanding gold to keep his secrets. In this matter, Barabas begins his steps in a hurry by stating "Great injuries are not so soon forgot" (1.2. 209), and "I am not of the tribe of Levi, I, That can so soon forget an injury" (2.3. 18-19). In a bid to take revenge his revenge, Barabas disguises himself as a French musician (4.4. 29) and visits Bellamira's house. Smelling the poisonous flower attached onto his hat, Ithamore, Bellamira and her pimp are all sickened to death, but before their final demise they have time to visit Ferneze confess Barabas's part in everything (5.1. 12-14). Later, Barabas is seized, but he denies all accusations and demands a fair trial until Ithamore confesses every action. Ferneze bids his men bury the corpses but leave Barabas's dead body to fall a prey to wild animals outside of the city-walls. While it is assumed that Barabas is dead, he is only feigning death, as he has taken a potion that allows him to appear dead for a while. This allows Barabas his final and ultimate opportunity for treachery.

The proverb saying, "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" goes for Barabas. On recovering from the sleeping mixture, he again shifts allegiance and this time helps the Turks to enter the city through a secret passage known to Barabas, and enabling them to conquer Malta stealthily and easily. Ferneze is taken prisoner and Barabas is granted the reward of the governorship of Malta for his service to the Turks. However, Barabas fearful for his life and position, given the hatred that he has generated against himself, and the possibility that this hatred will end up with his death is enough for him to veer away and seek a settlement with Ferneze (5.2. 31,37-38). Marlowe writes in the first scene "Crowns come either by succession, Or urg'd by force" (1.1. 129-130). The title of governorship came to Barabas neither by succession nor by force, but instead was served on a silver platter. Machiavelli

claims that ruling is very complicated for a new and inexperienced prince. He also wrote in *The Prince* that remaining on the throne is more complicated and dangerous for a new ruler (Machiavelli, 2018, pp. 19-20). Barabas has no experience in governing, and so vulnerable to the power plays of politics he is willing to make peace with Ferneze. Marlowe reflects Machiavelli's maxims about how men are bound by the benefits by saying "And he from whom my most advantage comes from, Shall be my friend" (5.2.113-114). The idea that men tend to search for someone who is useful to them is, as far as Machiavelli and here Marlowe are concerned, already coded in human nature. Otherwise, what is the difference from "the ass that Aesop speaketh of without getting friends and filling his bags" (5.2.41). Barabas and Ferneze shake hands and come to an agreement for a common interest, which is freeing Malta from the Turks. When Ferneze exits, Barabas speaks in a soliloquy:

And thus far roundly goes the business.
Thus, loving neither, will I live with both,
Making a profit of my policy,
And he from whom my most advantage comes
Shall be my friend.
This is the life we Jews are used to lead –
And reason too, for Christians do the like.
(5.2. 110-116)

In this confessional nod to the audience, we understand that Barabas has not changed and continues to go after his personal interest and fortune. Moreover, we see here too the villainy of Ferneze, the closest example perhaps of the Machiavellian ruler, who is able to take decisions for the welfare of Malta, unlike Barabas whose only aims are enrichment and pure vengeance.

Feasting has been an extremely common way for playwrights to massacre their cast throughout the centuries, before and after *The Jew of Malta*. Such feasts are not just dramatic tropes however, as *The Prince* shows, referencing a feast held by the historical figure Oliverotto da Fermo and Pausanias at which they ambushed and slaughtered their guests (Machiavelli, 58). Machiavelli's maxim of the "end justifies the means" works one more time for all the figures mentioned here to shore-up their power and terrorize their potential foes. As part of Barabas's plan, he holds a banquet for Calymath in his own house with his army housed in a monastery which is full of gunpowder from whence none can possibly survive (5.5. 30-33). He has carpenters

prepare a special mechanism which will drop Calymath and his consorts to their death and into a boiling cauldron. Barabas gives the knife to cut the cords to Ferneze by Barabas with the purpose of gaining his trust. His reliance on Ferneze, however, proves his downfall, just as Machiavelli warns against reliance on others. Before Barabas exits, Ferneze cuts the cable and lets Barabas fall into the boiling cauldron. He cries for help in pain:

Help, help me, Christians, help.
Oh, help me, Selim! Help me, Christians!
(5.5. 68,73)

Even at the moment of death, Barabas does not give up trying his luck. However, when he is sure that neither of them will help, he shows his true Machiavillain colours, and yells then dies:

Know, Governor, 'twas I that slew thy son.
I framed the challenge that did make them meet.
Know, Calymath, I aimed thy overthrow,
And had I but escaped this stratagem,
I would have brought confusion on you all,
Damned Christian dogs, and Turkish infidels!
But now begins the extremity of heat
To pinch me with intolerable pangs.
Die, life! Fly, soul! Tongue, curse thy fill, and die!
(5.5. 86-94)

Ferneze misleads Calymath and blames the Jews for this massacre (5.5.97) then states that Calymath will be kept as a prisoner until Calymath's father covers the losses of Malta. Hence, the play ends with the victory of Machiavellianism represented by Ferneze over *Machia-villainy* represented by Barabas.

The characters in the play run after their own matters and they use what they have as their weapon. In other words, Barabas has money and insidiousness, and hence, he uses them to gain more strength. Ferneze has political power and hence, he uses it to protect his position and stay as the rich governor of Malta. The friars, Bernardine and Jacomo, have their religion and hence, they use it to make their respective monasteries the richer and stronger. The slave Ithamore is monstrous and primordially evil, and hence, he uses his nature to gain status in the society and lead a luxurious life. Even the courtesan Bellamira and her pimp, Pilia-Borza have the power of reaching everyman in Malta through her brothel, probably including

statesmen and upper class members as costumers, and hence, they use their advantage make a profit and fill her purse.

However, among all the characters and as mentioned before, the play confirms that it is Ferneze who is the true embodiment of the Machiavellian statesman, who worries about the welfare of his country and hold onto the reins of power at any cost. We can say that he likes money as much as the power to rule since he plans to protect his own pocket when he decides to collect money from only Jews. To Barabas, ruling is a common lust for all Christians not just for Ferneze; as a counter, Marlowe's Barabas and by implication all Jews in the play care about money. From the beginning to the end, Ferneze shows his indulgences in his actions. As the true Machiavellian, he violates the agreement with the Turks when he notices a sign of a new opportunity. Similarly, he renews his agreement with Barabas whom he has previously declared to be the enemy of Malta in order to regain control, again even if what he does in the play is not written in any book of religion or moral code. On the other hand, Barabas represents the true *Machia-villain* figure - the ultimate example of egoism and villainy, who wins and loses his power, then wins it back and loses it again; who goes after his vengeance and pays for it with his life. Throughout the play he also costs lives of two innocent young men, two unscrupulous friars, many innocent nuns, his traitorous slave Ithamore, two avaricious delinquents, Bellamira and Pilia-Borza, a swathe of Turkish soldiers and even his beloved daughter, beloved that is until she converts to Christianity, for which he takes ultimate revenge.

4. SHAKESPEARE'S MACHIA-VILLAIN

William Shakespeare's contemporaries had already created their own *Machia-villain* characters such as Thomas Kyd's Lorenzo in *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587) and Christopher Marlowe's Barabas in *The Jew of Malta* (1589), before Shakespeare began shaping *Richard III*. Both Lorenzo and Barabas are insidious manipulators intent on gaining power and authority over those unfortunate enough to trust them, and both are characters who are able to satisfy their lust for domination. These characters are perversions of Machiavelli's principles as laid out in *The Prince*, but evidently, the exploration of more knowing and cynical approach to leadership was of great interest to both Elizabethan dramatists and audiences. Critics speculate as to Shakespeare's own familiarity with Niccolo Machiavelli; Grady (2002), for instance indicates that there are several theories about how Machiavelli and his principles became known to Shakespeare in the Elizabethan period. One claim is that he read Machiavelli in French or Latin; another claim speculates that Shakespeare's acquaintance with *The Prince* came from the results of his close observations of Christopher Marlowe (p. 46). Nevertheless, it seems highly unlikely that the character of Richard was conceived of without the influence of Machiavelli's ideas.

In this chapter, I will argue that despite the heavy influence of Machiavellian ideas of leadership, Richard III cannot be rightly called a Machiavellian villain as the more cynical, ruthless and manipulative aspects of leadership outlined in *The Prince* are

not countered by the more positive aspects needed if, Machiavelli argues, one is to become an ideal leader. Shakespeare's Richard, for instance, does not devote himself to his country. Rather he acts as a tyrant who pursues his own glory and is ruthless to the point of cruelty, ready to eliminate all in his way, even including the true heirs to the throne, his own nephews. As argued in the first chapter, Machiavelli's purpose was to outline the necessary characteristics of a prince capable of saving Italy, saving his people and securing unanimity in the society through the power and principle of his message. Thus, the strategies Machiavelli's *Prince* employs, however manipulative, are designed to achieve peace; Richard's is, by contrast, a scorched-earth policy which engenders war and disunity. Moreover, while Machiavellian principles teach a prince how to survive at any cost, divine justice steps in to punish the *Machia-villain* ruler Richard III, whose attitude to kingship cannot be sanctioned by the governing ethical codes of the time. Richard's style of rule of villainy, unlike that of Machiavelli's rule by villainy, is moreover physically registered by deformity. While Machiavelli does not lay significance on the appearance of his ideal prince and uses real historical figures like Cesare Borgia, Alexander, Romulus and Ferdinand of Aragon etc. as his examples, the Elizabethan dramatists who played with Machiavellian character traits invariably marked their character's amorality through their body: the racist caricature of the hook-nose borne by the Jew Barabas, or the hunchback of Richard, whose physical deformity has, since the play's inception, been read as the outward expression of his grotesque ethical principles.

Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Richard III*, as the last part in a sequence of four history plays known as the first tetralogy, was written in 1592-1594 and published in 1597. It was Andrew Wise who registered his right to the title in October 1597 and who published the first edition of the play. *Richard III* is the second longest Shakespeare's plays after *Hamlet* and deals with the period of English history from around the moment of the death of King Edward IV to the chain reaction of the Battle of Bosworth and eventually coronation of Henry Tudor. *Henry VI, Part 1*, *Henry VI, Part 2*, and *Henry VI, Part 3* make up the other three parts of Shakespeare's first tetralogy (Bevington, 2019). The first recorded performance of the play comes from 1633, when it was performed for King Charles, but we know that it was already a great sensation among audiences from the evidence of multiple reprints of the play; indeed, since its debut, it has been one of the most popular of

Shakespeare's plays. The part was written for Richard Burbage, the principal actor in Shakespeare's company the King's Men, and his performance in the role of villain king is credited with the early popularity of the play (Hooks, 2016).

The play deals with an evil king who comes to throne through cunning and hypocrisy, and ends with the character, positioned as illegitimate and as a usurper, being slaughtered by Henry Tudor, the true king. As the play opens, Edward IV is the king and one of his brothers, the eponymous Richard, is the Duke of Gloucester. Richard is possessed with the lust for the throne and manipulates the king into imprisoning their brother, Clarence. Shortly after, the king has Clarence killed in the Tower of London, a place of potent symbolic importance to the audiences of the play as, in the history of England, including the contemporaneous present of the play, the Tower had been the site of countless imprisonments of people of note, alongside the slaughter of previous kings, queens, princes and princesses (Jarus, 2014). In the meantime, taking license with the timeline of events, Shakespeare has Richard persuade Lady Anne, the widow of Edward of Westminster, son of King Henry VI, to marry him on the day of the burial, despite the fact that Richard has murdered both her husband and father-in-law. When the sick king dies, the elder of his two sons, Prince Edward is the true heir and Richard is made lord protector, in charge of the administration of England until Edward reaches adulthood. In the play, Richard responds to this position of responsibility by capturing the two boys and imprisoning them in the Tower. Richard then spins a web of cunning and subterfuge in order to secure the crown for himself. No sooner does he reach the throne than he has the princes murdered and disposes of Lady Anne with the intention of marrying his own niece, Elizabeth of York. England's warring tempestuous royal houses are infuriated by Richard's actions and abandon the Yorkist faction, joining the cause of Henry Tudor, the Earl of Richmond. After a bloody war, Henry defeats Richard, killing him in battle. Henry accedes to the throne as King Henry VII. He marries Elizabeth of York, uniting the houses of Lancaster and York and ending the long and bitter War of the Roses by establishing a new era and a new royal Tudor dynasty.

The primary historical backdrop of the play is the battle between those two royal houses, and its proximity to the time of Shakespeare and its significance to the Elizabethans in general should not be underestimated. A thirty-year power struggle (1455-1485) between the royal House of York and the House of Lancaster, it took

years to decide on which royal house had the rightful claim to the throne of England and Wales. A major theme of this first tetralogy, and indeed the history plays which deal with the run-up to this tempestuous period, is this ongoing struggle between the two factions. As far as the first tetralogy is concerned, the contest between Yorkists and Lancastrians breaks out as a result of the poor management of Henry VI, especially in terms of the economy. These tensions come to their first crisis in 1460-1 when Edward from the House of York, wins the Battle of Northampton and is crowned king, deposing Henry VI. The newly-crowned Edward IV opts for mercy on his predecessor, Richard, who he sends to the Tower rather than killing him. This move of clemency ends with the Yorkists losing the throne once again to Henry VI, who reclaims the throne after his wife Margaret of Anjou leads a force from France to reinstate him. Edward IV is then sent into exile, but Henry's reinstatement is short-lived as serious mental problems drive him into madness, leaving no significant objections to Edward again assuming the crown. This time, Edward has learned his lesson, and orders Henry to be murdered alongside his heirs in an attempt to bring to a decisive end the Wars of the Roses. Edward makes the Yorks the ruling house in the country and begins his second reign. His two younger surviving brothers are the Duke of Clarence and Richard the Duke of Gloucester, Richard III in-waiting.

With these catastrophic wars, the Tudors managed to take the advantage of the gloomy atmosphere which had exhausted the English people with the never-ending struggles between the noble families over the throne. Nevertheless, with the influence of the continental Renaissance bringing winds of nationalism, individualism and patriotism, people began to think that they had the right to speak and to be represented in the governmental system. They wanted to see a qualified and legalized king on the wheel of the ship of the nation to take them to the through the stormy seas and land them safe on shores of peace; to bring them wealth and peace; to protect them against domestic and foreign threats (Wu, 11-12). In this climate, the symbolic significance of Henry Tudor's victory at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 was immense. He was credited with dissolving the black clouds that had benighted his nation for thirty years and was seen as a unifier and peace-maker between the warring factions. Not only that, with his marriage to Elizabeth of York, he became the father of the extraordinary House of Tudor, father of Henry VIII and grandfather of Elizabeth I, which was recognised by contemporaries as remarkable in terms of its

successes and stability when compared with the political unrest which had confounded its predecessors. At the time of Henry Earl of Richmond – Henry VII's accession, the nation was disillusioned and hungry for peace, and blighted by the economic consequences of years of unrest as the former noble families and remainders were disunited and disheartened. That caused the nation to embrace the new king and to credit him with the providing hope for the future, which his legacy in the form of his son and heirs, for the Elizabethans at least, confirmed.

As the primary works of the history of monarchy in the Tudor period (1485-1603), Holinshed's *Chronicles of England* (1516-1517) and Thomas More's *The History of King Richard III* (1513-1518) supplied the base material for cultural interpretations of the history of this period and Richard's villainy, made infamous by Shakespeare's dramatization, is largely to be found in these source texts. The importance of these two works underlines the fact that the Holinshed's *Chronicles* and the appeal of Thomas More's work was able to arouse interest and be afforded credibility among English society to the extent that they were established as source texts for interpretations of recent history by scholars and playwrights of the era. In both Holinshed and More, Henry VII, as known as Richmond in Shakespeare's play, is understood to be the lawful and rightful King of England, a peace-maker after the Wars of Roses; by contrast Richard III is regarded as a tyrant and an evil king. Both Holinshed's and More's assessments must be placed in the context of their own positions and time of writing. Part of their purpose is necessarily the justification of the reign of the Tudors; in so doing, it is important that Henry VII is established as the true king of England who has the divine right to rule. Likewise, Shakespeare writing in the Age of Elizabeth I, was equally conditioned by the politics of his time, and it would be naïve to assume that a demonization of Richard was not an important part of the necessary political messaging of the play, reinforcing the image of the Tudors as the saviours who liberated England's people and saved the country from tyranny (Aubyn, 1983, p. 71). Nevertheless, it is crucial to remember that Shakespeare's primary purpose why presenting historical figures is establishing them as dramatic characters, not accuracy in terms of historical events nor openly and clearly propagandizing, as a politician might. Shakespeare's was, as always, concerned with drama and used his pen and words to support the Queen and the Tudors insofar as it enabled him to continue to do his job.

The information that we have about the life of Shakespeare is so tenuous that it would be ambitious to establish a mutual and direct relation between Shakespeare and Machiavelli. We do know, however, that the first translation of *The Prince* to be published in English was printed in 1640, though the original versions of all Machiavelli's books would of course have been available to the reading classes who were literate in Italian or French for over a century prior to the English publication. We know that Shakespeare did not speak Italian and only knew some Latin and less Greek, making it unlikely that he read the original of *The Prince* or *Discourses*, but nevertheless, it has been generally assumed that the Elizabethan playwrights such as Marlowe and Shakespeare, if they did read Machiavelli, then they did so in the French translation or Italian original.

As alluded to earlier, Shakespeare borrowed the characterisation of Richard as an evil figure from one of the most remarkable works of that era, the *History of King Richard the Third* by Thomas More, in which he depicts Richard as an entirely villainous character. Without doubt, More's Richard III laid the ground for Shakespeare's interpretation. In terms of Thomas More's own impartiality, it is open to debate how objective he was in terms of his depiction of Richard, as he himself was a prominent public servant for Henry VIII, the son of Henry Tudor. Moreover, it was almost impossible to read a document from that time which defended the historical Richard, as St. Aubyn (1983) remarks, because the number of surviving Yorkists and Yorkist defenders was so few (p. 239). Thus, the historians and playwrights of the sixteenth century were likely to stick to the Tudor line on Richard's villainy and illegitimacy, characterising Richard III just as Shakespeare describes – a “bloody tyrant and a homicide; one raised in blood, and one in blood established” (5.3. 260). One way or another, historiographers accepted More's style of characterization of Richard as their basis, and this characterisation was easily transmitted to Shakespeare, with a couple of modifications. Indeed, in principle, Shakespeare's and More's Richard display parallel characteristics; they are both political dramatizations of an historic figure, designed to serve as propaganda for the Tudors at various points of their dynasty.

Shakespeare's Richard III, therefore, corresponds to the general assumptions about his kingship that were current at that time. Shakespeare's Richard is a lot more *Machia-villain* in character than a real life Machiavellian ruler who Machiavelli

characterises in his books. Machiavelli asserts that it is no harm for a prince to follow an evil path in order to reach the power and sustain his supremacy. He does not do that for his own dignity, but for the common good. However, in the play, Richard III is the one that is responsible for so much blood, and he is always busy with destruction, either shedding blood or planning his next murder. His sword and words do not know any fellow, brother, wife or nephew.

Over four hundred years after Shakespeare's Richard was first created, the villainous characterisation came under extraordinary scrutiny when, in 2012, an organization named the Richard III Society helped to fund and spearhead an archaeological dig in Leicester. On the first day, the team found an anonymous grave in a car park in an area of Leicester that had been the site of Greyfriars Abbey throughout fourteenth and fifteenth century England. Philippa Langley, a screenwriter and creator of the *Looking for Richard* project, thought that she was intuitively aware of something important in a car park when she stood on the grave.

I really think it's a justice thing... I thought, this is a man whose real story has never been told on screen, never. He was always real to me, he was always a real living breathing man from the get-go, and there was something really quite heroic about him... They dug in that spot and the leg bones were first revealed. (Kennedy, 2013).

After exhuming the skeletal remains and taking them for analysis, it was confirmed, several months later, that the grave belonged to the dethroned King Richard III, who had been placed there naked, unarmed and nameless. The site where he was buried, Greyfriars, was itself a victim of the Tudors, being disbanded and its wealth appropriated in 1583, during Henry VIII's campaign against the Catholic Church in England, known as the Dissolution of the Monasteries (Buka, 2014, p. 353). Thus, the abbey and the grave were all forgotten during the following five hundred years. It took a couple of months for geneticists to analyse the bones and declare that the corpse really belonged to Richard. In addition to the DNA evidence, the juridical reconstruction of Richard's skull was considered to be remarkably similar to his portraits. What surprised many of the Ricardians and researchers involved in the dig, however, was that Shakespeare's physical representation of Richard as a hunchback, thought to be a malign dramatic conceit, was at least true. The battle-scarred skeleton

discovered by the University of Leicester's archaeologists and Philippa Langley's *Looking for Richard* team on that day had a marked scoliosis of the spine.

As Richard's grave was missing and the knowledge about him was not creditable due to the political climate that governed the reign of the Tudors, Shakespeare preferred to stick to the villainous figure painted by Thomas More. In Shakespeare's characterisation, Richard's appearance has a highly symbolic function as his physical deformity acts as a visual representation of his moral deformity, and his horrendous appearance is part of the attempt to form a *Machia-villain* character that is evil both physically and personally. Stephen Greenblatt, commenting on his own surprise and shock at the discovery of the historical Richard's scoliosis, which for him seemed to summon the spectre of More's version of the crooked-backed Richard:

But the most interesting piece of evidence is the spine, weirdly curved in a ghastly S. It's startling, seeming to confirm More's adjective "croke backed" and to conjure up the figure that has actually provoked the worldwide press coverage. That figure is not the historical Richard III but, rather, the fantastic villain that Shakespeare fashioned from More's slanders and unleashed in the early fifteen-nineties onto the London stage. (Greenblatt, 2013).

In the play, Shakespeare draws an exaggerated picture of Richard's deformed physical appearance, rendering him a grotesque figure within and without and a dramatic image of a monstrous *Machia-villain* character in the minds of his audience. This deformity mirrors in Shakespeare's Richard III a willingness to subvert the supposed moral codes of kingship, registered in a series of actions that chime with those that Machiavelli advises for his ideal prince. Jordan (2002) speaks to this mirroring of internal morals and external deformity in the significance of the appearance of our *Machia-villain* and with an inner evil character (p. 2). Moreover, what we are calling Richard's *Machia-villain* characteristics are also seen in other aspects of his character such as personal interest, politics and religion, topics all of which Machiavelli explores in his *The Prince* and *Discourses*.

As stated earlier, Machiavelli does not place importance on physicality in his description of the ideal prince. For him, it is the personal and internal characteristics that are key to ideal princely rule. Physicality, however, is an important part of Shakespeare's rendering of his *Machia-villain*, which Richard himself notes too, describing himself in the play as follows:

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, this weak piping time of peace,
have no delight to pass away the time,
unless to spy my shadow in the sun
and descant on mine own deformity.

(1.1. 14-27)

In the very first lines of the play, Shakespeare draws a disgusting, repellent and putrid picture of Richard III, who was born precipitately with some birth defects including uneven arms, a protrusive limp and a hunchback. What is presented as a faulty and cursed appearance prepares the audience for the upcoming evil actions of the character. Shakespeare's Richard is such a *Machia-villain* that he revels in his physicality, playing on the idea of being the devil incarnate which we can see in the way that he speaks of his own deformed body. Richard talks of his features as if he is an unfinished statue that his sculptor cannot, or will not, complete. This leads him to think that his unfinished structure does not fit in with peaceful times but rather with those of disorder, war and confusion, which is presented as his natural habitat. Part of Margaret's role, the widow of Henry VI and an otherwise minor character in the play, is to pour scorn on Richard as a scourge, and the savage way in which she focuses on his deformities, likening him to a pig, mark an extraordinarily memorable point in the play:

Thou elvish-marked, abortive, rooting hog.
Thou that wast sealed in thy nativity,
The slave of nature and the son of hell.
Thou slander of thy heavy mother's womb.
Thou loathed issue of thy father's loins.
Thou rag of honor, thou detested---

(1.3. 230-235)

While Richard blames nature for leaving him unfinished, his reputation among the people with whom he interacts is always bad. During the play, he loses his control so gradually and fiercely that he ends up with being fully detested by other characters

including his mother. This notoriety costs him his family and ultimately the throne of England. Even Richard's own mother is portrayed as being so repulsed by him that she regrets his birth and their kinship.

O ill-dispersing wind of misery!
O my accursèd womb, the bed of death!
A cockatrice hast thou hatched to the world,
Whose unavoided eye is murderous.

(4.1. 53-56)

The Duchess of York thus expresses clearly that in giving birth to Richard she gave birth to a monster, and mourns her cursed womb. Richard himself, however, seems to glory in what others find so monstrous about him, enjoying the correspondences between the ugliness of his appearance and the ugliness of his character, as exemplified in his pointing out that he was born with teeth before his time. Revelling in being the embodiment of evil itself, from the first act, Richard does not feel the need to hide what he is willing to do and who he is. He lusts for his own glory even though it may cost the deaths of many who happen to stand in his way.

Machiavelli suggests that the rulers may leave morality and virtues, but in leaving them behind, the ruler must serve for the common good (Berlin, 2013, p. 37). In other words, the ends must justify the means. Being feared, for Machiavelli, is much more important than being loved by one's people, when it is done for the specific purpose of the salvation of the country (Machiavelli, 2018, p. 81). Richard's lack of virtue and morality is for a different purpose: in addition to his ugliness and physical deformity, Richard is described as vicious, cruel and as lacking in morality, traits which serve his own interests, not that of the country. This crucial difference in the end purposes of adopted behaviours fundamentally separates the Florentine's ideal prince and Shakespeare's Richard. From the very beginning of the play, Richard does not hesitate to reveal the extent of his ambition in his intention to be crowned king of England, despite the fact that three rightful heirs to the throne stand before him. Thus Richard says:

I am determined to prove a villain
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams,
To set my brother Clarence and the king
In deadly hate, the one against the other;

And if King Edward be as true and just
As I am subtle, false, and treacherous,
This day should Clarence closely be mewed up
About a prophecy which says that "G"
Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be.
Dive, thoughts, down to my soul. Here Clarence comes.
(1.1. 30-41)

As Machiavelli (2018) states, an ideal prince knows what steps he needs to take and must be aware of the weakness of his rivals (p. 26). For Richard, in order to get what he desires, nothing will be too bloody for him, and the first obstacle to eliminate before Richard is his elder brother Clarence. Hence, Richard spreads rumours about a prophecy telling that a man with letter "G" in his name will murder Edward's heirs to take the throne. As a person who has weakness for superstition, Edward is terrified when he hears of this prophecy, since he has fresh memories of the War of the Roses and already suspects an attempt on the throne from the rival house, the House of Lancaster. No sooner does he hear the prophecy, Edward orders that Clarence, whose first name is George, be arrested in the tower and executed as he is the only one close to Edward whose name starts with "G". Recognising that the punishment of his own brother would be too severe and that the decision to execute had been taken too fast, at the last minute Edward decides to cancel the execution, but he is too late. This event provides the audience with an opportunity to see the extent of Richard's hypocrisy, as when comforting the brother whose execution he has engineered, he counsels "Well, your imprisonment shall not be long. I will deliver you or else lie for you. Meantime, have patience" (1.1. 114-115). Simultaneously the person who spreads the rumours about and then comforts Clarence, he plays the role of a *Machia-villain* hypocrite, totally lacking sincerity. In terms of deception and duplicity, no one can match Richard's capacity for treachery, and his only co-conspirator is the audience. Thus he sobs next to Clarence and promises to ask the king show mercy on him; however, in soliloquies, when Clarence turns his back, he whispers that he shall "shortly send Clarence soul to Heaven" (1.1. 119-120). Indeed, with the news carried by Hastings saying that the king is sickly, weak and melancholy and his physicians fear him mightily, Richard accelerates the process of executing Clarence:

He cannot live, I hope, and must not die
Till George be packed with post-horse up to heaven.

I'll in to urge his hatred more to Clarence
With lies well steeled with weighty arguments,
And, if I fail not in my deep intent,
Clarence hath not another day to live.
(1.1. 146-151)

Hence, Richard is very determined in his desire and wants Clarence dead. To make certain, he sends two killers for Clarence and warns them to assassinate him quickly and show no mercy. During the moment of necessity, being merciless, Machiavelli (2018) suggests, is applicable and tolerable (p. 97). In conformity with Clarence's predilections for consumption, the assassins take his life by drowning in a barrel of wine; thus the play opens with Richard dispatching the first obstacle to his claim on the crown.

As a part of the villainy of his plot, Richard makes sure that he leaves the blood of Clarence stained on the hands of Edward, pinning the crime on him by announcing, "he is dead, and slain by Edward's hands" (1.2. 95). His purpose here is to alienate the people of England, public officials and the competing royal houses from the king. He aims to bring Edward's reputation down, and thus the way to the throne will be easier. Thus he continues to pretend to be a caring brother when he is in front of the king and a caring uncle in front of Clarence's sons, but at the same time diverts his own culpability elsewhere, telling Clarence's family that it is the king and queen are responsible for their father's death.

Machiavelli (2018) underlines the importance of making allies and alliances, for a ruler, in order to secure his kingdom or republic (p. 129). Richard, likewise, recognises that he will be unable to achieve his goal alone and thus he seeks for an ally who he can manipulate and direct smoothly.

My other self, my council's consistory,
My oracle, my prophet, my dear cousin,
I, as a child, will go by thy direction
Toward Ludlow then, for we'll not stay behind.
(2.2. 150-153)

Richard finds his *Machia-villain* soul mate in his cousin, Buckingham. Richard wins Buckingham's loyalty by sweet-talking him, and flatters him consistently until he finds he has no further need for him. He also exploits Buckingham's own vanity by

offering him the incentives of royal privilege once Richard's aim of being king is realised:

Chop off his head. Something we will determine.
And look when I am king, claim thou of me
The earldom of Hereford, and all the moveables
Whereof the king my brother was possessed.
(3.1. 194-197)

After removing of one of the main obstacles to the throne, Clarence, and finding an ally in Buckingham, Richard seeks for a political marriage to make his position stronger. Ironically and as a display of power, he decides on Lady Anne, the bride of the killed Prince Edward from the house of Lancaster. In a show of dramatic license, Shakespeare credits Richard with the killings of both Prince Edward and King Henry VI, Anne's father-in-law, although the historical record shows that Richard had no connection with their murders and rather an army of Yorkists murdered them. By compounding Richard's crimes so that they fit to a real *Machia-villain*, Shakespeare exacerbates his evil and cruelty in his intentions to marry Lady Anne, who is first introduced to the audience as sorrowing and mourning next to her husband's coffin. She cries, "O, gentlemen, see, see, dead Henry's wounds. Open their congealed mouths and bleed afresh!" (1.2. 56-57). To marry the murderer of her husband is too harsh a fate for Lady Anne to endure, such a humiliation that she points out in a grotesque image that Henry's wounds open up and bleed again. Richard, the consummate manipulator, however, gets what he desires and convinces her to marry him with his lies and empty promises, even going to the extent that he blames her beauty for inciting him to Edward's murder.

Your beauty was the cause of that effect—
Your beauty, that did haunt me in my sleep
To undertake the death of all the world,
So I might live one hour in your sweet bosom.
(1.2. 126-129)

The power of Richard's language here, combined with the audience's complicity with Richard's intentions here, is enough to spark terror in the play's spectators and channel all their empathy towards Lady Anne. He also adds, "take up the sword again, or take up me" in the aim of bringing an ultimate sincerity and confidence. Not long after, Lady Anne begrudgingly accepts his proposal and the ring he offers

entreating her to “vouchsafe to wear”. As soon as she exits the stage, the audience is made aware of the extent of her victimisation, as Richard confides in a soliloquy that “I’ll have her, but I will not keep her long” (1.2. 236).

Machiavelli states that human nature is insatiable and that human nature will always want for more. King Edward IV dies and his eldest son, Prince Edward, the rightful heir of the throne, becomes king; but, being too young to rule at age 12, the care of the kingdom is entrusted to Richard, who becomes Lord Protector. Just how precarious Edward’s position is becomes clear when Richard shares his plan with his ally and right hand, Buckingham:

O bitter consequence
that Edward still should live ‘true noble prince’!
Cousin, thou wast not wont to be dull.
Shall I be plain? I wish the bastards dead,
And I would have it suddenly performed.
(4.2. 16-20)

With Edward too young to rule, Richard is appointed as the Lord Protector of the realm, a highly honourable title and equal in power to the king himself. Yet this is not enough for Shakespeare’s Richard to slake his thirst for power; rather, he sees his protectee as yet another obstacle to his own assumption of the kingship. Thus, with no remorse, Richard plots to kill the young, uncrowned, King and the last obstacle in his way, his brother, and sends Tyrell to dispatch his two nephews, then housed in the tower. Lord Rivers, the Queen’s brother, warns his sister about precaution she should take:

Madam, bethink you, like a careful mother,
Of the young prince your son: send straight for him;
Let him be crown’d; in him your comfort lives.
Drown desperate sorrow in dead Edward’s grave,
And plant your joys in living Edward’s throne.
(2.2. 96-100)

To take a strategic step, Lord Rivers exhorts the Queen to ensure the security of her sons, the princes in the tower, yet as a fellow conspirator of Richard, Buckingham suggests a counter manoeuvre and tells Richard:

My Lord, whoever journeys to the Prince,
For God’s sake let not us two stay at home:
For by the way I’ll sort occasion,

As index to the story we late talk'd of,
To part the Queen's proud kindred from the Prince.
(2.2. 146-150)

Machiavelli (2018) warns that a prince should be swift to take action before his rivals as opportunities may not visit him twice (p. 164). As advised by Buckingham, Richard decides to act more quickly and orders Buckingham to go for the prince before Queen's men and "part the Queen's proud kindred from the prince." Richard and Buckingham run after their opportunity.

Machiavelli (2018) claims that, ultimately, people judge a prince on his actions (p. 105). If they are convinced by the end results of the prince's actions, they forget what has gone before, as long as the republic reaches prosperity and steadiness (p. 54). At first sight, Shakespeare's Richard would seem to follow this maxim too; certainly he follows it inasmuch as all means are available to him in the pursuit of his goal. Richard does not think twice of soliciting, wooing, cheating and murdering, and is personally fully subscribed to the motto of Machiavelli which suggests that "the end justifies the means". Yet Richard's ends cannot truly be married with Machiavelli's as his ends are purely his own, and not those of the realm. Thus Shakespeare's Richard goes beyond the Machiavellian principles when he commits devilish actions for his personal triumph. Rather, Richard behaves like Agathocles, the commander leader in Syracuse, who Machiavelli cites in admiration. Machiavelli (2018) tells the reader that Agathocles "lived a wicked life", beginning as a son of a potter, and then ending up being the commander of Syracuse (p. 55-56), but ultimately it was his bad reputation that brought about Agathocles's end. Even if Machiavelli admires him for some of his achievements, he opines that ultimately, "it cannot be talent to slay fellow-citizens, to deceive friends, to be without faith, without mercy, without religion; such methods may gain empire, but not glory." (p. 57). Machiavelli underlines the fact that honour and reputation for a prince must be the uppermost goal, not the power and personal glory alone. For this reason, Shakespeare's Richard does not fit well with the definition of a true prince of Machiavelli. Quite the contrary, Richard represents the example of a failure of Machiavelli's prince pattern since it is Richard's bad reputation for lack of honour that causes him to first lose the support from the royal houses, and then lose the throne himself.

Richard's bad reputation is spoken out many times in the play. Queen Margaret warns Buckingham:

O Buckingham, take heed of yonder dog!
Look when he fawns, he bites; and when he bites,
His venom tooth will rankle to the death.
Have naught to do with him. Beware of him.
Sin, death, and hell have set their marks on him,
And all their ministers attend on him.

(1.3. 285-290)

For Machiavelli (2018), it is better “to appear to have [a] good personalit[y]” (p. 59) and to hide these characteristics when it is necessary. While being amiable and honourable are generally positive princely traits, he warns rulers that “having them and practicing them at all times is harmful;” nevertheless, “appearing to have them is useful” (p. 59). The widowed Queen Margaret warns Buckingham in advance about Richard's hypocrisy and that he is not like what he seems. In doing so she draws on an analogy of a tame-seeming, yet truly wild, dog that will eventually bite the person nearest to him.

Following the Machiavellian principle of knowing who to choose as one's ally (Machiavelli, 2018, p. 129), Richard chooses Buckingham for this purpose, who goes about the political work of fractioning the people of London, acting as a delegate on Richard's behalf so as to plead with them to accept Richard their new king of England. Understanding his own personal interest to be served this way, Buckingham does not hesitate to slander the two young heirs to the throne, and Edward too, by telling the story that the princes bastards. Given the significance to Crown legitimacy of the Divine Right of Kings, such an accusation is highly provocative. Yet, the reaction is not what they expect to be and Buckingham speaks:

they spake not a word,
But like dumb statues or breathing stones
Star'd each on other, and look'd deadly pale.

(3.7. 24-26)

This unexpected reaction, from Richard's and Buckingham's perspective, confirms that Richard is perceived as untrustworthy, and the people and mayor are not convinced by his statements. Richard's claims to dethrone his nephew are disapproved. Being a lexical bastard with no moral values is thus presented in the

play as being a lot worse than being a bastard without blood relation but with morality (Wu, 2001, p. 42). This theme of legitimacy, and the significance of parentage, spills into Richard's own contorted subjectivity. As we have seen already from Richard's extraordinary rendering of his own birth story which opens the play, his feelings towards his family are complex and lacking. Viewing himself as a cur provokes hostility towards his family; as Hunt claims in his article, Richard evidently does not take after his mother and father. Thus the question of the young princes' parentage, which Buckingham and Richard provoke, is coloured by the fact that Richard himself seems to subconsciously feel like a bastard, although he was born legitimately by all accounts. Dishonouring and blaming the two young princes of being bastard suggests that Richard secretly suffers from a sense of being alienated within his own family (Wu, 2001, p. 133).

Now that the strategy of accusing them of being bastards has failed, Buckingham suggests bringing religion into the court. Thus, they decide to win trust and make allies on the basis of religion:

The Mayor is here at hand. Intend some fear;
Be not you spoke with but by mighty suit.
And look you get a prayer-book in your hand,
And stand between two churchmen, good my lord:
For on that ground I'll build a holy descant.
And be not easily won to our requests:
Play the maid's part: still answer nay, and take it.
(3.7. 46-50)

For the Florentine (2018), religion is just a means for a prince to take him to where he desires to be (p. 126). Buckingham is a great advisor in this respect for Richard, as he knows how to affect a being a religious man. For Machiavelli, being religious is not among the qualities of a good prince; however, the ability to feign piety is:

[aside] I must be married to my brother's daughter,
Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass.
Murder her brothers, and then marry her—
Uncertain way of gain. But I am in
So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin.
Tear-falling pity dwells not in this eye.
(4.2. 62-67)

As mentioned above, Richard follows no divine path, and regards religion as simply a tool that helps to achieve his objective, much like *Machia-villain* in *The Jew of*

Malta. Although he tries to be seen as a religious ruler, he abuses religion. Hence, he does not show any hesitation at pursuing an incestuous marriage to his niece Elizabeth, once he has disposed of Anne as he promised he would. Marriage to such a close family member is forbidden according to the teachings of Christianity, but he eschews the moral codes of religion for the sake of securing the crown.

Religion is a great way of manipulating citizens, statesmen and even kings (Machiavelli, 2018, p. 126). The fact that Shakespeare shows Richard and his conspirator making political use of religion multiple times in the play highlights that that they are in fact *Machia-villain* rather than Machiavellian.

If you thrive well, bring them to Baynard's Castle,
Where you shall find me well accompanied
With reverend fathers and well-learnèd bishops.
(3.5. 98-100)

Richard does not show any trace of trust in God; rather, he trusts in his own intelligence and in his ability to craft intrigue. Machiavelli also visits the issue of divergence between the theoretical world and reality and aims to disconnect politics from the Church's teachings, scrutinizing it in a different and independent sphere. He believes that doing so will bring the glory for Italy and the king himself. In *Richard III*, the game of false piety starts when Richard begins to populate the Tower with those who he sees as threats, but it is seen multiple times during the play. Buckingham informs the group that Richard is not ready to receive them because he is at worship:

He is within, with two right reverend fathers,
Divinely bent to meditation,
And in no worldly suits would he be moved
To draw him from his holy exercise.
(3.7. 60-64)

Richard here is signed up to Machiavelli's advice about religion and attempts to project a pious image of himself on the people as part of his bid to open the gate of the palace. Everyone, including the Mayor is fully mesmerized with the scene they witness: as Richard stands flanked by two bishops, the Mayor exclaims "See where his Grace stands, 'tween two clergymen!" (3.7. 94). The plan is effective and brings Richard one step closer to personal success and the throne of England. He is helped

in this endeavour by Buckingham who tries different stratagems, tactics and manipulations to convince the people to embrace Richard as their rightful and legitimate king.

Religion is likewise a tool for Richmond in the play to motivate his soldiers and attract supporters, but Shakespeare renders its significance for Henry very differently:

A base foul stone, made precious by the foil
Of England's chair, where he is falsely set;
One that hath ever been God's enemy.
Then if you fight against God's enemy,
God will, in justice, ward you as his soldiers.
(5.8. 264-268)

While Shakespeare dignifies the Tudor dynasty through this speech, suggesting through Richmond's speech that divine right is on their side, he implies that Richard, and, by implication, all *Machia-villains*, cannot escape from divine justice (Hammond, 1902, p. 262). To put a finer point on it, by this stage of the play Richard is in the battle tents, preparing to fight Richmond for his crown, but instead of finding strength in faith, this representative of God's will on earth is visited by a parade of ghosts that all have messages for him. Eleven ghosts consisting of men, women, children, kings, princes, brothers, wife, kinsmen and friends, who were powerless against him when they were alive now stand in the tent to spill out their hatred and to curse him. They jointly prophesy that Richard will "despair and die" the next day. It is the first moment in the play where Richard loses his dominant role. Passively sitting in his tent, he is terrified and he questions himself for the first time. It is also the first time that Richard displays some human vulnerability in the play and the moment when he first experiences fear and foreboding.

Methought the souls of all that I had murder'd
Came to my tent; and every one did threat
To-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard.
(5.5. 216-218)

As the last Lancastrian and the first of the Tudors, Richmond is visited and motivated by the same ghosts who hail him, claiming that victory is at his door. Boyed up by the words of the ghosts, Richmond also invokes the divine in order to provide spiritual succour and strength to the lords who support him in his tent. He

undermines Richard's claim to the throne, arguing that he sits there invidiously, having usurped his brother and his nephew. Part of Richmond's justification for his own action is his claim that Richard has always been disbeliever and God's enemy. By the same token, Richmond is convinced that God will inevitably protect them, as theirs is the righteous case in this war between divinity and superstition.

The sweetest sleep and fairest-boding dreams
That ever entered in a drowsy head
Have I since your departure had, my lords.
(5.3. 240-242)

As a farewell performance, Richard cries "A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!" (5.5. 7, 13). He dies in such a desperate way that he could trade all what he has for a horse to carry him away from such indignity. But it is not to be, and Richard is depicted as dying an ignoble death after living an ignoble life. As the winner of the Wars of Roses, Henry ascends the throne of England and makes peace between the Houses of York and Lancaster by marrying Elizabeth of York.

A major reason why modern society has become so familiar with the tactics and tricks of politics is thanks to Machiavelli (Wu, 2001, p. 14). Yet, ever since Machiavelli's works were published in England, he is been feared and misunderstood. The people of England came to know more about Machiavelli during the Elizabethan period thanks to the contribution Machiavelli's ideas made to public theatre. Eschewing the historical Richard and creating a fully-fledged *Machia-villain* in the character, Shakespeare creates a character that cares nothing about his citizens, contributes nothing to the government of the country and lacks even the basic feelings of intimacy towards his own family. With only power and the throne to covet, Richard, like the characters of earlier morality plays, represents a *Machia-villain* in the Elizabethan Period who is introduced to theatre audiences as a reflection of Machiavellian individuals that, without the end of the greatest good for the greatest number, are doomed to ruin no matter how expert they are at pretence, how well they use evil, nor how sneakily they attempt to make profit of religion. In *Richard III*, Shakespeare can thus be seen as presenting a critique of the dangers attached to Machiavelli's doctrines, placing them in stark opposition to the benign and blessed Tudor rule to come at the end of the play. Indeed, in *Richard III*, Shakespeare creates one of the most notoriously *Machia-villain* characters of English

literature over the past 500 years, a character so successful in manipulation and cunning, and so grotesque in physique and morality, that this dramatic creation marred the perception of the historical Richard for 500 years. The case of Shakespeare's *Richard III* and the research now being done in the wake of the discovery of the historical Richard's bones in Leicester, are extraordinary examples of how Machiavelli's ideas of princship will continue to sit uncomfortably with audiences and the public.



5. CONCLUSION

Niccolo Machiavelli did not know the secret agenda of Cesare Borgia, Agathocles or other subjects in his *The Prince*, but he committed himself to solve the problems of Italy through his objective observation of them (Ferneyhough, 1953, p. 212). His is the language of a historian and political thinker, and far from the literary flourishes of the Elizabethan playwrights. Rather he wrote for the sole purpose of finding of immediate political necessity - the salvation and unification of Italy. Marlowe and Shakespeare, however, have other concerns. Rather than write out of necessity, instead, they aim to invent characters that explore the human condition for an audience's entertainment. Hence, although they use history as a source, alteration and invention are the part of their art – their dramatic license. In their treatment of Machiavelli, we can see that both Shakespeare and Marlowe had inherited a perception of the Florentine that bastardised and demonised his principles. This is all to say that all villainous characters in the Elizabethan period can be collected under this umbrella of Machiavellianism. The combination of these perverted character traits which ape those of the Florentine's ideal prince creates a new character type that I have named "*Machia-villain*", what elsewhere is called the Elizabethan supervillain, Machiavellian villain, or stage villain.

Although it is still not obvious that Marlowe and Shakespeare read Machiavelli first hand, they were clearly well-enough acquainted with his reputation to be able to bastardise his philosophy. Yet, to some extent, they accept some of the Florentine's teachings and are aware of the pragmatic utility of his insights as well. When we

focus on the period when Shakespeare wrote his history plays (1589-1599), England was tired from failures abroad, and with the ultimately victorious Spanish Armada (1588) breaking the pattern of a long time without significant victory, patriotism grew in England leaving no ideological reason for a Machiavellian ruler. In such a period it would not be wise for both Shakespeare and Marlowe to distress people; instead they choose to demonise his doctrines and his ideal princely figure. Shakespeare and his contemporaries in the Elizabethan Age are worried about the results that Machiavellianism cause, and write their historical plays as a rebuke to the Florentine's works.

The downfall of atheist or impious Machiavellian rulers is an inevitable end in the light of the information above. Thus, Shakespeare's Richard III largely ignores the historical facts of his reign, and paints a fully-fledged *Machia-villain* in the place of a king dealing with a tempestuous realm and unruly people. Similarly, an exploration of the malevolence of Barabas gives us a definitive proto-type of the *Machia-villain*, one of the first of its kind in that period.

The *Machia-villain* characters are already cursed with ghosts, prophecies, visions or dreams in Elizabethan drama before their ends come and they die painful and inglorious deaths. Shakespeare propagandized that there are certain qualities of a king like morality and piety which are indispensable to the legitimacy of their rule; by the same token, the downfall of an atheist or impious Machiavellian ruler is inevitable. Likewise, Marlowe's dramatic output emphasised that those who lack honourable qualities are doomed to lose. His exploration of *Machia-villainy* allows an excoriating criticism of hypocrisy, sanctimony and false professions of religion, the worst offenders of which are often priests, the government and the decisions taken by that government. Yet, ultimately, wayward characters as Shakespeare's must be punished by the institution they once condemned, and order, however ridden with hypocrisy it is, restored.

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RESUME

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