

Shakespeare's Machiavellianism from Richard III to Richard II

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Abstract

The relationship of William Shakespeare to Niccolo Machiavelli is a vague and perplex matter. The reason for bringing the two names together is the fact that the Italian political thinker and the English playwright share common grounds. There have been thorough debates over the question of Machiavellian impact on Shakespeare's writings in the last centuries. However, as Roe (2002) states in the Preface to his *Shakespeare and Machiavelli*, this is a question that can never be answered with certainty; nor is this essay an attempt to provide an answer. Rather, the aim of this essay is to demonstrate how Machiavelli's *The Prince* can help illuminate Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *Richard II*. This essay looks at certain situations in the two plays that find parallels in *The Prince*, and in so doing the aim is to illustrate what version of Machiavelli the different plays depict. Before discussing the plays, however, the essay will briefly discuss how the flavour of Machiavelli's thoughts was brought to the Elizabethan England, and how Machiavelli was perceived.

Machiavelli in the Elizabethan England

Machiavelli was no doubt the most prominent political thinker of the Renaissance era based in Florence. His *The Prince* (1513) called into question almost all political writings preceding it. The first printed version of Machiavelli's *The Prince* was published in 1532, five years after the death of its author. Ever since the book was widely circulated and translated into many languages. Although England lagged behind in translating and publishing that enigmatic book, but once in England the book was both admired and deplored (Roe 2002). According to Grady (2002), Machiavelli was very well familiar among the Elizabethan political class, and was broadly read and discussed, despite the religious condemnation and official prohibition of his books, especially *The Prince*. He was, in short, not simply an author whose arguments were widely circulated, but one whose new form of discourse entered into cultures in general. That Machiavelli's *The Prince* was surreptitiously disseminated in England before 1592 is evidenced by commentators like Gabriel Harvey on whose 1579 list of highly recommended books the Florentine is named as 'Machiavell' (Redmond 2009). Redmond also writes that "the name of Machiavelli had a semantic currency of its own", and his most contentious arguments in *The Prince* made a regular appearance in the era's political writings, for were reproduced very often. It was a book everybody had heard of and perhaps had some preconception about it. It is, however, largely overstatement to believe that everyone who talked about Machiavelli had read him. Just as the wide reference to Shakespeare's "to be or not to be" in the modern time is not evidence of Shakespeare's readership, so was the name of Machiavelli in Elizabethan England.

The absence of an English version of *The Prince* notwithstanding, John Wolfe's publications of Italian versions of Machiavelli's books including *The Prince* were found interesting by courtiers and the Elizabethan reading class (Redmond 2009). The first printed English version of *The Prince* appeared in 1640. Long before then, however, the book was in easy reach for Elizabethan playwrights, including Shakespeare; they reached the Italian and French translations at least (Meyer 1897). It is then not surprising that, as Redmond suggests, many of Machiavelli's English readers found it difficult to understand the French and Italian versions of *The Prince*, but the prestige of having being able to get a copy of the mysterious book would suffice (Meyer 1897). Interestingly, Meyer argues that what the Elizabethans considered as Machiavelli's maxims were, "four cases out of five", not his, and thus he was unjustly made author of things he did not write at all (1897). Accordingly, the interpretation of Machiavelli became problematic; some agreed that deception was at the heart of Machiavelli's arguments in *The Prince*, whereas many observers asserted that the book itself was "deceptive" (Redmond 2009). Roe (2002) asserts that Elizabethans definitely read Machiavelli, but, as he puts it: "were they reading Machiavelli or they were reading an author with a Machiavellian reputation?" (p.3) . He further assumes that nobody reading Machiavelli in the 1580s was able to approach him without a clouded vision (p. 3). It is then possible to argue that we cannot see the "original Machiavelli" in many Elizabethan representations of him. He was filtered very effectually through many distorting lenses, and there were many sources for the "demonization" of Machiavelli's figure (p. 6-7). This idea of distorting and demonizing Machiavelli also concerns Shakespeare's plays, as explained below.

As early as 1572 villainizing Machiavelli in England started when the preface to *A Treatise of Treasons Against Queen Elizabeth and The Crown of England* condemned the Elizabethan England as "a Machiavellian State and Governance" (Redmond 2009). This statement was clearly meant to discredit the Italian author. A clear manifestation of the dangers annexed to the notorious Florentine's name, who was represented as a frightening model of political behaviour, is the many advisory references in Elizabethan and Jacobean writings wherein people are advised to "farre from drifting Florence keep, lest Machiavels yee groe" (Redmond 2009). Redmond also notes that there has been a keenness among critics to consider as Machiavel any nasty writing of the Elizabethan era. For authors of the Elizabethan epoch, Machiavelli appeared as the "devil incarnate", or the incorporation of duplicity (Meyer 1897). Perhaps, one of the sources for demonizing Machiavelli was Marlowe who, in *The Jew of Malta* (1589-1590), "capitalizes on the fact that Machiavelli's name is odious" (Redmond 2009). In the prologue to Marlowe's play the character Machiavel appears on the stage and speaks as: "To some perhaps my name is odious/ But such as love me guard me from their tongue/ And let them know that I am Machiavel" (*qtd in* Redmond 2009, p.83).

As for Shakespeare having read Machiavelli, or being influenced by *The Prince*, the matter becomes more complicated, for there is little, if any, certainty as to what Shakespeare borrowed from the banned Italian author. According to Alexander (2004), since the seventeenth century there have been continuous endeavours to bind Shakespeare's writings to "an individual" cause like Protestantism, Catholicism, Republicanism, and Liberalism, to name few of them. All those attempts, however, have served one thing: that Shakespeare's plays and poems prove "irreducible to a particular context", or interpretation. Nonetheless, as stated above, the name of the Florentine and the flavour of his political thoughts were in England during Shakespeare's life. Grady states that many Machiavellian discourses were transferred into the Tudor and early Stuart London theatre, although it cannot be explained accurately how this happened. As to the evidence of how dramatists transmitted Machiavellian ideas, there is scarcely reliable information, but speculation. For example, Shakespeare's source of knowledge of *The Prince* might have been a close observation of Marlowe's plays, because Marlowe was at Cambridge and there he probably could read Machiavelli (Grady 2002). Yet, what is significant is not whether Shakespeare directly read the Florentine or not; what matters rather is the fact that parallels can be seen between the two. Those parallels, Grady believes, allow us to read different understandings into his plays. Hence it is more understandable to compare, as Roe (2002) suggests, "the *situations*, and the manner of depicting them, that occur in Shakespeare" and "find analogous treatment in Machiavelli" (p.x). The Machiavellian examples, then, help underline details in Shakespeare's plays that "may otherwise seem less clear" (p. x). In this sense, Roe asserts that "Shakespeare may illuminate Machiavelli as much as Machiavelli may illuminate Shakespeare" (p. x). In what follows an explanation is given about how Shakespeare treated Machiavellian themes in *Richard III*, and how the dramatization of those themes changed in *Richard II*.

During Shakespeare's life Machiavelli's political ideas had a profound impact upon literature. Tracing the Machiavellian themes in Shakespeare, Grady (2002) states that the

English playwright did not probably know the Florentine's *The Discourses*, but "he could not have been a man of the theatre" without knowledge of *The Prince* (p. 45). Having said this one also needs to bear in mind that, as Worden argues, the political realism of Shakespeare's plays "could not have been achieved in an earlier age" (*qtd in* Alexander 2004). *Richard III*, believed to have been written in 1592, is the concluding play of Shakespeare's first tetralogy. The play depicts Richard's remarkable Machiavellian rise to the English throne and his subsequent overthrowing by Richmond. Much discussion has gone among Shakespeare's critics as to what extent Shakespeare's dramatized version of the English history in *Richard III* correlates precisely with the history recorded in official documents. This essay does not follow those discussions. Rather, what is explained here is how we can read the play through the lens of Machiavellianism, and more importantly what version of Machiavelli is represented in the play, if any.

Grady (2002) observes that in his early plays, including *Richard III*, Shakespeare worked with a "popular discourse of the Machiavellian" bequeathed to him from Marlowe (p.46). It is significant to note that that 'popular discourse' created Machiavels, characters who, like Richard, propagate a sham facade of virtue under which lies a malicious rapacity for power. Watson (1976) highlights that among the Elizabethans Machiavel was a name for Machiavelli the writer and was also simultaneously a type of character. The use of 'Machiavel' with a double meanings started in 1590 when, during the performance of Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, the audience were asked to imagine that the Machiavel presented on stage spoke the spirit of the Italian writer. It is attention-getting that the aim behind this kind of representation was to depict the Florentine as the "supreme representative of Deceit and Violence", or what he himself would have called the Fox and the Lion (Watson 1976, p.637). A common feature that combined those plays was the "condemnation of the doctrine" to which the characters related. In *Richard III*, for instance, Richard's physical deformity and his overthrowing seem to serve this purpose. Such thematization of Machiavellianism was an effective, deliberate attempt to disgrace Machiavelli, according to Grady (2002). In this sense, in 1592 Shakespeare was part of the public discourse that worked to discredit the author of *The Prince* and to refute his political ideas.

As far as *Richard III* is concerned, the character Richard is a complicated Machiavel because he both follows and violates Machiavellian instructions in *The Prince*. On the one hand, his fate (Fortuna) operates in a way comparable with that described in *The prince*, whereas on the other hand Richard practices all evils that would make him despised (Roe 2002). In one of his soliloquies in Act one, the monstrous Richard plans to woo Lady Anne, widow of King Henry VI, in whose murder Richard has participated. He hopes that he can support his claim to the throne by marrying Anne. Although his proposal for Lady Anne's hand is bewildering and dangerous, it also wins Richard Machiavelli's admiration. He falls at the feet of the widow, gives her his sword, asking her either to kill him as a revenge for her dead husband, or accept his proposal. Though sure that he is a 'dissembler', Anne "will not by thy executioner", thus surrenders (I.I. line 189, pp 27). This way, Richard wins both Anne's hand and Machiavelli's approval for his control of his fortune. This apparent recklessness and madness is necessary to expose him to dangers, and thus making him a protagonist of the play (Roe 2002). Richard's venture, Roe sates, is not "less Machiavellian, but more so, as it makes

of Richard someone who shapes his own fate-the kind of figure who wins Machiavelli's wholehearted approval" (2002). Richard's determination in wooing Anne resembles what the Florentine says in *The Prince* about fortune : that " it is better to be adventurous than cautious, because fortune is a woman, and if you wish to keep her under it is necessary to beat and ill-use her" ((2009, p.90).

Throughout the play Richard is interested in power, or more probably the seeking of power (Abbot 2010). In the opening scene of play the audience are informed, through his soliloquy, that since he cannot prove a lover, he is "determined to be a villain" (1.1 line 30, 9). Whether or not his actions are to compensate to his being misshapen he is determined to seize power, and in so doing, kill his way to the throne, no matter what the price might be (Abbot 2010). To achieve his goal he needs to practice some Machiavellianism, whereby he learns that " violence be deployed in concentrated fashion" (Abbot 2010). To become king he does not even hesitate to kill his own brother and his nephews. Following his single-minded determination, Richard as a king recognizes no limitations on his power. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli advises princes that "it is necessary to know well how to disguise this characteristic, and to be a great pretender and dissembler" (p.63). According to Wheeler (1971), Richard's rise to the throne is based on his artful pretending, on his capability to falsify reality, and to invent an illusionary world that others can accept. Nonetheless, he "distorts the world so out of shape in his play-acting that the artificiality of it becomes only too clear" (Wheeler 1971,p.311). Once he has become king, he is not able to act anymore, and, instead of adapting himself to the circumstances as Machiavelli advises, he endeavours to reshape them (p.311). His unsuccessful second proposal for Queen Elizabeth's daughter's hand typifies Richard's loss of his persuasive ability, with which he won Anne at the beginning of the play. Wheeler further writes that " Richard is the most famous of Elizabethan Machiavels, but the Machiavelli who wrote *The Prince* would have little patience with his tactics" (p.309). There are many examples in which Richard acts so foolishly or violently that Machiavelli would not endorse.

Interestingly, Loder (2007) writes that "what Shakespeare achieves in Richard is the perversion of Machiavelli's ideal prince" (p.69). Although Machiavelli asks rulers to be aware to the good-bad opposition, Richard's determination to do all evils does not correlate with Machiavelli's virtue (p.73). Thus "the character Richard is a distortion of Machiavelli's doctrine, which presents the Machiavel as someone who is committed to evil out of mere selfishness" (p.73). Moreover, the fact that Richard commits all his crimes for his own satisfaction, and not for the good of his people, further takes him away from the original doctrine of Machiavelli; Machiavelli "claims prosperity of the commonwealth to be a principal aim of a prince" (p.73). Loder (2007) also observes that Shakespeare's references to the Machiavel Richard as "villain, plots, hate, subtle, treacherous, secret mischief, seem, play the devil" are signifiers to a Machiavellianism that can be traced in other Renaissance works too (p.74). In this sense, Shakespeare's Machiavel Richard is part of a broader pattern which worked to disgrace Machiavelli. As such Richard becomes "the epitome of the English stage Machiavel, not the Machiavellian prince" (p.74). The continuous cruelty perpetrated by Richard has no place in Machiavelli's doctrine in which he warns against intensified cruelty. "

Although Richard follows Machiavelli's advice and deceives, pretends to be religious and does not accept his fate but fights Fortuna, it cannot be said that Richard is the ideal prince" (Loder 2007, p. 74). His extreme violence and his lack of ability to acclimatize accordingly with the circumstances are signs of the perversion (p.75). Richard's seizure of the throne is the result of a determined mind, a mind that Machiavelli finds in heroes. Yet his limitless brutality and the fact that he enjoys his cruelty make him "stray from the path of Machiavelli's original doctrine and turn him into a Machiavel" (p.75). If Shakespeare distorted Machiavelli's ideal prince, what could have been his reason for doing so?

Roe (2002) writes that Shakespeare's tragedies challenge the "threat of the amoral", and those confrontations with the amoral allow the playwright to "reflect on what the nature of reality would be if certain of Machiavelli's implications were to prove irrefutable" (p.xi). Evidently enough, Shakespeare would think that the results would be very disturbing, so he resists them (p.xi). This is highly applicable to *Richard III*, in which an ever-widening scheme is at work to destroy the villain Machiavel. Aycock (1973) names three forces that are arrayed against the 'murderous villain', 'son of Hell', 'rag of honor'- Richard. These are Richmond, Queen Margaret's effective curses, and Richard's determination to be a villain (p.70). Historically, Queen Margaret is out of place in *Richard III*, but Shakespeare reconstructs her purposefully. Even without her, Richard would furnish his damnation, but her presence ensures the ultimate downfall of Richard because her curses "seem to have divine sanction" (p.70). Aycock (1973) further states that as if Margaret's curses would not suffice, Shakespeare adds to the working forces a most sore and touching curses- that from his mother. Richard's mother Duchess of York curses his son as: "Therefore take with thee my most grievous curse" (IV.IV line 188 pp 175). Shakespeare's determination to bring his Machiavel to complete destruction, as shown in the play, may explain his inclination to the idea of Divine Right of kings. For, as Roe (2002) underlines, he shows "the triumphant dynasty prevailing according to the will of God" (p.26); therefore, Richard's fall becomes inevitable as a divine punishment. As such, Richard becomes 'son of Hell', and his conqueror Richmond becomes 'God's captain'. This supposition that Richard works against the will of God is underpinned by Hunt's argument that: "rather than ruthless ambition, Richard's motivation for his cruelty arises from his bitter desire to deface, to disorder the beautiful handiwork of God, who had malformed him" (p.11). Judged by this, Richard's failure follows God's intervention to order the defacement wrought by the Machiavel, an idea that undergoes a dramatic change in *Richard II*. This portrayal of Machiavellianism, in which the Machiavel's commitment to evil makes his decline inevitable, is possibly due to the knowledge that Shakespeare had about Machiavelli in 1592. As stated before, Shakespeare inherited his knowledge of the Florentine from a popular discourse that worked to discredit Machiavelli and represent Machiavels as dissemblers, hypocrites, and master criminals. Shakespeare, however, did not stick to that distorted version of the Machiavel in his later plays.

Shakespeare's complex and multi-layered treatment of Machiavelli's themes notwithstanding, it is not impossible to figure out a "trajectory and thematic" progress (Grady 2002). Grady also argues that "Shakespeare's' first historical tetalogy makes use of the 'evil' or lurid image of Machiavelli" (p.44). As already shown the Machiavellian character in *Richard*

III is a power hungry villain. This evil image of Machiavelli, however, goes under a sea change as the playwright develops further in his career. Shakespeare's tragedies and histories written between 1595 and 1600 are different from his earlier plays in that they show a more positive attitude about political power (Grady 2002). They appear to "take for granted a secular, realpolitik understanding of political power as a force for both good and evil" a view generally correlated with Machiavelli's *The Prince* (p.26). The history plays during the time that Grady calls "Machiavellian Moment", 1595-1600, show more positivity about political power in general, and Machiavelli's ideas in particular. Of those one is *Richard II*.

Richard II was written in 1595, a time that the name of Machiavelli and his *The Prince* were becoming more familiar in the Elizabethan England. The play is the story of Henry Bullingbrook's successful rise to the throne and the fall of King Richard's power. Much ink had been spilt over discussions regarding the linkage between the play and the oppressed Essex rebellion in 1601. The play was written six years before the rebellion of the Earl of Essex, and performed just on the day before the rebellion; it is not surprising then that many people thought that Essex supporters were galvanized by the successful Machiavellian rise of Shakespeare's Henry Bullingbrook to power. Many people drew a comparison between king Richard II and Queen Elizabeth, and even the queen herself was quoted to have said: "I am Richard II. Know ye not that?" (*qtd in* Grady 2002). This was the reason that the deposition scene of the play was removed in the first quarto and in all the other editions during Elizabeth's life (Noon 1989). This is, however, not the focus of this essay; for there is not enough evidence to link Shakespeare and the Essex movement. Rather, Shakespeare's treatment of Machiavellianism in the play gains more interest for the play is a "thoroughly Machiavellian document" (Grady 2002). As such, the play "gives two machiavels, but only one real Machiavellian- Bullingbrook- who truly understands the necessity of appearance of virtue" (Grady 2002). If Bullingbrook's rise to power is a successful practice of the Florentine's advices, then King Richard's overthrowing is due to his inability to act as Machiavelli has advised. Therefore, we see in *Richard II* many situations that can be well illuminated by *The Prince*.

In chapter nineteen of *The Prince* Machiavelli strongly advices princes not do anything that would make them hated and writes that: "it makes him hated above all things, as I have said, to be rapacious, and to be a violator of the property and women of his subjects" (p.65). In the first act of *King Richard II* we learn that the ruling King Richard is preparing for a war and decides that: "Our substitutes at home shall have bank charters" (I.IV line 48, pp 93). The decision to oblige his impoverished subjects to finance the war is fatal and probably the worst of all decisions (Mabillard 2000)¹. Machiavelli also writes that "men more quickly forget the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony" (p.60). Violating this basic tenet, king Richard grabs the estate of the murdered John Gaunt and prevents Bullingbrook from becoming the legal heir to the hereditary rights bequeathed to him. Mabillard also states that Richard's effeminate obsession with latest fashions, alongside a sick reputation, as opposed to caring for public opinion and the good of the state, make him inconstant and

¹ Mabillard, Amanda. *Shakespeare Online*. 20 Aug. 2000, 18/12/2013).

frivolous in the eyes of his people. In addition, the choice of counsellors is so important for Machiavelli as he writes in *The Prince* that shrewd princes choose wise and faithful advisors, and when it is otherwise, the prince has made the fatal error by choosing unsuitable servants. King Richard's advisors are Bushy, Baggot and Green. Throughout the play they prove to be unable to give good counselling. As opposed to King Richard, Bullingbrook proves to be a true Machiavellian character.

According to Ribner (2003), a manifestation of "the actual Machiavellian philosophy in *The Prince* may perhaps be seen in Bullingbrook" (p.178). When comparing Bullingbrook with Machiavelli we are surprised by the similarity between the two. Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* as a call for a prince who might be able to cure Italy's prolonged suppurating sores and remedy the insults. Shakespeare's Bullingbrook is the embodiment of such a leader. His handling of power "follows closely the formula set down by Machiavelli" (p.178). If we were to assume, as Grady (2002) does, that both King Richard II and Bullingbrook are Machiavellian characters, then we can see that the opening scene of the play is where their similarity ends. The play opens with Bullingbrook and Mowbray accusing each other of high treason, in front of the king. Bullingbrook accuses Mowbray of the murder of Gloucester, and thus implicitly attacks King Richard's government. This political deception, according to Ribner (2003), is "in line with Machiavelli's words on dissimulation and keeping of faith" (p.179). In chapter eighteen of *The Prince* Machiavelli writes that a prince needs to appear to be "merciful, faithful, humane, upright, and religious" (p.64). Nonetheless a prince only needs to appear to possess those qualities, and when the observance of faith is not to his advantage, he should not observe it. This is truly what Bullingbrook is in the first act, for "honesty and trust mean nothing to Bullingbrook when his own advantage is involved" (Ribner 2003). In the last scene of the play Bullingbrook, after having caused the murder of Richard, decides to "make a voyage to the Holy Land/ To wash this blood off my guilty hand" (V.VI lines 49-50, pp 183). This statement is, Ribner (2003) observes, one of the most important principles that a Machiavellian prince should follow. Throughout *The Prince* Machiavelli emphasizes the necessity of appearing pious in the eyes of the public, and this is what Bullingbrook is doing.

Another remarkable difference between King Richard and Bullingbrook, in terms of Machiavellian practices, is their treatment of their rivals when they are on power. An important principle of *The Prince* is that a prince, who has recently taken power, should be able to either completely defeat the supporters of the former ruler, or make them his ally. In so doing, the prince must ensure that he has "destroyed the family of the prince who was ruling" (*The Prince* p.6). In the accusation exchange scene Richard had the opportunity to either destroy Bullingbrook or make him his supporter, but he chose a "middle, ineffectual solution", by deciding to banish them both (Franco 2008). The banishment allows Bullingbrook to come back again and dethrone King Richard. Bullingbrook's treatment of the overthrown King Richard, however, is quite Machiavellian. He realizes that as long Richard is alive, he is a threat to his power, so he decides that neither Richard nor his supporters like Northumberland should live. Machiavelli also advises that princes should have agents to get those things done for them that might incur hatred, so Bullingbrook employs Pierce of Exton to get Richard killed. Ribner (2003) states that although "Richard's murder is an act of extreme cruelty", it "does not dismay Bullingbrook the least. If his title is to be made secure, and the nation

strengthened and united, Richard must be murdered" (p.183). This is clearly what *The Prince* says about cruelty: "Therefore a prince, as long as he keeps his subjects united and loyal, ought not to mind the reproach of cruelty" (59). Ribner (2003) states that in all the important actions Bullingbrook takes, from his quarrel with Mowbray to the promised voyage to the Holy Land, "the underlying philosophy of Machiavelli can be seen" (p.183). To cut it short, "not only does Richard do almost everything wrong according to Machiavelli, but Bullingbrook does almost everything right" (Franco 2008,p.22). As regarding princely actions *Richard II* conforms with the Machiavellian rule that appearances are the very base of politics (Grady 2002). This might well explain why the play is silent as far as Bullingbrook's interiority is concerned. As can be seen in the soliloquies, *Richard III* opens for its readers a window to see through the mind of character Richard, whereas *Richard II* is strategically and completely silent (Grady 2002).

It is attention-getting that the Machiavellian character in *Richard II* succeeds over the ruling king and seems to have little to worry about as a prince, as opposed to the condemned Machiavel in *Richard III* who is doomed to destruction. According to Grady(2002), the fall of king Richard II is mainly due to his inability as a politician, and the encounters between accomplished and unaccomplished Machiavellians in the play implies "an understanding of the Machiavellian arts similar to the one Machiavelli himself promulgated throughout *The Prince*" (p.79). There is, then, a sense of affirmation of the importance of Machiavellian political artistry. King Richard is a weak king because he does not have those arts, and is defeated by Bullingbrook who clearly posses true Machiavellian arts. The failure of king Richard and the success of his opponent can be associated with Machiavelli's instructions in *The Prince* (Franco 2008). Thus, the play is nothing if not "an affirmation of the accuracy" of Machiavelli's theory for power (Grady 2002).

Roe (2002) writes that "with the second tetralogy Shakespeare, in his application of the Machiavellian formula, makes use of a quieter, more subtle mode" (p.38). Grday (2002) also observes that in *Richard II* Shakespeare establishes a new attitude toward Machiavelli in the way he treats Bullingbrook, a kind of treatment that differs significantly from that in *Richard III*. While the character Richard in *Richard III* is obviously a villain, Bullingbrook is a "more ambiguous, more impersonal, and ultimately more successful" character (p.47-8). Hence the play *Richard II* is Machiavellian in two ways that *Richard III* is not: first, "it implies a secular, realpolitik, non-Providential view of power and politics"; second, the play does not denounce its central Machiavel's manipulations, as does *Richard III* (p.48). Franco (2008) highlights that in *Richard III* Shakespeare, seemingly, does not accept Machiavellian principles as a touchstone for a good rule, so he refutes them. This view, however, moves toward "acceptance if not outright endorsement" of those same principle in his later plays, as typified by *Richard II*. Therefore, in *Richard III* Shakespeare makes use of different forces to destroy the Machiavel who is supposed to speak the spirit of the Florentine. In *Richard II*, however, not only he does not condemn his Machiavel's actions, but rather tends to see them as essential for good ruling.

Conclusion

As stated before, there is not enough evidence to prove the argument that Shakespeare's portrait of his characters in the two plays in question was influenced by Machiavelli's political ideas. Nonetheless, it is difficult to argue otherwise. Having looked at the parallels between Machiavelli's themes in *The Prince* and Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *Richard II*, it is significant to note the disparate dramatizations of those themes by the playwright. In his 1592 *Richard III*, Shakespeare depicts a perverted, deformed, villainized Machiavel, who is self-propelled towards his ultimate destruction- besides other forces at work that ensure the destruction. He inherited that image of the demonized Machiavel from a popular discourse, a discourse that worked to discredit Machiavelli deliberately. In the case of Shakespeare, such a thematization was also accompanied by a focus on the adequacy of the prevailing dynastic rule. Three years later, however, Shakespeare's attitude changed dramatically, and he embraced Machiavellian ideas with more positivity. The time between the writing of the two plays is only three years, yet Shakespeare's attitude toward Machiavellianism undergoes a sea change. This essay suggests that this shift might have something to do with the changes that happened in Shakespeare's career during that time. With the publication of his *Venus and Adonis* in 1593, as the first printed work under his name, Shakespeare announced his authorship of written works, in a sense refusing to call the early writings his own (Wetherell 69). Interestingly, Shakespeare wrote a two-line Latin poem on the cover page which demonstrated that he had by that time turned away from the vulgar, and that he aspired "towards a loftier and more durable style" (Duncan-Jones and Woudhuysen 11). As such, it is possible that from 1593 onwards Shakespeare was, or he thought he was, moving away from the popular discourse that shaped his knowledge. Therefore, if the 1595 *Richard II* was an attempt to absorb the true flavour of Machiavellian thoughts, it was also an endeavour to dissociate from the popular discourse villainized Machiavelli.

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پوخته

به دريژايي چهند سهد سالي رابردوو ناوي وليام شكسپير و نيكولاس ماكيافيلي زور جار بهيه كه وه هاتوه، هوكاره كه ش دهكرئ ئه وه بيت كه كومه ليك خالي هاوبه ش له نيوان ماكيافيلي، بيرمهندي سياسي ئيتالي، و شكسپير، شانونوسي ناوداري ئينگليزي، ههيه. به لام پهيوه دني نيوان ئه م دوو ناوه پهيوه نديه كي ئالوز و ناروونه. زور جار باس له كاريگه ري ماكيافيلي دهكرئ به سهر نوسينه كاني شكسپيره وه، به لام زوريك له رهخنه گران له و باوه رهدان ئه مه پرسياريكه ناتوانرئيت به دلنياه وه وه لام بدرئته وه، وه ئه م توئزئينه وه يه ش هه وليك نيه به و ئاراسته يه دا. ئامانجي توئزئينه وه كه ئه وه يه نيشاني بدات كه، كتئيبى (مير) ي ماكيافيلي يارمه تي تيگه شتن ده دات له دوو شانونامه ي شكسپير به ناوه كاني (ريچاردى سئيه م) و (ريچاردى دووهم). له و ريگه يه وه توئزئينه وه كه هه وليك به تيشك خستنه سهر ئه و بارودوخ و سيناريو يانه ي له (مير) دا باسيان ليوه كراوه، و له شانوكاندا رهنگيان داوه ته وه. ئامنج له م به راوردكاريه ئه وه يه نيشان بدرئيت كه چؤن، وه بوچي، شانوكاني شكسپير دوو وينا ي جياوازي ماكيافيلي نيشان ده دن. بو ئاسانتر تيگه شتن له وينا جياوازه كان، به پيوست ده زانرئ له سه ره تاي توئزئينه وه كدا كورته يه ك بخريته روو له سهر چؤنيه تي گه شتتنى تيزه سياسيه كاني ماكيافيلي به ئينگلته را، هه روه ها وينا كردي گشتي ئه و نووسه ره له و ولاته له سه رده مي شكسپيردا.