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ENG 200

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A Courtier or a Prince:

Shakespeare's *Richard II* as a Dramatization of Conflicting

Paradigms of Political Craftsmanship

The character of Richard II in Shakespeare's historic tragedy with the same name initially appears as a strong man in total control of his destiny. He is described as royal, strong, and with a regal look and charisma. Initially, no one disputes his right to rule. This essay will discuss how Richard's insistence on maintaining of an outdated, feudal approach to governing, and his failure to adopt a Machiavellian paradigm leads to his downfall. In effect, Shakespeare's Richard's undoing is facilitated by his inability to absorb and practice in the cultural (con)text of the time, which required a dynamic reading and application of Machiavelli as well as Castiglione and Pico della Mirandola. Bolingbroke, in contrast, skillfully negotiates the roles of both courtier and prince, and is thus empowered to govern successfully. In fact, Bolingbroke emerges as a consummate Machiavellian prince, which enables him to seize a kingdom and hold on to it, for the benefit of his own heir and the Lancastrian dynasty in general, though he is not entirely able to escape the troubling interference of the mystification of power and kingship. With these parallel, and sometimes interwoven paradigms of power, *Richard II* can be read as a dramatic interpretation and amalgam of several Renaissance theories for conduct, behavior, and political strategy.¹

Comment [A1]: Introductory premises, etc.

Comment [A2]: Thesis statement

Comment [A3]: Further explanation of assumptions stated in the thesis

It has been a topic of much debate whether or not Shakespeare had the opportunity to read Machiavelli's writings. Scholars such as Martina Gessner and Leslie Freeman have argued with some certainty that Shakespeare knew Machiavelli's theories only through other sources.² One of the more widespread, and deliberately distorted, sources of Machiavellian ideology was Innocente Gentile's *Anti-Machiavel*, which contributed to a severely distorted idea of Machiavellian ideology in early modern England.³ Though Machiavelli used verifiable historical examples to illustrate his point, many Elizabethan readers found his ultra-realist study too sinister and too un-Christian to accept, though it is clear from Shakespeare's historical dramas (and countless other authors, as well as historiographers) that the very same methods had long been employed in English politics.⁴ Giuseppe Mazzotta has argued compellingly in his recent collection of essays, *Cosmopoiesis: The Renaissance Experiment*, that the Machiavellian construction of political authority is a not uncomplicated negotiation between power "as it really is" and power as a mystically endowed prerogative.⁵ Drawing from Mazzotta, with particular attention to Machiavelli's realist yet mystical view of power, this essay will probe the conflicting paradigms of authority represented by King Richard and Bolingbroke.

Comment [A4]: Proof supporting the thesis (What did Shakespeare know about Machiavelli?)

Comment [A5]: Outside source (secondary source) written by an expert in the field used to back up own assumptions.

In act I, scene i, Bolingbroke and Mowbray come before the king to settle the matter of Bolingbroke's accusation that Mowbray successfully plotted to kill the king's uncle Gloucester, and that he may do the same with Richard himself. The question here is not really to bring Gloucester's murderer to trial since all present know that the Richard himself is the one who instigated his uncle's murder. Rather, the problem is that insults have been uttered and must be reciprocated, while maintaining at least the semblance of justice. Mowbray is rendered unable to defend himself efficiently by claiming that he was *not* the one instigating Gloucester's murder, because Richard must naturally not be implicated. The situation is awkward. Overtly, they are

Comment [A6]: Textual source (primary source—the work that is being investigated) is introduced to illustrate claim.

engaging in a courtly ritual; two courtiers come before their sovereign to warn him of danger, and to settle their differences. Both profess affection and loyalty to Richard, who responds in the manner of a benign, objective prince. Richard has put Mowbray in a very difficult situation by engaging him for the murder of Gloucester, only to later leave him to fend for himself, and with Richard assuming the role of the impartial, sage ruler. In plotting against Gloucester, Richard has in fact enacted one of the difficult but necessary duties of the Machiavellian prince, that is, to dispose of opponents in the most efficient manner possible, even if they are close blood relatives. Mowbray, however, may not have been the most suitable person to assist Richard, since he is known to have attempted to assassinate John of Gaunt on an earlier occasion, and that the Lancasters therefore have double reason to suspect him. In short, Richard's very choice of accomplice is incriminating. Further, this public accusation makes it impossible for Richard to reward Mowbray as he deserves for his services, and to keep him close for monitoring and as a possible future ally. As a matter of course, Richard would have to act the impartial judge, but even later he makes no effort to assist Mowbray, but instead banishes him from England for life, hardly a fate to incite great devotion in future would-be aides, as a prince must always strive to appear to be a true friend to his supporters. Further, Machiavelli emphasizes that open support of a friend is better than neutrality, as it gains the prince a reputation for strength and loyalty.⁶

Instead, Richard chooses to maintain the illusion of a prince governed by the demands of chivalry, and decides that the opponents may settle the dispute in mortal combat. This will satisfy both parties' need for saving face (the culturally significant act of *fare una bella figura*), and at the same time rid him of either Bolingbroke or Mowbray, solutions that will work well from a Machiavellian point of view. In fact, so far Richard has contrived to balance chivalry and Machiavellian principles fairly well. He may have been forced to deny Mowbray the support he

Comment [A7]: Machiavellian theory introduced to demonstrate exactly why Richard's mistake is damaging (which is posited in the thesis).

deserved, but as Machiavelli ascertained, the prince is entirely justified in breaking a promise if needed:

[S]i vede per esperienza ne' nostri tempi quelli principi avere fatto gran cose che della fede hanno tenuto poco conto, e che hanno saputo con l'astuzia aggirare e cervelli delli uomini; e alla fine hanno superato quelli che si sono fondati in su la lealtà.⁷

Comment [A8]: Textual evidence introduced to demonstrate assumptions. All evidence included should serve to substantiate and prove the thesis statement.

In other words, Richard may be justified both in abandoning Mowbray and in allowing him the opportunity to redeem his honor in single combat. However, he immediately undoes this masterly strategic opportunity by interrupting the combat, deciding to personally pass judgment.

This is a great mistake for several reasons. Firstly, as Machiavelli ascertains, the prince should, in order to avoid accusations of favoritism and consequent hatred let the judging be carried out by a third party—entirely under his command—such as a court or parliamentary body.⁸

Comment [A9]: Indirect citation of primary text (paraphrase) serving to prove thesis.

A prudent prince avoids the hatred of the rich and powerful, but also of the people, who can be easily incited if the prince appears mercenary or prejudiced. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, in changing his mind and deciding to judge for himself, Richard displays lack of resolve and determination. It is crucial that the prince establishes a reputation for never changing his mind once it has been made up.

Contenendo [il principe] fa essere tenuto vario, leggieri, effeminato, pusillanime, irresoluto: da che uno principe di debbe guardare come uno scoglio, e ingegnarsi che nelle azioni sua si riconosca grandezza, animosità, gravità, fortezza; e circa e maneggi privati de' sudditi volere che la sua sentenza sia irrevocabile.⁹

Comment [A10]: More primary textual evidence.

Richard's violation of this advice turns out to be a serious mistake. It shows that the prince is no true friend or even ally of Mowbray's, and in addition, that he is weak-willed and emotional. To become Richard's ally must seem dangerous and counterproductive to his princely relatives and

other political operatives. For Bolingbroke, Richard's fatal *faux pas* in government provides sufficient reason and, as shall be discussed later, *justification* for revolt. Thirdly, when taking upon himself to personally pass judgment, Richard fails to extract a sufficiently damaging punishment. Though lifetime banishment may indeed seem harsh, it is far from crippling to an opponent who will leave the country with as much of his portable possessions and financial resources as he can carry. In fact, if the opponent feels emotionally violated by the separation from his native country, he certainly has nothing to lose by inciting rebellion. In short, the punishment may be harsh, but it is far from harsh enough and therefore is such that it "la [...] tema la vendetta."¹⁰

As if banishment was not enough of a reason to create hatred in both Richard's ally Mowbray and in his challenger Bolingbroke, the king proceeds to commit crucial mistakes in act II, scene i. John of Gaunt is dying, and his death is possibly hastened by the grief over his son's banishment. Immediately after his death, Richard declares that he is seizing all his uncle's property, "his plate, his goods, his money, and his lands," which rightfully belongs to the exiled Harry Bolingbroke.¹¹ His avarice is ill advised, especially considering that he not long before shortened Bolingbroke's banishment with four years. As far as Richard knows, Bolingbroke must be planning to return to England, and to then reclaim his property. Admittedly, as Richard is seizing his cousin's lands, Bolingbroke is in the process of instigating rebellion, but Richard is unaware of this and cannot claim this fact as an excuse. Richard's greed appears imprudent for several reasons. Firstly, it seems unchristian and callous to be reckoning up his uncle's estate while he still remains above ground unburied, and considering that Richard believes himself to be a monarch endowed with power directly from God, it is necessary to at least attempt to keep up appearances. Secondly, as Machiavelli clearly states in a chapter aptly entitled "In che modo

si abbia a fuggire lo essere sprezzato e odiato“ that “Odioso [il principe] fa, sopra tutto, come io dissi, lo essere rapace e usurpatore della roba e delle donne de’ sudditi: di che si debbe astenere”¹² and as quoted previously, “ingegnarsi che nelle azioni sua si riconosca grandezza, animosità, gravità, fortezza.”¹³ Richard, unfortunately, could not be further off the mark. His nobles react with disappointment and disgust, Northumberland pronouncing that “afore God, ‘tis shame such wrongs are borne / in him, a royal prince,”¹⁴ and Willoughby pronounces the king morally “bankrupt like a broken man”¹⁵ and he has lost every opportunity of defining himself in the public mind as a man of high reputation. This is far cry from the strategies of *Il Principe*, and Richard, who certainly is contemptible as a human being, is beginning to seem like a monumental political failure. In the span of one scene it is shown that Richard has alienated himself from the “commons” whom he has almost taxed to death, and has interfered with the nobles’ ancient privileges to manage their own grievances amongst themselves (and in addition, tried to capitalize on this tradition by fining them for various infractions). Machiavelli stresses numerous times the importance of gaining the people’s love, or at least not inciting their hatred, since the prince’s best insurance against conspiracies is the love of the people:

Ma, circa e sudditi, quando le cose di fuori non muovino, si ha a temere che non congiurino secretamente: di che il principe si assicura assai, fuggendo lo essere odiato o disprezzato, e tenendosi el populo satisfatto di lui; il che è necessario conseguire, come di sopra a lungo si disse.¹⁶

When it comes to the nobles, whose money he has been tapping into with his fine-based fundraising, Richard has shown remarkable lack of insight into the financial attitudes of the aristocracy. The prince should, “sopra tutto, astenersi dalla roba d'altri; perché li uomini sdimenticano più presto la morte del padre [like John of Gaunt] che la perdita del patrimonio”

Comment [A11]: Textual analysis, serving to explicate the situation.

Comment [A12]: More textual evidence supporting the thesis. Every single source used should serve to support the thesis. If it does not help proving the thesis it doesn't belong in the paper.

stresses Machiavelli.¹⁷ In short, Richard's actions are so counter-productive—according to a Machiavellian reading—that it seems clear that he is operating under a completely different paradigm which is outdated and probably also misinterpreted.

The notion of kings deriving their power directly from God, on the top rung of the Great chain of Being, was firmly established in Shakespeare's time, though political strategy manuals such as *Il Principe* certainly seem to indicate a shift towards more progressive methods of governing, and establishing and maintaining authority. Richard, however, is firmly convinced that he needs to please no one but God, from whom his authority emanates, and that “no hand of blood and bone / Can grip the sacred handle of our scepter, / *Unless* he do profane, steal, or usurp.” [emphasis mine]¹⁸ This statement fails to recognize that any Machiavellian pretender surely would have no qualms doing either or all of those. Further, Richard has complete faith in the weight and authority invested in his family heritage. He reigns by right of blood, being the grandson of the Edward III, and son of the famous Black Prince, or as Richard himself sum up his authority of lineage: “we were not born to sue, but to command,”¹⁹ However, Bolingbroke is Edward III's grandson himself, and by blood almost equally entitled to the crown, and, operating under a Machiavellian paradigm, not overly impressed by Richard's divinely invested kingship. The bold, and certainly arrogant claim “we were not born to sue, but to command” could be said to apply equally to Bolingbroke, and since Richard has put him in a position where he is not only exiled but also deprived of his inheritance, he is perfectly justified to make a bid for power. In addition, Bolingbroke is a man who has made the best of all resources available to him: his birth, ambition, political savvy, and people skills. **As Giovanni Pico della Mirandola asserted in his *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, arguably the manifesto of the Renaissance, man has the unique**

ability to define himself on the chain of being, thus destabilizing the more Platonic paradigm of The Divine Right of Kings.²⁰

O supreme generosity of God the Father, O highest and most marvelous felicity of man! To him it is granted to have whatever he chooses, to be whatever he wills! [...] On man when he came into life the Father conferred the seeds of all kinds and the germs of every way of life. Whatever seeds each man cultivates will grow to maturity and bear in him their own fruit.²¹

Comment [A13]: A new research source included to strengthen argument and demonstrate that previous research by other scholars seem to support the thesis of this paper.

Pico's celebration of the God-given self-fashioning powers of man offers a spiritual rationale, in addition to Machiavelli's political, for Bolingbroke's purpose. Indeed, it may be argued that Bolingbroke is simply bringing to fruition the possibilities of his "seeds of all kind" with his desire to rule. Machiavellian political theory, maintaining that for man it is "molto naturale et ordinaria desiderare di acquistare," intersects with Pico's seemingly conflicting *Oration*, which authorizes Bolingbroke to "have whatever he chooses, be whatever he wills."²²

However, when Richard and Bolingbroke meet at one last, albeit perfunctory, attempt at reconciliation in act III, iii, even Bolingbroke has difficulty in completely ignoring Richard's just claim to the crown. He oscillates between assertiveness and insecurity, and cannot refrain from speaking of Richard in terms of divine endowment:

See, see, King Richard doth himself appear,
As doth the blushing discontented sun
From out the fiery portal of the east
When he perceives the envious clouds are bent
To dim his glory [...] ²³

Comment [A14]: Direct textual quote from the primary text.

Bolingbroke cannot help noticing the visual qualities of Richard's kingly persona. He is compared to the sun, come out to burn off the offending clouds, rebels, who lack the eternal and brilliant qualities associated with a monarch. Richard appears truly regal to everyone around him. When comparing Richard to the sun, Bolingbroke is in fact channeling a rhetorical tradition in which kings are heliocentrically situated. Castiglione employed the very same metaphor when poeticizing the immobilized state of the Duke of Urbino, Guidobaldo di Montefeltro. In addition, solar metaphors also evoke the idea of a universe centered around a stationary king, who provides light and sustenance to the surrounding universe.²⁴

[C]osí come nel cielo il sole e la luna e le altre stelle mostrano al mondo, quasi come in specchio, una certa similitudine di Dio, cosí in terra molto piú simile imagine di Dio son que' bon príncipi che l'amano e reveriscono, e mostrano ai populi la splendida luce della sua giustizia, accompagnata da una ombra di quella ragione ed intelletto divino; e Dio con questi tali partecipa della *onestà, equità, giustizia e bontà* sua [...] ²⁵

[emphasis mine]

Comment [A15]: Another textual source included to demonstrate the solidity of own thesis.

Despite its heliocentrically aligned power structure, *Il Libro del Cortegiano* seems to underscore Machiavelli's assumption that the prince must embody certain key characteristics, all conflated in the concept of *virtù*.²⁶ Richard's apparent failure to project sufficient *virtù* renders him increasingly vulnerable to rebellion throughout the course of the play. In addition, due to the king's previous mistakes in establishing respect and fear in his subjects, Bolingbroke really cannot pass up making his bid for the crown.²⁷ A king who is weak and who is aware of the disrespect of his nobles must be prone to desperate or even cruel retaliation. Even if Bolingbroke could induce the king to pardon him for his treason—which Richard likely would do if given the opportunity—that solution could be only temporary. Despite his indecisiveness, Richard is after

Comment [A16]: Explanation of key term that would take up too much space in the body of the paper.

all a Renaissance politician. He has previously murdered his uncle Gloucester, banished his accessory Mowbray, and stripped his uncle Lancaster's estate over his dead body, all of which indicate that long-term forbearance and compassion are unlikely.

When Richard finally is pressured into giving up his kingship, and to defer to Bolingbroke, he is able to utilize the rituals associated with his own kingship, that is, divinely endowed stewardship, to discredit Bolingbroke. In a gesture of defiance he takes charge of his own decoronation, seizes the crown and hands it to Bolingbroke. The act is intended to undermine the symbolic authority invested in the new king. Richard, being close to God on the Great Chain of Being, personally cedes to the new king, but also underscores the fact that Bolingbroke is *not* given his crown by *God*, as Richard believes himself to have been endowed. Further, power invested in someone by God is not to be discarded at will, and so the decoronation/coronation move is one of irony and defiance. He then proceeds to parody the anointment aspect of the coronation ritual, each line beginning with "With mine" rather than with the prayer following anointment of the coronation liturgy, which clearly assigns this authority to God:

O Lord and heavenly Father,

the *exalter of the humble* and the strength of thy chosen,

who by anointing with Oil *didst* of old

make and consecrate *kings, priests, and prophets*.²⁸

[emphasis mine]

Comment [A17]: Another secondary source which serves to illustrate the validity of the thesis of this essay.

However, Richard's emotional display of bravado is contrasted with the secular, legalistic, and politically charged document, detailing all his offences (real or fabricated), which he is ordered to read aloud in public to justify Bolingbroke's rebellion against his rightful king. Bolingbroke has seized upon an important insight into the methods of the career prince. Machiavelli maintains that a born prince does not need to do much to maintain his power, only make sure that he does

not upset status quo. Very likely this will be enough to keep him in power. However, a prince who has come into power by other means, such as Bolingbroke, must constantly appear justified in whatever harsh measures he takes. If you dethrone a king ruling by God's grace, you have to justify that action by showing that (a) he had forfeited divine grace by his own actions and (b) that your rebellion was caused only by your desire to correct serious flaws in the government of the state. By having Richard publicly confess his crimes Bolingbroke accomplishes both, and in addition, sets the stage for eventually neutralizing Richard completely. Richard's defiant upstaging of Bolingbroke at the decoronation ceremony indicates that he has grasped a fundamental, symbolic flaw in Bolingbroke's rationalizing for his *coup*. Significantly, Bolingbroke cannot accomplish his dethroning of Richard without resorting to the type of rituals normally employed to validate the concept of power as a spiritually endowed quality, and at which Richard excels.²⁹ The decoronation ceremony and Richard's forced public confession are a reversal of the rituals used to symbolize and concretely manifest divinely conferred power, but they are *rituals* just the same. The public display of power, then, seems to necessitate a ritual manifestation, which is utterly at odds with a utilitarian characterization of power, but quite consistent with a numinous or spiritually endowed basis for kingship.³⁰ The very inclusion of a ritual decoronation does in itself pose a problem with Bolingbroke's Machiavellian ethos. He already looks and behaves like a prince—he always has—but despite this he is unable to assume the throne officially without inclusion of decoronation/coronation ceremonies which in themselves serve to frame and endorse power as a sacred privilege, a theory he has rejected both theoretically and practically with his bid for the crown. In addition, Richard's self-decoronation underscores the ambivalent nature of power as an essentially tragic quality. Implicit in any coronation is that the crowned prince can now be dethroned. Power as an idea cannot be defined

Comment [A18]: Textual analysis/explication for supporting purposes.

without defining the lack of it, and possibly the loss thereof. As Bolingbroke goes on to become King Henry IV in the tragedy with the same name, Shakespeare underwrites the Machiavellian principles of politics as intrinsically tragic.³¹ The inclusion of the dramatic decoronation scene underscores the complexity of the contending ethoi of power and hierarchy included in this tragedy.

Once dethroned, Richard experiences an acute identity crisis. He has thought of himself, and equated his own self with the persona of the monarch since age ten. However, at this point it becomes somewhat easier to discern the courtier in Richard. As king, he has naturally had less use for these talents, in which lies the source of his primary pathos—courage, faith, honesty, brilliance—all conflated into one behavioral model by Castiglione as *sprezzatura*. Though Richard appears weak and unskilled compared to the forceful and ruthless Bolingbroke, he emerges as a character in greater essence once his “over-sized” regalia are taken away from him.

Comment [A19]: Further reference to already introduced researched evidence.

In act V, v Richard reminisces about the events that led to his downfall. His rambling mind is disturbed by music played somewhere close, but he believes that the music played was intended to please him, and is perhaps a sign of love:

Yet blessing on his heart who gives it [the music] me,

For 'tis a sign of love, and love to Richard

Is a strange brooch in this all-hating world.³²

Comment [A20]: More textual evidence from the primary text.

The sad irony is that Richard truly desired his subjects' and relatives' love. When Bolingbroke offered to yield to him on bended knee, Richard responded that he “rather had, my heart might feel your love.”³³ This desire, founded on ideas of kingship that included roles of fatherhood and a pastoral function, as well as a feudal structure where subjects pay homage to their ruler, and in return he lets his munificence reflect back on them, very much like the sun metaphor. In fact,

Castiglione's ideal courtier should love his master over everything else, and always be vigilant over the master's well-being. In return, the master will reward him with love and recognition.³⁴ From Richard's point of view, this exchange of appropriate emotion and homage has not been fulfilled, and he cannot understand where he failed (he is conveniently forgetting about banishing Mowbray). Richard's desire to be loved by his subjects is certainly human enough, but as it is not tempered with an appropriate amount of respect, or as Machiavelli puts it, "fear," the personal affection displayed by the few individuals who do love him is akin to pity rather than respect. Richard mistakenly equals "love" and "respect," two emotions desired by Machiavelli's prince, but entirely opposite. Further, if the prince cannot earn both love and respect from the people, cultivating fear is wiser:

Nasce da questo una disputa: s'elli è meglio essere amato che temuto, o e converso. Rispondesi che si vorrebbe essere l'uno e l'altro; ma perché gli è difficile accozzarli insieme, è molto più sicuro essere temuto che amato, quando si abbia a mancare dell'uno de' dua.³⁵

Comment [A21]: Textual evidence from Machiavelli.

Bolingbroke does not, as stated before, have any difficulties gaining the love of the people and his friends. He is easy-going and dashing, which has earned him the love of the masses, and when the time comes for rebellion he displays all the ruthlessness and astuteness needed to dethrone his cousin, despite the fact that he professes personal affection for Richard. For Richard, it is impossible to understand how Bolingbroke can love him but not respect him, not realizing that the very qualities that have rendered him likeable—forgiveness, gentility, softness—have also been his own downfall.

In a very minor way Richard does experience a fulfilling courtier-prince relationship with the groom in his jail at Pomfret, who wants to remain and fight with Richard when Exton arrives

to assassinate him. Richard then assumes the role of the caring, paternal prince and sends the groom out of the room to save his life, again in the name of love: “If thou love me, ‘tis time thou wert away,” and bravely faces his murderers alone in one last show of grace under fire.³⁶ Exton, after having killed Richard, is forced to admit him “As full of valour as of royal blood,” in a final acknowledgement of Richard’s, possibly unsatisfactory but certainly genuine, princely qualities.

In conclusion, *Richard II* dramatizes contemporary theories of kingship and politics, using the character of Richard II as a representation of a ruler who bases his authority on traditional values of family, blood, and divine stewardship, but who fails due to his inability to absorb and apply a more utilitarian approach to power which to a great extent discounted or circumvented traditional Christian values. Machiavellian ideals of authority, the vigorous ideological stepchild of humanism, ultimately come to permeate politics, both theoretically and practically. Richard’s failure, then, consists in his inability to sufficiently develop and apply skills of *virtù* to compensate for overwhelming external circumstances; in the shape of his cousin Bolingbroke’s masterly execution and relentless application of politically progressive strategies, Richard faced an insurmountable obstacle. While Bolingbroke skillfully glosses his utilitarian approach with traditionally popular elements—his “common touch” combined with his understanding of civic ritual and authorized by humanist ideals of man as a self-realizing creature—Shakespeare presents a Richard who erroneously adheres to a more idealized, and fatally misinterpreted, political paradigm which is insufficient to conquer the devastating peripheral conditions of his reign.

Comment [A22]: Concluding paragraph/recap of salient points leading up to a successfully supported thesis.

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¹ All quotations from *Richard II* refer to *The Norton Shakespeare*, Ed. Stephen Greenblatt, (Oxford: The Norton Co, 1997)

² Freeman, Leslie, "Shakespeare's Kings and Machiavelli's Prince," *Shakespeare Encomium 1964*, p. 24

³ Gentillet, Innocent, *Anti-Machiavel. Discours sur les moyens de bien gouverner et maintenir en bonne paix un royaume ou autre principauté*, (Genève: Droz, 1968), passim.

⁴ Freeman, p. 24

⁵ Mazzotta, Giuseppe. *Cosmopoiesis: The Renaissance Experiment*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 28

⁶ Machiavelli, Niccolò., *Il Principe e pagine dei Discorsi e delle Istorie*, (Firenze: Sansoni, 1967), capitolo XXI, p. 175

⁷ *Ibid.*, capitolo XVIII, p. 144

⁸ *Ibid.*, capitolo XIX, p. 150-151

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 151

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, capitolo III, p. 49

¹¹ *Richard II*, Act II, I, line 211

¹² Machiavelli, capitolo XIX, p. 150

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Richard II*, Act II, i, line 239-240

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, line 258

¹⁶ Machiavelli, capitolo 19, p. 151-152

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, capitolo 17, p. 141

¹⁸ *Richard II*, III, iii, line 78-80

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, I, ii, line 196

²⁰ Pico della Mirandola, Giovanni, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*. Ed. Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oscar Kristeller, et al. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 2, passim.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2

²² Though Pico's and Machiavelli's views of the nature of man differ radically; Pico emphasizing the ability of man for self-improvement, and Machiavelli instead the natural ambition of man to conquer, in this case the two viewpoints intersect. Shakespeare's Bolingbroke is beyond a doubt ambitious, but he is also a man whose political and aristocratic potential has not yet been fulfilled, and who therefore strives to be all that his family heritage, history, and political realities need him to be.

²³ *Richard II.*, III, iii, line 61-65

²⁴ Falvo, Joseph D., "Urbino and the Apotheosis of Power" *MLN*, (101) 1, p. 142

²⁵ Castiglione, Baldassarro, *Il libro del Cortegiano*, (Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1965), capitolo XXII

²⁶ As there seems to be no precise translation of Machiavelli's term "*virtù*" I will use the Italian throughout this essay when referring to specific characteristics of the prince, related to "faith, humanity, integrity, and religion" (chapter 18, p. 109), and in general to the ability to counteract misfortune (often seen as a fickle woman) with a combination of strategic moves related to the projection of the complete and convincing application of these values (above) to the state in general. *Virtù* must always be at the essence of everything the prince says or appears to do (though not at all necessarily what he means and actually does).

²⁷ Actually, Bolingbroke's desire to seize power is quite natural. "È cosa veramente molto naturale et ordinaria desiderare di acquistare; e sempre, quando li uomini lo fanno che possano, saranno laudati, o non biasimati; ma, quando non possono, e vogliono farlo in ogni modo, qui è l'errore et il biasimo." exhorts Machiavelli. Thus, from this point of view there is nothing wrong with attempting to oust a prince—only to fail to do so due to misestimating of one's own capabilities. (*Il Principe*, capitolo 3, p. 57)

²⁸ Kershaw, Simon, (ed.), "The Form and Order of Service that is to be performed and the Ceremonies that are to be observed in The Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in the Abbey Church of St. Peter, Westminster, on Tuesday, the second day of June, 1953" 1662 version, <<http://www.oremus.org/liturgy/coronation/>>

²⁹ Giuseppe Mazzotta's chapter "Ariosto and Machiavelli" in *Cosmopoiesis* elucidates this dilemma with much insight. Princely power, based on the deceptive powers of the fox and the forceful persona of the lion, necessitates ritual in order to render itself entirely visible and symbolically articulated. This dependency on mythical representation of power effectively blurs the line between "real-life politics" and the dramatic rhetoric of divinely

endowed kingship (p. 30-31). In addition, as Act V, ii indicates, *Richard II* is a tragedy which is much concerned with how this ritual admission compromises the Machiavellian ethos under which Bolingbroke, and in extension Renaissance politicians in general, operate.

³⁰ Mazzotta, *passim*.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31

³² *Richard II*, act V, v, line 64-66

³³ *Ibid.*, Act III, iv, line 190

³⁴ Castiglione, Book 2nd, p. 80

³⁵ Machiavelli, capitolo XVII, p. 139

³⁶ *Richard II*, act V, v, line 96