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A Machiavellian Analysis Of Shakespeare's Villians

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SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

A MACHIAVELLIAN ANALYSIS OF SHAKESPEARE'S VILLAINS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF

THE MASTERS OF ARTS DEGREE

BY

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To Samantha and Bosco



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PREFACE

This effort will hope to investigate some of the concepts involved in Shakespeare's use of the character technique known as the "Machiavel". I will delve into characters such as: **Richard (Gloucester), Iago, Aaron, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, Edmund, Shylock, Claudius, Cassius, and Don John**, in an attempt to determine whether the aforementioned fit into the "Machiavellian" mold, and, if they do, ascertain the specifics of their evil natures.

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INTRODUCTION

So as to create a barometer by which all of the characters to be discussed are measured for their "Machiavellian" tendencies, the following definition shall be used:

A villainous but humorous character; a sly character who loves evil for its own sake; one who has the habit of commenting on his own activities in humorous soliloquies, treachery to his own allies, a tendency to lewdness, and a cynical contempt for goodness and religion. (Boyce 395)

It is also important to add that the Machiavel must be willing to stop at nothing to attain the throne. "Machiavelli learned that princes and states were guided by expediency and selfish interests without regard to moral principles" (Lucas 342).

Being the great historian, Shakespeare realized that for his plays involving "great" leaders, he needed to use Machiavelli's model for both the leader's great rise, as well as his great fall. Machiavelli outlined a specific plan by which all leaders should organize their rule. Lucas goes on to explain:

Men at first lived like animals, hostile to each other, but soon chose leaders for protection. A wise ruler or legislator was named, and, as he transmitted his power to his heirs, monarchies were established. Mankind, however, is

selfish and certain to abuse its power, and the monarch degenerated to a tyrant. People then expelled the tyrant. To save themselves, people expelled the tyrants. The people then tried to start a democracy, which was then overthrown by demagogues. (343)

CHAPTER ONE

Richard of Gloucester

It is important to begin an analysis of Machiavellian characters with perhaps the one with so much development: Richard is an integral component of no less than three full history plays. His development in these three plays provides many examples of his Machiavellian ways.

Richard is described in *2 Henry VI* as deformed, bloodthirsty, and audacious (Pearlman 412). In V. i. 157-8, Clifford calls Richard a: "heap of wrath, foul indigested lump, / As crooked in thy manners as in thy shapel" Richard's character here is simple: He is a revolting man in a perpetual state of revolt. He is a young man of few words: "And if words will not..." (V. i. 139), and one who would rather hack his way around: "...then our weapons shall" (V. i. 139-40). Richard's Machiavellian development is enhanced slightly at the end of this play when he kills Somerset and says: "Priests pray for enemies, but princes kill" (V. iii. 71). Here, Richard gives the reader a hint as to his beliefs regarding how to properly run a government: Kill your enemies, for then and only then will one be able to achieve true Machiavellian greatness.

In *3 Henry VI*, Richard's progress toward that precipice of evil continues when he "outdoes" his brothers by presenting the head of the

Earl of Salisbury as a war prize for his father, the Duke of York. His speech is still rather primitive: "Speak thou for me and tell them what I did" (I. i. 16). To be a true Machiavel, one must be great both in speech and in deed. Richard seemingly is the latter, not quite the former. "The bloodthirsty and primitive Richard who brings the decapitated head on onstage to mock his enemies is as yet far wide of the devious, indirect, ambitious, and self-conscious figure he will soon become" (Pearlman 412).

That time begins to manifest itself in the advice he give to his father in I. ii. 22-34:

This speech divides into three sections, each different in diction and tone. The colorless language of the first six lines does not distinguish Richard. These lines reflect neither the simple brutality of Richard, nor the complexity he will eventually require. The second section is set at lines six through ten. For this Richard the throne is no longer a political target, but a transcendent aim. The final three lines of the speech reveals the impatient and fierce Richard who is eager to dye a white rose in warm blood. (Pearlman 413)

In those lines, Richard proves that he is coming to the fore in terms of his progress toward Machiavellianism. His speech is complex and worthy of

one who has the crown on his mind for not only his father, but also for himself.

For the remainder of Act Two, Richard continues his quest for revenge, revenge for his father's and his brother's deaths, all the while only giving slight hints as to his future endeavors and desires. The turning point for Richard comes in III. ii., when he is spying on Edward wooing Lady Anne. Here, Richard shows, for the first time, a bit of the humor required for Machiavellian greatness: "Fight closer or, good faith, you'll catch a blow" (23). That scene ends with a seventy-one line soliloquy that gives new vitality to this blood-thirsty warrior. This will be a different Richard, one who will not, "make my heaven in a lady's lap, and deck my body with gay ornaments" (148-9), foreshadowing later thoughts on the subject of romantic love. Since he cannot perceive the world as anything but "hell", he will, "make his heaven to dream upon the crown" (168-70). He will become one who can, "smile and murder whiles I smile" (182); one who can, "frame my face for all occasions" (185); and one who can, "set the murderous Machiavel to school" (193). "The Richard who emerges intends to employ his consummate skill at disguise and pretense to overcome every obstacle" (Pearlman 418).

Richard's dialogue with King Henry in the Tower of London (V. vi.) is worthy of some analysis. When King Henry, obviously realizing that these

are his last moments, begins to rail and to insult Richard, it is Richard who gets the upper hand. He gets the upper hand not just physically, but semantically, too. In lines 31-4, Henry asks Richard if he has killed Henry's son. Richard, in true Machiavellian form replies, "Thy son I kill'd for his presumption" (34).

Following that remark, King Henry makes his prophesy that all those who come in contact with Richard shall, "...rue the hour that ever thou wast born" (43). Henry then starts into insulting his family lineage, especially his mother and how she gave birth to this hideous monster:

Thy mother felt more than a mother's pain, And yet brought
 forth less than a mother's hope, To wit, an indigest deformed
 lump, ... teeth hadst thou in thy head when thou wast born,
 To signify thou cam'st to bite the world;... (49-51; 53-4)

What Henry's speech does for Richard is accomplish two important goals: First, it accomplishes the goal for which he went to the Tower in the first place. The speech enrages Richard such that Henry cannot even finish it as Richard kills him while Henry is still speaking in line 56. Second, and more important, it provides Richard, indirectly, with more salient information about himself, as identified by lines 68-93. Here, the reader is exposed to the great Machiavellian mind at work. When Richard says in line 68, "I that have neither pity, love, or fear...", he has reached the point

of Machiavellianism in that he has become the emotionless tyrant who is ideally suited to run the state, according to Machiavelli.

This speech is also worth noting for a few reasons. First, he gives evidence of his physical deformities (78-9). Second, it gives rise to Richard's autonomy (80; 83). Third, it foreshadows Richard's plans for the throne, and in the process, both Edward's and Clarence's demises (84-8).

In *Richard the Third*, the reader notices that Richard picks up where he left off in the previous play when, in the opening soliloquy, he basically repeats his intentions for the throne. Richard continues to use his deformities as a motivation for the crown, and at the same time, he uses those "abnormal" features to attack and to patronize those with "normal" features. Those sportive tricks (13) are not only sinful in Richard's eyes, but they are also part of the problem in running an effective Machiavellian government. A leader must be always at the ready to defend and to attack all who would mean to disrupt a war with peace. Therefore, Richard's comment in lines 10-14 comparing a world of war, a world that Richard would much rather see, to that of a world of peace and "merry meetings", lends credence to Richard's Machiavellianism.

The next scene of importance with regard to Richard's Machiavellian development is the scene involving Lady Anne (I. ii.). Richard enters this scene having already disposed of Clarence, and he is now ready for the

ascent to the throne. As he sees Lady Anne, he interestingly conjures images of Saint Paul (37). This line, as well as the entire scene, is significant because it provides a dichotomy in terms of Richard's direction as a Machiavel. That line, it is generally believed, causes his fall from greatness, based on two important factors. First, Richard's background provides no evidence of a relationship to God and religion. A Machiavel cannot possess a dependence on a God in order to achieve success. The iron hand must be the ruling guide. Second, Richard, almost immediately after he condemns those who participate in "sportive tricks", is now wooing a woman. Yes, there is the need for the prospective king to have a queen, but there is work to be done, work that is temporarily avoided by Richard in this scene. Still, Richard proves to be Machiavellian in his wooing of Lady Anne. He continues to heap praise on her (albeit vulgar), while she has little or no retort, sans cursing. Richard, at least at this moment, is no equal. "Richard is superb in one-on-one situations. His soliloquy and earliest dialogue are masterpieces of personal, colloquial rhetoric, full of energy, wit, and inspiration" (Hassel 60). This heated exchange shows Richard in potentially his finest hour. He is in complete control of the moment as he skillfully shifts Lady Anne's focus from his physical grotesqueness (not to mention the fact that he killed her husband in the previous play) to his verbal superiority. As the

scene progresses, Lady Anne is slowly falling under Richard's spell. His verbal skills become too much for her, as she runs out of words in line 143:

Using language passionately and above all, consciously, characters return again and again to the problems of expression, particularly in their search for epithets sufficiently monstrous to describe Richard. Sometimes language is declared to be inadequate and Lady Anne, as if to transcend speech, stops Richard's seduction words by spitting... (MacDonald 466)

The spitting, of course, does little to deter Richard's wooing. Richard is in such control that he succeeds in two areas. First, he "invites" Lady Anne into his "world" of killing by offering to have her kill him (175-8). Second, after she cannot kill him, he is successful in putting a ring on her finger (201). The scene ends with Richard's famous soliloquy ("Was ever a woman in this humor wooed?"), which provides two seemingly opposite ideas. One, in line 229, he says that he will have Lady Anne, but "not keep her long", indicating that his Machiavellian tendencies of torturing someone and enjoying it are very much intact. Two, perhaps as a result of his successful wooing of Anne, he has come to "love" his physical self more (255-9), lending affirmation that he may be losing focus in his still

unfulfilled quest for the throne, thus losing part of his Machiavellian status. Shakespeare's complex development of Richard is obviously at its height in the early stages of *Richard III*.

It is not until Richard is crowned king that one begins to see his skills diminishing. Boyce reveals that when Richard tries to ask the permission of Queen Elizabeth to marry her daughter, it reminds one of the scene early in the play where Richard succeeds in wooing Lady Anne (546). This new and lesser Richard is shown in IV. iv. 291-8, where Richard, "apologizes for his deeds, whereas with Anne he boldly attributed them to his love" (Boyce 546).

Another point of decline can be made in earlier in IV. iv., when King Richard enters the scene and is immediately harassed by both Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of York. Richard no longer dominates the situation, and, in fact, acts much like Lady Anne when he was trying to woo her:

A flourish, trumpets! strike alarum, drums! Let not heaven's
hear these tell tale women Rail on the Lord's anointed.

Strike I say! Either be patient and entreat me fair, Or with
the clamorous report of war Thus will I drown your
exclamations. (148-54)

A leader who calls not for war, but for the "sounds" of war is a leader

who has obviously begun to lose control of his kingdom. Richard's language is simple, frightful, and hardly Machiavellian. He is at the mercy of the other characters, lesser characters at that, in the entire scene, something unheard of before this time.

Another scene in the play deserving of attention is the memorable scene involving Richard's dealing with the ghosts (V. iii.). Richard is haunted by various ghosts of those whom he has killed. His reaction upon coming out of the dream provides an interesting commentary on his rapid loss of control over his kingdom. His "coward conscience" is deeply affecting him, affecting him to the point of not realizing what, or who, he is. When he says, in lines 192-200, that his conscience condemns him for being a villain, Richard has succumbed to the pressures of being the most hated man of his own kingdom, a true Machiavel. All the good that came from being a villain and, "hating the idle pleasures of these days" has, for all intents and purposes, gone away. He is one who all of a sudden is concerned that, "no soul will pity me" (202). This reversal is the first of a two-part end of Richard as a Machiavel.

The second part of the demise of Richard is the physical and verbal confrontation with Richmond. Hassel contends that because Richard is without God or anyone else, he is no match for Richmond, who possesses a deep faith (55-6). Richard no longer has the ability to speak on a noble

scale, that of a great leader, unlike Richmond:

Then if your fight against God's enemy, God will in justice
ward you as his soldiers; If you do swear to put a tyrant
down, You sleep in peace, the tyrant being slain;... (V. iii. 255-
7)

These are noble rewards about which Richmond speaks. Richard's oratory to his army, by contrast, is vile and "old Richard" in its language as shown in lines 317-8, "A vile... vomits forth...". Hassel asserts that because he "is himself alone, his language is limited to the condition of his being, while Richmond is more eloquent because he has God, family, and is not alone. Style and being are one" (60).

Richmond, at least on this day, must win because of his goodness. He, according to Machiavellianism, will surely fail because of his good intentions. In Richard, however, Shakespeare created a "villain who could dominate the stage with his demonism, psychological coherence, and brilliance of language" (Pearlman 429).

CHAPTER TWO

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth

For obvious reasons, it is important to organize the above characters, albeit married, as two singular and unique people. One's actions and words (Lady Macbeth's) dictate the other's, at least in the initial stages of the play, a point which becomes the reverse during the latter scenes of the play.

First, however, one must analyze the events that lead to Macbeth's (also, Lady Macbeth's) rise and fall. As is commonly known, Macbeth has the good fortune of being under the reign of King Duncan, a just and worthy ruler. Of course, with respect to Machiavellianism, Duncan is less than superior. "Measured by Christian values, Duncan's behavior is impeccable. By Machiavellian standards, it is a menace to himself and to his people" (Riebling 274). Duncan's downfall possibly begins with the naming of Macbeth with the Thane of Cawdor in I. ii., especially when one considers that the witches are craving a meeting with him. The other consideration here is actually earlier than that episode, wherein Duncan admits that he entrusted the Thane of Cawdor, "He was a gentleman on whom I built / An absolute trust" (I. iv. 14-5). It is quickly apparent that Duncan is not a terribly good judge of character, although he himself is referred to as

someone to emulate. Duncan, because of his natural goodness, cannot see the evil around him. He then, as previously mentioned, doubles his mistake by awarding Macbeth the Thane of Cawdor, an act, at least for the moment, that seems benign:

Duncan, however admirable a man, is by Machiavellian standards a dangerous king- a ruler whose gentle and trusting character has invited treason, civil war, and foreign invasion. By being a perfect Christian, Duncan succeeds in being the perfect lamb- a sacrificial offering on the altar of real-world politics. (Riebling 276)

Obviously, the next significant step in Macbeth's Machiavellian development is the scene involving the three witches. Here, in I. iii., Macbeth is at once a true subordinate, a loyal soldier to Duncan; and he is also on the cusp of greatness, according to the witches. Macbeth is at this point a deeply confused man, and it is interesting to note his speech in the lines after he is informed that he is indeed the Thane of Cawdor. First, he feels a swell of forthcoming glory, "Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor! / The greatest is behind" (I. iii. 116-7). The statement has the makings of Machiavellianism, yet it is not backed by sufficient action. Rather, it is followed by aside after aside, a structure that in itself is not terribly worthy of a Machiavel. Perhaps a Machiavel would, at this point, act

immediately on these prophecies. Macbeth is not quite ready for this action, as is shown in lines 142-3, where he expresses a theme that will continue throughout the rest of the play, "If chance will have me king, why, / chance may crown me / Without my stir". There must be something, or someone, who will have to convince him to act, not merely rely on chance to make him king. He begins to move toward action when in I. iv., he is told that Malcolm will become the heir to the throne. Macbeth, now on stage, says in yet another aside, "The Prince of Cumberland! that is a step / On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap, / For in my way it lies" (48-50). Here, Macbeth again falls short of the Machiavellian way of getting power, but at least he is thinking that he will have to act on his desires, eventually. He simply needs a little prodding, a little help.

That help comes in the form of his loving wife, Lady Macbeth. It is she who, while reading the letter sent from Macbeth, cleverly begins to design a plan for not only her husband, but also her own aspirations for the throne. This scene, along with Act Two that follows, gives the reader that turning point as to who the psychological leader will be in the process of usurping the king. Lady Macbeth succeeds in two things while learning of her husband's new title. First, she affirms that which the reader already knows: Macbeth will not be able to complete this monumental task alone.

Second, she consistently shows her Machiavellian tendencies when she says, "Come you spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts and unsex me here, / And fill me from the crown to the toe topful/ Of direst cruelty" (I. v. 40-3). This desire to be unsexed, to be transformed into an evil man, is at the heart of Machiavellianism. She is one who will sacrifice everything to become queen, including her autonomy.

Lady Macbeth then approaches her husband, who has just returned from battle, with her passion for the job to be done, and to be done immediately. She instructs him, in true Machiavellian terms, to:

beguile the time, Look like the time; bear welcome in your
eye, Your hand, your tongue; look like th' innocent flower,
But be the serpent under't. (I. v. 63-6)

It (the task) is now in Macbeth's hands, and in I. vii., he again falls into the man who is not at all ready to be king. In his most important soliloquy of the act, he continues earlier apprehensions for the crown. His concerns about the "double trust" Duncan has placed in his top soldier, again do not allow him to that for which he has been destined, albeit by three witches. It is at this point that Shakespeare continues the great duality between the two characters as Lady Macbeth enters saying, "Art thou afeard / To be the same in thine own act and valor / As thou art in desire" (39-41). Lady Macbeth is always taking the advantage, always

looking for the opportunity to take the throne, even so willing as to forsake her own gender to be considered royalty, a point brought up again in lines 54-9. The antithesis is Macbeth, a man in a seemingly no-win situation; a man who is torn by three wholly different forces: The supernatural (not to mention omniscient) witches, his loving wife who obviously wants the best for him (one would think), and his own conscience which is trying to have him weigh all of the options before his life changes forever. The Machiavel does not relish the last thought; the crown is the sole objective. Carrying that point further, a Machiavel would not even allow the advice of his wife to sway him in any way. Regardless, the end of the Act One continues to depict Lady Macbeth in her role as supervisor of this horrible act, while Macbeth searches for the words and the deeds to become what he wants to be. He says, in the last two lines of the act, "Away, and mock the time with fairest show: / False face must hide what the false heart doth know" (81-2), giving the reader perhaps a signal that he will perform as he (and his wife) would like, like a Machiavel.

Act Two brings on the death of Duncan, and with it some interesting problems for the two conspirators. First, for Macbeth, the speech, "Is this a dagger which I see before me...", provides further insight into the torment Macbeth endures, torture that should not impede the Machiavel.

Yet, it can be said that those torments, and the dagger, compel Macbeth to act, "...That summons thee [Duncan] to heaven or to hell" (II. i. 64). Those torments continue in II. ii. as Macbeth, upon killing Duncan, cannot pray with the two guards, whom he was supposed to have killed anyway. This inability to pray has no place in the quest of the Machiavel, for the Machiavel should believe that God is on his side in his plan for the throne. Second, Lady Macbeth, acting as the Machiavel, must do what her confused husband could not- finish the job, "My hands are of your color; but I shame / To wear a heart so white" (II. i. 61-2).

Again, Lady Macbeth is taking charge of the situation, with her husband barely in tow. The act ends with two major events in which one would figure Macbeth would find great solace: Macbeth is crowned king of Scotland, and that Malcolm and Donalbain have fled, leading most to believe that they are the murderers. Macbeth has, with the utmost help from Lady Macbeth, become all that the Machiavels desire- King. It is now up to him (and her) to maintain the perception that all rulers must rule feeling that they are the hunted, and that all others are conspirators.

Act Three provides the reader with Macbeth's initial transformation into the Machiavel. He cleverly lures Banquo into having dinner with him, but hires three murderers to kill him and Fleance, his son. Macbeth speech just prior to the murders has Machiavellian potential:

If it'd be so, For Banquo's issue have I fil'd my mind, For
 them the gracious Duncan have I murther'd, Put rancors in the
 vessel of my peace Only for them, and mine eternal jewel
 Given to the common enemy of man,... the seeds of Banquo's
 kings! (III. i. 63-9)

Macbeth's budding Machiavellianism continues later in the scene when he skillfully convinces the murderers that Banquo was involved in Duncan's death, and therefore must die. Yet, Macbeth assures the men that he cannot do the deed himself, "...yet I must not, / For certain friends that are both his and mine, / Whose loves that I may not drop, but wall his fall, / Who I myself struck down" (III. i. 119-22). In essence, the devil has many hands to do his work.

As soon as Macbeth appears to have come to the fore of being a ruler worthy of Machiavelli, he resorts to his old, confused, and hesitant ways when at his banquet, he learns that Fleance has escaped. For a moment, Macbeth seems genuinely concerned (III. iv. 20), but soon assumes a rather confident attitude that none can overcome him (28-31). This attitude changes with the coming of Banquo's ghost. Macbeth's seemingly relentless inner turmoil resurfaces to the point where Lady Macbeth must cancel the party. Macbeth, however, reassures her by saying, "It will have blood, they say; blood will have blood" (121). He also adds that he will

seek the aid of the "weird sisters" in an attempt to figure out what he should do next. Perhaps the simple act of asking outside influences for assistance *while* being king is non-Machiavellian, but at least Macbeth has gone as far as to begin the process of exploring his evil nature.

Of course, Macbeth's meeting with the witches and apparitions in Act Four provides Macbeth with the confidence needed to complete the task of eliminating those who stand in his path as king, primary of which being Macduff. Macbeth's brutal slaying of Macduff's family, albeit without Macduff, is a prime example of Machiavellian evil. There is no need to slaughter the whole family, but Macbeth has now gone to another level of villainy.

While Macbeth seems to have found his place among the Machiavels, Lady Macbeth has taken a few steps back with what can only be described as an attack of conscience. She is seen, by the doctor and the gentlewoman, in a trance - like state making references to the various murders. Her "infected mind" has obviously gotten the best of her. Her potential for further evil has vanished. In fact, she is not heard from again, as she is reported dead in V. v. 16.

Macbeth, in the meantime, has the throne in good hands, or so it would seem. His attitude is such that none can harm him, a feeling that is at once Machiavellian, and at the same time potentially disastrous

militarily. For obvious reasons, it is Machiavellian because of Macbeth's reactions to all forthcoming invasions ("Geese, villain?"), and it is Machiavellian because it mirrors his wife's reactions to him in the earlier acts ("Canst thou minister to a mind diseas'd,"). Macbeth has become so callously Machiavellian that he has little or no remorse in hearing about wife's death in scene five. This attitude is also deadly militarily because of Macbeth's rather smug indifference at the potential for any usurpation. The question begs for the Machiavel as to why Macbeth did not send troops to England and Ireland to dispose of any possible rebels. Nonetheless, Macbeth seems extremely comfortable in his position, although some would argue that he should not be:

What Machiavelli would argue is that Macbeth's conversion comes too late for himself and for the kingdom. ... By murdering Duncan, and Duncan alone, Macbeth's worst fears come true. He unleashes a flood of events that so outrace his efforts at containment that he finally resorts to a reign of terror.

(Riebling 281)

That reign of terror comes to an abrupt end when the prophecies incredibly come true, proof that Macbeth has failed miserably in the eyes of the Machiavel, and as such, must be defeated and subsequently killed. One might argue in no different a manner than Duncan (Riebling 283).

CHAPTER THREE

Shylock

In order to properly analyze the degree to which Shylock is Machiavellian, one must first delve as to whether Shylock possesses royal aspirations. The answer to that question is a firm "no". Yet, his motives for revenge, and the ways in which he carries out that revenge, are indeed Machiavellian. He is, in the end, a man of misunderstood principles, principles that are out of touch with pro-Christian Venice.

In meeting Shylock for the first time in I. iii., one is immediately drawn to his primary focus in life: money, as evidenced by his first words, "Three thousand ducats, well". He then skillfully assures Bassanio that the bond will suffice in lines 15-26, and then cites his complete disgust at all Christians with his, "I will not eat with you,...", which is quickly followed by the man who gets to the depths of Shylock's soul, Antonio. It is Antonio who realizes Shylock villainy and potential Machiavellianism:

The Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose. An evil soul
producing holy witness is like a villain with a smiling
cheek, A goodly apple rotten at the heart. (I. iii. 96-9)

Shylock then explains the extent to which his hatred for all Christians, especially Antonio, is manifested in lines 104-27, wherein he also states

that he is more than ready to "help" Antonio and Bassanio. His Machiavellian psychology of luring Antonio into owing the Jew money, despite all of the alleged horrible things he has done to Shylock, presents an interesting question, at least economically. Shylock knows full well that Antonio's wealth is at the mercy of the ocean, but the question begs as to what if Antonio's ships come in safely, an equally likely prospect? The Machiavel answers that question with the ability to realize that if he can impart an ounce of trepidation in the potential victim, all the while seeming to be a victim himself, he can live with the equally possible hope of getting his prey after the ships sink in the ocean. Shylock carefully reminds the two men that he will profit little in getting Antonio's pound of flesh, an idea that plants undo confidence in the "victim", while the Machiavel appears not only rather fiscally incompetent, but also somewhat kind in helping the two men out of their dilemma.

Both men, Antonio and Shylock, claim that one has the upper hand on the other. The two men have a past and a general hatred for one another.

Bloom continues:

Shylock and Antonio are Jew and Christian, and they are at war as a result of their difference in faith. It is not that they misunderstand each other because of a long history of prejudice and that enlightenment could correct their hostility;

rather their real views of the world, their understanding of what is most important in life, are so opposed that they could never agree. (Bloom 17)

It is clear that Antonio and Shylock will forever be at odds, but Shylock is infinitely more capable of evil, evidenced by his rather gruesome request for Antonio's flesh. Shylock's soul resonates with the sounds of money. He wants to have the finer things in life, and does. When others need money, he preys on their need (Bloom 18). In this way, he is hardly worthy of being considered a Machiavel, beyond his calculating mind and sinister heart toward Christians. Shylock is a man who lives by the letter of the law. He, ironically, is also destroyed by the same rigidity of the law. He, like Richard, hates the pleasures of Christian life, as seen II. v. 31-38. He is a shrewd businessman who seems to care of little else. His daughter, Jessica, is left to do nothing more than to take care of his money and possessions. Even she revolts and succumbs to the pressures of being a Jew in a haven for Christians, as she converts to Christianity by running off with Lorenzo, as well as Shylock's money. Shylock's reaction to the loss is seen in III. i., where he calls his daughter "rebel", and as is his way, he blames the Christians, not specific people, for the damage done to his assets, which do not necessarily include Jessica! Shylock then issues his famous, "Hath not a Jew eyes" speech, wherein he discusses the value

of Old Testament religion over the soft, bleeding-hearted New Testament philosophy of people like Antonio and Bassanio. Later in that scene, Shylock completely renounces his daughter, "I would my daughter were dead at my foot" (84), further showing the depths of Shylock's principles.

Shylock's attempt to acquire Antonio's flesh is destroyed by that which he so desperately desires: justice. Justice shows itself in the form of Portia, whose level-headed thinking salvages a happy ending for all involved, except of course, Shylock, who is crushed under the force of not only Christian will, but also Christian justice.

Shylock, in the end, is not a Machiavel. He does little to help his cause to ensure that his desires for revenge are met. He did not, as a Machiavel would, sabotage Antonio's ships so as to guarantee the debt be paid in full. Yes, Shylock has evil motives and thoughts, and uses Machiavellian psychology to plant seeds in his potential victims, but he neglects to actively engage them for his advantage. He is destroyed by his own passivity.

CHAPTER FOUR

Don John

In first meeting Don John, one is immediately taken by his silence. It is a silence that is broken only by Leonato's welcoming him in I. i. 154. Don John's response is curt: "I thank you. I am not of many words, / but I thank you". He is considered, by name and by demeanor, an outsider; he is barely part of the opening scene, a scene where many a Machiavel have announced their place. Don John does not do that; he waits for the opportunity to feed on others' happiness and potential wedding bliss. It is Don John's lack of wit and speech, not action or mind set, that prevents him from being truly considered a Machiavel.

Don John lays out his plan in I. iii., when in Richard-like fashion he outlines the kind person he is, and what he would like to do if given the opportunity. "I had rather be a canker in a hedge / than a rose in his [Claudio's] grace. ... I am a plain-dealing villain" (26-7, 32). His great moment for revenge against his brother, Claudio, and all who represent goodness, comes in the form of Borachio, who tells his master that there is a wedding being planned for Hero and Claudio. Don John now has his formula for the ruining of lives, a classic Machiavellian trait, especially when one considers the sheer joy and pleasure Don John is getting out of

the situation. "If I can cross him in any way / I bless myself every way" (67-8).

In Act Two, Don John begins to exercise his plan in true Machiavellian style, much like Iago. His plan can be broken into two parts: tell and show. The first part, tell, occurs at the banquet where all the participants are masked. Claudio, the shy soon-to-be newlywed, asks Don Pedro to woo Hero in his stead, which Don Pedro, masked, completes successfully. While watching Don Pedro work his magic, Claudio is approached by Don John and his train. Don John plants the seed of doubt in Claudio's head that Don Pedro is wooing Hero for selfish gain. Don John is successful in performing expert Machiavellian psychology on Claudio as evidenced by Claudio's short soliloquy on the fact there is no friendship in love (II. i. 172-82). The potential crisis is put quickly to rest when Don Pedro publicly presents Hero to Claudio, but Don John has not only been successful in inserting a hint of doubt, but he has also provided the comedy with the first crisis it must overcome.

The second part of Don John's plan is the "show" aspect. Don John must provide solid, physical evidence that all is not perfect in the Hero / Claudio relationship. He sets Borachio to woo Margaret in Hero's window so that it would appear that Hero is not pure the night before her wedding. In saying that he realizes that he has not been the best of examples or

brothers before and would like to help Claudio in any way he can, Don John skillfully coerces the two men into seeing Hero in a seemingly vulgar position on the eve of her wedding. More importantly, Don John has fulfilled his plan of revenge: he has allowed all involved to be moved into misery by his hand.

The problem with Don John's potential Machiavellianism is simply that he does not stick around to pounce on the victims. The Machiavel would remain and keep the pressure applied to all who stand in his way, Don John's being the "overthrow" of Don Pedro, his brother. As is known, Don John is captured later in the play by members of Dogberry's expert posse.

Don John's demeanor and philosophy on life are certainly Machiavellian to the point of almost being identical to Richard of Gloucester. It is Don John's actions, or lack thereof, that prevent his entrance into true Machiavellianism.

CHAPTER FIVE

Claudius

Claudius, Hamlet's uncle and step father, presents an interesting challenge for those investigating his villainy. Is he a ruler full of ambition and tyranny intent on simply getting his way and keeping those who oppose him quiet, or is he a man who loves his wife?

In identifying the first part of Claudius' dilemma, one must search his past. His past reveals the fundamental aspect of the tragedy: Claudius killed King Hamlet for the throne, and by extension, the queen. That ambition, and the action that follows, is standard Machiavellian philosophy. Later, Claudius' advice to Laertes after the Polonius' death has both Lady Macbethian and Machiavellian underpinnings, "Revenge should have no bounds. But good Laertes, / Will you do this, keep close within your chamber" (IV. vii. 127-8). Previously, Claudius' prayer again shows his Machiavellianism in that he outlines his life and the values he has set in that life, "My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen" (III. iii. 55). The order in which Claudius places the values is significant in that he holds Gertrude last in that order- a fact of which Machiavelli would be proud. Love has no place, except love for the crown, in the kingdom. Claudius' scheming to get Hamlet out of the way exemplifies Claudius' villainy in

that he skillfully has Rosencrantz and Guildenstern do his dirty work, a plan that seemingly absolves the king of any wrong doing. Again, his plan with Laertes to kill Hamlet after the latter returns shows Claudius' ruthlessness in keeping the crown, and secondarily, Gertrude. It is that secondary ambition, love, that is Claudius' undoing.

"Claudius, in brief, loves Gertrude. Revenge, which has no place in Christian commitment, obtrudes nonetheless in Hamlet's concern; love, which has no place in Machiavellian commitment, obtrudes nonetheless in the concern of Claudius" (MacFarland 53). Claudius, like Hamlet, continuously rationalizes his lack of action in eliminating his antagonist, a rationalization that proves to be a critical part of his downfall. For instance, in his discussion with Laertes mentioned above, he makes the decision not to kill Hamlet himself, something a Machiavel would do, citing two reasons for his decree:

The Queen his mother Lives almost by his looks, and for myself- My virtue or my plague, be it either which- She is so conjunctive to my life and soul, That as the star moves not but in his sphere, I could not by her. The other motive, Why to a public count I might not go, Is the great love the general gender bear him... (IV. vii. 11-18)

That "virtue or plague" is the line over which Claudius must perpetually

balance himself. The fact that he so deeply loves Gertrude provides the dichotomy of the ruler: on one hand, Claudius' love for the queen is worthy of praise; on the other, that love plagues or clouds his thinking that Hamlet presents a real threat to his throne. The Machiavel's system of virtue is the reverse: love of anything but the throne is considered to be a plagued way of thinking. The Machiavel should act only for the sake of keeping his kingdom, even if it means killing one of the treasured members of that kingdom. In the end, Claudius is tortured by the fact that the correct, Machiavellian act in order to keep what he so desires- the kingdom- is to kill Hamlet; yet, in order to keep what he also so desires- Gertrude- he must not act in a pro-active, Machiavellian manner. It is that precipice over which Claudius must stand or fall which causes him to lose sight of his kingdom, and in hindsight, his love as well.

just as Hamlet's assumption of filial responsibility- an attitude which in ordinary situations would be a virtue- ironically leads to his destruction, so Claudius' capacity to love- again in ordinary situations a virtue- lures his ship onto the rocks. (MacFarland 54)

CHAPTER SIX

Cassius

The degree to which Cassius is a Machiavel can be summarized in two sections: Pre - Caesar and Post - Caesar. It seems that Cassius becomes a completely different character after act three, and it appears that the friendship that he develops with Brutus is what gives him the power over Caesar he covets, but that friendship also provides his demise.

In Act One, it is Cassius who leads the rebellion against Caesar, saying that he is no less of a man than Caesar to rule (I. ii. 97). The irony here is that his Machiavellian thinking is not self-serving, but mostly for Brutus to become the leader of Rome. In fact, it is Caesar who is the only one who identifies Cassius' potentially treacherous traits, "Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look" (I. ii. 194). It is not until Cassius' soliloquy at the end of the act that the reader gets a hint of his Machiavellianism:

yet I see Thy [Brutus] honourable mettle may be wrought
From that it is dispos'd; therefore it is meet That noble
minds keep ever with their likes; ... And after this let Caesar
seat him sure, For we will shake him, or worse days endure.

(308-11; 321-2)

Later in the act, Cassius skillfully encourages Casca to join in the noble cause by appealing to the same principle with which he convinced

Brutus. The section that best reflects this budding Machiavellianism is shown in lines 89-99, wherein he appeals to the "justice and nobility" of the cause to uproot Caesar, using lines such as, "If I know this, know all world besides, / That part of tyranny that I do bear / I can shake off at pleasure" (97-9). He is most willing to die for his "noble" cause, and he will kill all those who think that Caesar is super-human, "What trash is Rome? / What rubbish and what offal? when it serves / For the base matter to illuminate / So vile a thing as Caesar!" (107-10).

In Act Two, the scene involving the conspirators indicates perhaps a lessening in Cassius' evil nature in that he is talked into not killing Marc Antony in the process of killing Caesar. It does, indeed, appear to show a slight problem in his resolve. However, when one looks deeper, one will realize the power of Cassius' will:

Cassius is the animator of the plot. He has the idea, and he organizes everything. Conspiracies are low things; they require secrecy and stealth. As such, they are not the best ground for gentlemen, who are not in the habit of hiding anything or of feeling the shame that seeks the cover of darkness. This does not bother Cassius. ...Cassius needs no painful dialectic with himself to prove that it is right for gentlemen to commit murder. ... Cassius needs Brutus, for Brutus has the reputation

for virtue which will draw other worthy men into the conspiracy, and after the assassination, only he could make the deed appear to the people to be good and just. (Bloom 93)

So when Brutus asks that Antony be spared, Cassius acquiesces so that the greater mission be successful. That friendship and alliance to Brutus keeps Brutus in the plan, but that decision will prove fatal in the end. Yes, Cassius is evil, but only the true Machiavel would eliminate all possible counter-conspirators (i.e. Antony) in usurping the throne. Again, Cassius needs Brutus.

In Act Three, the act involving Caesar's assassination, Cassius begins to show signs of weakening, for it is Brutus who dominates the scenes that follow. Cassius is reduced to little more than a whining discontent who is shooed aside until the two definitive sides are developed. Cassius' speech reflects this "loss of power" when he reveals that, "I know not what may fall, I like it not" (III. i. 243). The Machiavel must remain in total control of his (and others') situation. Cassius is slowly losing his fight that he worked so hard to start.

This loss of power continues in Act Four as Cassius, further showing his slow demise, accusing his best friend of "wronging" him. In what becomes little more than a "he said / he didn't say" by play, Cassius

clearly establishes himself as far less a man than his much more virtuous and verbally skilled comrade. The significant part of this scene involves Cassius offering Brutus his dagger to kill the former, not unlike Richard offering Lady Anne to kill him. What makes this scene wholly different is that the character who is giving his weapon is also giving up his Machiavellian power. The Machiavel in Cassius' situation does one of two things: he either kills the man he is challenging, or he renders the potential victim so powerless through speech so cunning that the victim is practically hypnotized into the Machiavel's realm.

Act Five produces the final insult Cassius inflicts on the spirit of the Machiavel. He and Brutus agree that they would rather kill themselves than be captured, an idea considered vile by the Machiavel. As is known, Cassius does the unthinkable and impales himself on his sword.

Clearly, Cassius does not measure up to the basic principles of the Machiavel, save for the original idea to usurp Caesar. His lack of Machiavellian wit and speech prevents him from eliminating Brutus and others from the equation, while his lack of solitary action prevents his success. His dependence on others is a fundamental aspect of his downfall. The most glaring error he makes is his maintenance of his friendship with Brutus, while highly noble in most eyes, proves completely disastrous in the realm of the Machiavel.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Aaron

The first time we meet Aaron in *Titus Andronicus*, we are immediately drawn to his ambition and his propensity for evil. He discusses this plan for action in II. i., where he decides that he will get the throne and Tamora in the process, "Then, Aaron, arm thy heart and fit thy thoughts, / to mount aloft with thy imperial mistress,..." (12-3).

Aaron has little or no reservations about who he is and how he will meet his objectives. He is calculating and sinister and quickly immerses himself into the realm of the Machiavel. He does so in the latter parts of II. i., when he skillfully convinces Chiron and Demetrius, both of whom want Lavinia, to kidnap and to rape her: "The forest walks are wide and spacious, / And many unfrequented plots there are, / Fitted by kind for rape and villainy" (114-6). Later in the act, Aaron continues his witty ways when he describes his devious plan for the bag of gold, a speech that is replete with Machiavellian self-absorption:

Let him that thinks of me so abjectly Know that his gold
must coin a stratagem, Which cunningly effected will beget
A very excellent piece of villainy. (II. iii. 4-7)

Aaron continues to describe himself in bloody, diabolic images, as

shown in his meeting with his love, Tamora, in II. iii., "Vengeance is in my heart, death in my hand, / Blood and revenge are hammering in my head" (38-9). His elaborate plan to frame Martius and Quintus is classic Machiavellianism in that it is both gruesome and cunning in its evil. Aaron, in complete control of the situation, has become a true Machiavel. He has Titus begging for his mercy and guidance, and Aaron complies by cutting off Titus' hand. Aaron replies after severing the hand in Richard-like fashion:

O, how this villainy Doth fat me with the very thoughts of it!
 Let fools do good, and fair men call for grace, Aaron will have
 his soul black like his face. (III. i. 202-5)

In Act Four, Aaron is notified that he and Tamora have conceived a son, which the Nurse brings to the Moor with explicit directions that Aaron have it killed. In great Machiavellian style, he tells Tamora's increasingly angered sons that there is nothing that can be done about their new step-brother, "Villain, I have done thy mother" (IV. ii. 76). He then kills the Nurse, for no other reason than to keep her quiet. The birth of the child, however, perhaps signals a chink in Aaron's Machiavellian armor. "Yet Aaron, in the fierce love he has for his bastard son, also has his touch of humanity" (Farnham 141). The Machiavel does not consider love of family in his dealings, yet Aaron all of a sudden wants to become a

family man, or a decent father at least. That image of fatherhood proves to be an integral part of his demise, as he is shown captured in V. i., weakly begging for the sparing of his child's life. He offers a bargain whereby he will agree to tell of all his hideous deeds in exchange for his son being allowed to live. Realizing that Lucius will comply, Aaron then proceeds to "brag" about his exploits on how he coerced Tamora's two sons into his evil world: "Indeed I was their tutor to instruct them. / ...That bloody mind I think they learn'd of me, / As true a dog as ever fought at head" (98; 101-2).

Then Aaron, again in Richardian style, answers Lucius' question regarding the former's remorse:

Ay, that I had not done a thousand more. Even now I curse the day- and yet I think Few come within the compass of my curse- Wherein I did not some notorious ill: As kill a man or devise his death,... And nothing grieves me heartily indeed, But that I cannot do ten thousand more. (V. i. 124-28; 143-4)

Aaron's last breath before he is taken away reflects his grotesque Machiavellianism, "If one good deed in all my life I did, / I do repent me from my very soul" (V. iii. 189-90).

In the end, Aaron remained a Machiavel, focusing on destroying others' lives, while looking to ascend to the throne. Moreover, Aaron

thoroughly enjoyed his evil, much like Richard. But unlike Richard, Aaron did not torture himself (nor was he tortured by ghosts or otherwise) over his heinous deeds. The birth of his son perhaps signals a soft spot in his evil demeanor, but his ending speeches reflect his fervent dedication to the concept of the Machiavel:

The list of Aaron's enormities provides a fairly complete record of the crimes practiced by the class to which he belonged (Sadist). Lust and cruelty were the motives that urged him to their perpetration; and it is evident that he derived supreme pleasure and satisfaction from committing them. (Brock 35)

CHAPTER EIGHT

Edmund

When one writes on the evil potential of Edmund, one must first consider that his quest is a quest for legitimacy, a wanting to be regarded as highly as his legitimate half-brother, Edgar. Inexplicably, Edmund resigns himself to the distorted view that he must destroy Edgar- and all that come in his path- in order to receive what he feels is his proper standing. His plans for Edgar's demise, as well as all who fall into his traps, have all of the earmarks of a Machiavellian figure, yet upon his death, Edmund resorts to begging for forgiveness.

Edmund begins his Machiavellian development in I. ii. where he discusses his intentions for obtaining not only Edgar's lands, but also Gloucester's favor, "Edmund the base / Shall [top] the legitimate" (21-2). During the same soliloquy, Edmund, in Richardian fashion, reminds himself that his, "dimensions are as well compact, / My mind as generous, and my shape as true..." (7-8), indicating the semi-Machiavellian notion that he is equal or greater than his "opponents". Once his step-father enters the scene, Edmund's plan is in full motion. His devious plan to frame Edgar for writing the letter containing plans for killing Gloucester is at its core wholly Machiavellian, simply because Edmund succeeds in attempting to

shield Gloucester from harm. Hence, Edmund appears the good son. His rather brilliant plan continues with coercing Gloucester into listening in on the conversation with Edgar, not before he wittily muses on the effects of his evil and the foolishness of others:

This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune—often the surfeits of our own behavior—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and stars, as if we were villains on necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence, and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. (I. ii. 118-26)

Later in the same scene, Edmund cunningly describes Edgar as like a “catastrophe of the old comedy” (134), while he considers himself capable of “villainous melancholy” (135). Edmund then skillfully recommends that Edgar go see his father armed because something has, “qualified the heat of / his displeasure” (161-2). Ironically, Edgar responds that “some villain has done him wrong” (165). Edmund has thus succeeded in creating enough doubt in Edgar’s mind that he is willing to visit Gloucester armed for potential battle. Edmund the Machiavel is growing:

A credulous father and a brother noble, Whose nature is so

far from doing harms That he suspects none; on whose
foolish honesty My practices ride easy. (179-82)

The situation does not manifest itself again until II. i. , when Edmund shrewdly coerces Edgar into a fake fight, shooting Edgar away, and purposely wounding himself in the process. Again, Edmund has convinced Gloucester of Edgar's unworthiness when Gloucester no longer refers to his legitimate son by name but by "villain" (II. i. 37). Edmund succeeds in getting himself aligned with the conspirators, who at the time seem to be the side of power. The question remains if Edmund will take the full Machiavellian path, that is, will he continue his destruction of his adopted family, or will he move to the upper echelon of the Machiavellian persona and attempt to usurp the throne?

It appears, in III. iii. , that Edmund has decided to take the latter route. Having learned from Gloucester that Lear plans to take back his throne, Edmund declares that he will tell the Duke of Lear's plans, thus condemning Gloucester, while likely receiving the inheritance more quickly than expected, "That which my father loses: no less than all. / The younger rises when the old doth fall" (24-5). Gloucester is then arrested and has his eyes plucked out by Cornwall's men in III. vii., while Edmund watches with great delight.

Edmund, in the meantime, has skillfully earned the love of both

Regan and Goneril, and in the latter stages of Act Four that triangle of evil begins to unravel, beginning with the death of Cornwall, Regan's husband. Perhaps unknowingly, Edmund has planted that seed of doubt in Goneril's mind that maybe Regan would try to steal Edmund away from her. Edmund's Machiavellianism has drastically affected the other major players, and has brought them into his world of evil, all of which plays out later in Acts Four and Five.

The letter that Oswald asks Edgar to give to Edmund represents the depths to which Edmund has gone. Goneril desperately wants Albany dead, so that she and Edmund can be married. Unfortunately for Edmund, Regan is still alive and she questions him about his fidelity, questions that he skillfully avoids as Goneril's soldiers arrive. In great Machiavellian fashion, Edmund discusses the deeds he has done:

To both these sisters have I sworn my love;
Each jealous of the other,
Neither can be enjoy'd if both remain alive:
to take the widow Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril,
And hardly shall I carry out my side,
Her husband being alive.

(V. I. 55-62)

The genesis of Edmund's downfall actually begins here. In the last section of the above soliloquy, he mentions that he would hope that after the war is over, Goneril would have Albany killed. The Machiavel would extinguish

Albany immediately after Albany has made complete his usefulness. Edmund's lack of initiative, in addition to Edgar's triumphant return, proves fatal later on.

The fight with Edgar is hardly climactic, and frankly, Edmund dies with precious little dignity- at least from a Machiavellian perspective. His final speeches are little more than petty condolences and apologies for evils in which he so willingly reveled all through the play. "I pant for life. Some good I mean to do, / Despite of mine own nature" (V. iii. 244-5).

It seems, in the end, that Edmund is caught between the anger of illegitimacy and the pangs of love. There is perhaps little question that he loved the two women, and for that he and they are killed in the process. In terms of Machiavellianism, Edmund's intentions are good, but in the final analysis, are clouded by the heart and the need to be loved- a love he didn't realize that he had with Gloucester. He, unlike Aaron and Richard, falls far short of the Machiavellian exit:

The dying Edmund, mortally wounded by Edgar in their duel, changes his mind too late. ... He attempts to rescind his fatal order. (Goddard 160)

CHAPTER NINE

Iago

At his core, Iago is evil incarnate. There is no end to the lengths to which he will go to exact his revenge on Othello, as well as other characters in the play. His demeanor is classic Machiavel; he commits evil deeds, and he garners great pleasure in them. His Machiavellianism resonates through all of the characters, and in the end, Iago maintains control over himself and the play as a whole.

In first meeting Iago, one is immediately drawn into the conflict that the jaded soldier obviously has with his superior, Othello. Brock poses an interesting question regarding Iago's past about which the reader knows precious little:

The point that has baffled critics is to find a reason which will account for the career of crime on which Iago embarked, after having lived an outwardly decent life and been esteemed a dependable and companionable man, and not a destructive enemy of society. (1)

It appears that Iago's problem stems from his jealousy at not being chosen as Othello's lieutenant. However, as Brock points out, perhaps Iago has a patterned history of criminal activity, as evidenced by Iago's hand firmly implanted in Roderigo's purse (2). It seems likely that the multitudes have

the perception that Iago is a good and faithful soldier, shown in Othello's rather simplistic and open confidence in Iago, thus refuting Brock's points on Iago's evil past. So the question begs as to Iago's Machiavellian genesis. It is clear that it emanates from that initial rejection, and more importantly, it will be broad and far-reaching in its scope. It will attack all relevant members of Othello's immediate cabinet. Cassio will be the first victim.

Iago explicitly announces his intentions to Roderigo in I. i., where he says, "I follow him to serve my turn upon him. / We cannot all be masters, nor all masters / Cannot be truly follow'd" (42-4). Iago succeeds in not only waking Brabantio, but also convincing Desdemona's father that Othello has kidnapped her. This event is fundamental for the Machiavel: plant that seed of doubt so that he can begin to cause eternal conflict between those who have infinitely more to lose than the villain.

In I. iii., after Desdemona defends her actions and her love to Othello, Iago is the proud recipient of leading the ship (carrying Desdemona) that will follow Othello to Cyprus. This assignment puts Iago in the perfect place to continue with his plan: he will discuss with Desdemona the lesser points of marrying a Moor, thus progressing the potential for conflict between the two newlyweds. Additionally, he expertly convinces Roderigo that he will help the latter in his courting of

Desdemona. While doing so, Shakespeare lets the reader into Iago's mind, as his soliloquy suggests in I. iii., where Iago has succeeded in three things: One, that Roderigo is willing to follow him to all ends in order to acquire Desdemona (382); two, that the confidence he needs from Othello in terms of Desdemona's safe keeping is clearly evident; three, that he will be able to subtly bring Cassio, the secondary objective, into submission. It is these three components that Iago has at his disposal that set him into the Machiavellian mold. Iago's plan, as Act Two begins, seems to be taking great shape:

Cassio's a proper man. Let me see now: To get his place and
to plume up my will In double knavery- How? how?- Let's
see- After some time, to abuse Othello's [ear] That he is
too familiar with his wife. He hath a person and a smooth
dispose To be suspected- fram'd to make women false. The
Moor is of a free and open nature, That thinks men honest
that seem but so, And will as tenderly be led by the nose As
asses are. I have't. It is engend'ed. Hell and night Must
bring this monstrous birth to the world's light. (392-404)

The image of "Hell and night" further depicts Iago as the budding Machiavel. As Richard did many years before, Iago doffs the Christian value system and accepts Hell as his home. From this point forward, there

is no question as to the direction Iago will travel:

The invocation of 'Hell and night' implies Iago is aligning himself with the powers of evil, 'all the tribe of hell' he referred to earlier in the scene while conferring with his crony Roderigo. ...In this world turned upside down, the devil provides Iago with a malign source of 'creative inspiration'.

(DiMatteo 332)

Act Two has its setting in Cyprus, and Iago immediately cuts to the chase. Here, Iago finds himself in a peculiarly advantageous position in that news has arrived that a storm may have destroyed Othello's ship. The scene that ensues has Iago in complete control of a discussion between Desdemona and Emilia. The three discuss a variety of subjects, most of which Iago turns into sexual innuendo (148-58). Othello arrives, and the devious plan of Iago begins to take shape: "O, you are well tun'd now! / But I'll set down the pegs that make this music, / As honest as I am" (199-201).

First, Iago convinces Roderigo that Desdemona is in love with Cassio. In the process, he outlines specifically all of Othello's faults and Cassio's prowess for the same (221-48). Iago, in full Machiavellian temperament, uses Desdemona's seemingly innocent "paddle" with Cassio to mean "lechery", thus reinforcing the image that Desdemona could not be

so faithful to Othello as to not notice the affections of Roderigo, the precedent having already been set. Second, Iago tells Roderigo to be on the watch with Cassio that night, and get Cassio angry enough to resort to violence, thus revealing to Othello that Cassio is not worthy of the job Iago so desperately covets. The Machiavel works ceaselessly at using other people's emotions and desires to his advantage, because while others' minds are inhibited by those subjective feelings, the Machiavel has a sole objective motive: to rise to the throne (and enjoy doing it). In his soliloquy, Iago details his plans to use Desdemona in his quest:

And I think he'll [Othello] prove to Desdemona A most dear husband. Now I do love her too, Not out of absolute lust (though peradventure I stand accomptant for as great a sin) But partly to diet my revenge, For that I do suspect the lust Moor Hath leap'd into my seat; ... And nothing can or shall content my soul Till I am even'd with him, wife for wife; or failing so, yet that I put the Moor At least into a jealousy so strong That judgment cannot cure. (290-6; 298-302)

Iago's next appearance in II. iii. shows Iago coercing Cassio into some heavy drinking, a perilous thought for Cassio. As is commonly known, Cassio does get drunk, does go after Roderigo, does get into a fight with Montano, and does get dismissed by Othello. Here, Iago is at his

Machiavellian finest. After Cassio realizes that his military career might be over, Iago reassures him to the contrary. Iago also succeeds in presenting two characters as one:

Our general's wife is now the general- I may say so in this respect, for that he hath devoted and given up himself to the contemplation, mark, and [denotement] of her parts and graces. (II. iii. 314-8)

Ironically, but also perfect from Iago's perspective, Cassio has fallen into Iago's trap, indicated by Cassio's, "Good night, honest Iago" (334). After Cassio leaves, Iago continues his reveling in performing "honest" work at the expense of others' lives and reputations. In his soliloquy at the end of II. iii., Iago, like Richard, revels in how the perception of his "villainy" is so preposterous when he continues to help those who cannot possibly help themselves:

How am I then a villain, To counsel Cassio to this parallel course, Directly to his good? Divinity of hell! When devils will the blackest sins put on, They do suggest at first with heavenly shows, As I do now;... And by how much she strives to do him good, She shall undo her credit with the Moor. So will I turn her virtue into pitch, And out of her own goodness make the net That shall emesh them all. (348-53; 358-2)

Iago's Machiavellianism is in its full development. He knows full well that he does evil, yet he expertly directs all into his world of "honesty" and charity. "In these lines he turns his own inclination into one as 'honest' as Desdemona's, thus making a contribution to the structure of irony built upon repeated use of the word 'honest' in the play" (Farnham 139).

Moving quickly, Act Three places Iago at the citadel of Othello, where, he hopes, Cassio will make his plea. In III. iii., Desdemona assures Cassio that all will be well, talks to Othello who reaffirms her assurances, and convinces all (especially Iago) that the way to get one's way is through Desdemona. Subsequently, Iago begins to work on Othello. Planting seemingly innocent questions about Cassio into Othello's head, Iago allows Othello's general militant nature to run its course, saying only, "O, beware, my lord, of jealousy! / It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock / The meat it feeds on" (165-7). This use of hinting and questioning is fundamental to the success of the Machiavel. He lets Othello do most of the talking, letting Iago observe and further plan. The plan continues as Iago gets his wife, Emilia, involved with the dropping of the handkerchief. Again, Iago allows Othello to act and react on his own observations of Cassio and Desdemona. In the section where Othello demands proof of Desdemona's infidelity, Iago reaches his finest hour as the Machiavel: he has Othello on his knees and in his power. Iago is more

than appeased by the fact that not only will he be freely allowed to kill Cassio, but he also has the ability to will Othello to do his bidding. Iago, not even taking his own marriage into account, convinces Othello that all women are lecherous:

The fallacious reasoning he unfolds is predicated on the supposition that he understands better than Othello the ways of Venetian women. He argues that they do not scruple to commit adultery, but only to keep it unknown, and suggests that a match with a young man like Michael Cassio would have been more natural for Desdemona than her marriage to one from outsider her social class, a black man, and a foreigner...

(Caro 340)

Act Four continues Iago's quest for revenge as the scene opens with Iago squarely attached to Othello. He reveals that Cassio has intimated to him that the former has slept with Desdemona, "With her? On her; what you will" (IV. i. 36). Iago, after Othello's fainting, skillfully convinces Othello to eavesdrop on his and Cassio's conversation. Expertly using Bianca as a guise, Iago gets Othello to commit to murder. In truth, Othello is more than willing to kill Cassio, the man in whom he placed his precious faith when he appointed him lieutenant. Iago, the Machiavel, has triumphed in transforming Othello into someone who will rather easily

destroy those close to him. "He [Iago] realizes that true tyranny is not imposed by force, but imposes itself on the minds of men" (Bloom 63).

Iago's plan is almost usurped by Roderigo as the latter comes and announces that Iago has done nothing for him. Iago skillfully diffuses Roderigo by saying that Cassio is to take Othello's place, giving the two a perfect opportunity to kill Cassio. The question here begs as to why Iago, so completely in control, would not quickly dismiss a seemingly worthless man in the greater scheme. Iago, the Machiavel, makes sure that all participants are taken carefully and calculatingly. Roderigo will surely die, but only after Iago is sure that he has served his purpose for Iago's master plan for revenge. Iago, Christ-like, brings Roderigo back into his focus and into his confidence. "Come, stand not amaz'd at it, but go along with me; I will show you such a necessity in his death that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him" (IV. ii. 239-41).

Act Five reveals what appears to be a slight flaw in Iago's potential ascent. After Roderigo fails in killing Cassio, Iago, in what can only be called a cowardly act in the eyes of Machiavellianism, stabs Cassio from behind and still does not finish the job when he merely wounds Cassio in the leg. Still, Iago reasserts his Machiavellianism when he comes back to the scene and kills Roderigo. Then, in great Machiavellian arrogance, he arrests Bianca for the crime.

Later, in V. ii., Iago again begins to see the end, just as all of the components of his plan seem to be falling into place. After Emilia reveals the truth to Othello, Iago, again rather cowardly kills his wife and flees. Yet, Iago, even in seeming defeat, revels in the acts he has done, and those in which he did not have a direct hand. Only the Machiavel can expertly use others to do his bidding. The best Othello or anyone else can do is render Iago silent:

The goal of this movement... is silence: Desdemona dead, Emilia dead, Roderigo dead, Othello dead, Iago promising that 'From this time forth [he] never will speak word' (V. ii. 304). As Hibbard says, the surviving characters contribute to this silence, as if thereby avoiding something 'monstrous and obscene'. 'There is no formal praise of the hero;... no interpretation of the events that have led up to the disaster is given, or even promised. Faced with actions which they find shocking and unintelligible, the surviving characters seek, with a haste that is almost indecent, to put them out of sight and out of mind.' (Zender 334)

All in all, Iago exacts his revenge on all of those on whom he chose to exact it. There is no great exaltation of Othello at the end of the play, proving that Iago's plan worked about as well as could be expected. He is

truly the devil who cannot be killed (Farnham 151). There is absolutely no question as to the extent of Iago's Machiavellianism. His intent is to torture his superiors and to make his superiors feel inferior. He is the consummate villain and is, at numerous times, considered the Devil:

He challenges us to show that he does evil even as he demonstrates that he does it. In effect he boasts himself to be one who can take us into his confidence and expose his iniquity but can yet successfully defy us to incriminate him. (Farnham 138)

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