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"Fit to govern?"

Charismatic and Traditional Kingship in *Richard III, Richard II,* and *Macbeth*

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Submitted for Honor Requirements
for the Department of English
Dickinson College

April 17, 2015

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INTRODUCTION

Oh, had thy grandsire with a prophet's eye
Seen how his son's son should destroy his sons,
From forth thy reach he would have laid thy shame,
Deposing thee before thou wert possessed,
Which art possessed now to depose thyself.
(John of Gaunt on Richard II, II.i.104-108)

But in this kind to come, in braving arms,
Be his own carver, and cut out his way
To find out that right with wrong–it may not be;
And you that do abet him in this kind
Cherish rebellion and are rebels all.
(York on Bolingbroke, II.iii.143-147)

These adjacent passages, both taken from *Richard II*, elucidate two types of kingship. We have Richard II, a traditionalist king, who is in power because he is his "grandsire's son's son": by right of lineal succession. We have his opposition, Bolingbroke, a charismatic leader who, "braving arms" is able to assemble a force against Richard. Each of these passages highlights the strengths of traditionalist and charismatic leadership, but they also expose their weaknesses. Though Richard has the right to rule, he has "destroy[ed]" his kinsmen and is set "now to depose [him]self." In short, he lacks any real political ability and thus is a weak king. Bolingbroke is "his own carver," politically astute and able to inspire others to follow him, but he is nonetheless branded as a "rebel," a usurper. In *Richard III*, *Richard II*, and *Macbeth*, William Shakespeare places these two types of kings in conflict.

The prolific career of William Shakespeare is one that spanned the reigns of two monarchs, Elizabeth I and James I of England. It was a period of political uncertainty and change. What was common between the two regimes, however, was an absolutist doctrine based on the idea of the divine right of monarchs to rule. When we consider these three tragedies together, all plays of regicide, tyrannicide, and usurpation, Shakespeare is inviting us to compare conflicting models of kingship. As Irving Ribner eloquently puts it, "each of his characters is carefully moulded to fit an intellectual conception ….He approaches the great issues of human life from many angles, with different hypotheses, and we have a resulting diversity in his plays"

(8). While Ribner produces a moral reading of the tragedies, we can apply his sentiment to the plays in a different way. By applying a Weberian lens to the differing "intellectual conceptions" embodied by the rulers in these plays, we can read them as models of dynastic versus charismatic kingship. And indeed, these three plays produce "resulting diversity" in the rulers Shakespeare presents at the conclusion. Furthermore, these plays fit into an overall reflection of the monarchical absolutism prevalent when Shakespeare was writing. To make sense of this, we must first understand the historical context in which these plays were produced, as well as Max Weber's theories of leadership authority and legitimacy.

As the heads of absolutist dynasties, Tudor and Stuart monarchs held the majority of power in the state. Shakespeare's work contains local references to the reigns and political doctrines of both rulers. Tudor absolutism was based on what is known in scholarship as the Tudor myth. In essence, it is the idea promoted by apologists that Richard III was a tyrant sent by God as punishment for the murder of King Richard II by the usurper Henry IV.[1] Henry VII, the first Tudor king, was England's divinely ordained savior and overthrew Richard III at the Battle of Boswoth, ending the Wars of the Roses. Peculiarly, the Tudor myth draws on scripture to promote the idea that it is unlawful to overthrow a king, even a tyrant, because he fulfills a divine purpose. In Romans 13:1-7, Paul says rulers are "ministers of God" who "[bear] not the sword for nought" but "to take vengeance on him that doeth evill."[2] In the Tudor worldview, there is no justification for rebellion. With pamphlets such as the 1570 "Homilie Agaynst Disobedience and Wylful Rebellion," which condemned "breach[es] of obedience, and breaking in of rebellion," the doctrines of the Tudor myth were reinforced throughout the Elizabethan period (2v).

[1] The works of Sir Thomas More (*The History of Richard III*), Polydore Vergil (*Anglica Historia*), Edward Hall (*The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre and Yorke*), and Raphael Holinshed (*Chronicles of England*) form the basis of this myth. These sources depict Richard III as a divine scourge, and Henry VII as a warrior sent to eradicate the evil of Richard.

[2] All biblical quotations will be cited from the Geneva Bible.

The ascension of James saw a continuation of absolutist rule.[3] He wrote extensively on the duties of the king to his people and of subjects to their sovereign.[4] In keeping with the Tudor myth, James's political philosophy also condemned rebellion, even against tyrants, because "the wickednesse therefore of the King can neuer make them that are ordained to be iudged by him, to become his Iudges" (*The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* 78). As Parliament grew more powerful during James's reign, they began to challenge this doctrine. In a speech in 1610, James reprimanded the legislative body and warned them, "I will not haue you meddle with such ancient Rights of mine, as I haue receiued from my Predecessors *More Maiorum* [by ancestral claim]" ("Speech to Parliament, 21 March 1610" 190-191). Stuart absolutism and Parliament's growing resistance to it would come to a head with the reign of Charles I, executed by the English government for pursuing his personal interests above those of England. While Shakespeare's plays engage with the Renaissance political theology of Elizabeth and James, they are all set in medieval Britain, and thus also model medieval kingship.[5]

With this historical context in mind, we can apply different leadership theories to Shakespeare's work to help understand the rulers he portrays. The nineteenth century sociologist Max Weber theorized about various types of leadership authority and political legitimacy. His works *Economy and Society* and "Politics as a Vocation" define three grounds for legitimacy: traditional authority, which rests on "traditions and…those exercising authority under them"; charismatic authority, which rests on "the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character

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[3] James was crowned on 24 March 1603. His ascension to the English throne made him James VI of Scotland and James I of England, and he ruled England, Scotland, and Ireland together through personal union.
[4] James was an intellectual, and wrote several political treatises. *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* (1598) was a theoretical work on the rights of absolute monarchs, and *Basilicon Doron* (1599) was meant as advice to his son on how to rule effectively.
[5] Shakespeare's two tetralogies of histories depict the Wars of the Roses, a fifteenth century conflict, while the historical Macbeth ruled Scotland in the eleventh century.

of an individual person"; and legal authority (*Economy and Society* 215).[6] This last is a concept related to the modern servant of the state, but Weber's concepts of traditional or dynastic authority and charisma can be valuably applied to these plays to understand the different forms of kingship Shakespeare presents.[7] Dynastic rulers are "bound by the precedents handed down from the past" and thus achieve legitimacy through succession and the idea of divine right (244). Charismatic leaders, by contrast, must be sanctioned by their peers, the "charismatic community," to maintain legitimacy (243).

Each of these three plays tells stories of usurpation and deposition. In *Richard III* and *Macbeth*, we see a pattern of double-usurpation: a king is killed by an evil usurper, whose legitimacy is denied when he too is killed by a charismatic challenger. The conflict in *Richard II* is simpler: Richard, a dynastic, divine right king, is overthrown by Bolingbroke, who garners popular support and becomes Henry IV. Shakespeare thus invites comparisons between rulers with dynastic and charismatic claims. It is important to understand that these tragedies were written in the order of *Richard III*, *Richard II*, then *Macbeth*. By looking at them in the order in which they were written, we can see that the type of ruler Shakespeare leaves in power at the end varies, to show a progression toward an ideal ruler.[8]

These three plays place dynastic authority and charisma in conflict. Perhaps counter-intuitively, however, we see that what is exalted as the ideal is a dynastic-charismatic king. *Richard III* leaves us with Richmond, the most purely charismatic ruler we see. However, his charisma is "routinized" by his marriage to Elizabeth after the close of the play, making it

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[6] For the purposes of this essay, the terms "dynastic" and "traditional" will be used interchangeably.
[7] Several critics have also considered the concept of charisma as it relates to Shakespeare's play, notably Raphael Falco in *Charismatic Authority in Early Modern English Tragedy* (2000) and Kristin M.S. Bezio in "Drama and Demigods: Kingship and Charisma in Shakespeare's England" (2013).
[8] Shakespeare wrote his *Henry VI* plays and *Richard III* (c.1592-1594) before he wrote the Henriad tetralogy. Thus, though the narrative progression of the histories runs from *Richard II* (c.1595-1596) to *Richard III*, *Richard III* is in fact the earlier work. *Macbeth* was written nearly a decade later, in 1606.

possible for it "to be transmitted by ritual means from one bearer to another" and thus Richmond too becomes traditionalized (248). In the second tetralogy and *Macbeth*, Shakespeare shows kings with joint claims on stage. Henry V is the synthesis of the traditional authority of Richard II and the charismatic authority of Bolingbroke. Similarly, Malcolm is part of an established primogeniture and his kingship is reinstated by the charismatic community. A ruler with a dual claim to tradition and charisma promotes stability and loyalty. By looking at these three plays in conjunction we can observe a process of creating this ideal king that is expedited with each succeeding play.

RICHARD III

This play, the earliest we will examine, engages with the discourse of the Tudor myth. The myth's understanding of the sanctity of kings, which prohibited even rebellion against tyrants, stands in direct contrast to what is presented in *Richard III*. In the play, Richard III is branded as an evil tyrant, and Henry Tudor is invited from France to lead a rebellion against him.[9] Richard P. Wheeler asserts "in this play Shakespeare is finding his way toward an understanding that ultimately undermines a simple adherence to Tudor historic myth, but is not yet in full awareness and control of its disturbing implications" (177). However, I will argue that by dramatizing this moment in English history during Elizabeth's reign, Shakespeare purposefully demonstrates how the Tudors have obscured the circumstances of their rise to power. *Richard III* exposes the hypocritical nature of their origin in rebellion and their later condemnation of it.

The Tudor myth has its origins in the events depicted in this play. Tudor apologists promoted the idea that the Wars of the Roses were God's punishment against the English people for allowing the deposition of Richard II, and that this punishment climaxed with the evil of Richard III. Though it was written before the Henriad tetralogy, *Richard III* is the culmination of the story arc of the eight history plays that Shakespeare wrote in the 1590s, which can be understood as running from *Richard II* to *Richard III*. One of Shakespeare's sources, Edward Hall, described Richard III as "tyraunt more than Nero" while Thomas More characterizes him as "malicious, wrathful, envious" (Hall 295, More 118). We see that this view of Richard III as a tyrannous miscreant was not Shakespeare's invention, but a product of the Tudor portrayal of his reign and Henry VII's coup.

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[9] Henry Tudor is billed as Richmond in the play, and may also be referred to as Henry VII.

Historically, Henry VII's rebellion against Richard was treated as a liberation sanctioned by God.[10] Thus, the Tudors found it necessary to "justify the rebellion against Richard III" by shrouding it in religious significance in order to distinguish it from the usurpation of Richard II (Frey 156). Shakespeare shows the rise of a Tudor king and praises him over his opponent, but he also shows the first Tudor monarch's brand of kingship as very different from that which would come to be associated with him. Thus, in this play, Shakespeare is challenging the Tudor notion that overthrowing a king, even a tyrannous one, is never justified. He does this by presenting for our comparison two types of kings.

This is one of the first in a series of tragedies in which Shakespeare models ideal types of leadership. *Richard III* is the play that most affirms what Weber deems pure charismatic leadership authority. For Weber, charisma is inextricably tied to rebellion: "in traditionalist periods, charisma is *the* greatest revolutionary force" (*Economy and Society,* emphasis original, 245). Interestingly, however, the central conflict in this play is not between a divine right, traditionalist king and a usurper (which features in Shakespeare's later work, such as *Richard II*), but rather between two usurpers. How, then, can we understand this as a conflict between dynastic and charismatic authority? The answer lies in the way Shakespeare presents Richard and Richmond.

Since Richard is a usurper, he is not an inherent divine right or traditionalist king. However, Shakespeare fashions him in a way that allows us to interpret him as a dynastic claimant. Rather than seizing the throne and then defending it by force, Richard goes through

[10] This idea of Richard as a divine scourge and Henry Tudor as savior sent to deliver the English people appears in Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia* (1534), Sir Thomas More's *The History of King Richard the Third* (1543), Edward Hall's *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre and Yorke* (1548), and Raphael Holinshed's *The Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1578). It is certain that Shakespeare was familiar with Hall and Holinshed's chronicles, and it is likely that he would have read Vergil and More's accounts.

pains to put his brother, King Edward IV, in power, then waits for him to die from an illness while making plans to have Clarence and his nephews murdered.[11] It is suggested at the end of *Henry VI, Part III*, that Richard's purpose in placing Edward on the throne is so that he himself might have some semblance of legitimacy: "King Henry and the Prince his son are gone; / Clarence, thy turn is next, / Counting myself but bad till I be best" (*III Henry VI,* V.vi.89-91). Richard has placed himself into the line of succession, despite the fact that this line stretches only as far back as his eldest brother. His concern is with becoming the heir, becoming "best." However, this preoccupation seems almost puerile. Shakespeare, through placing emphasis on Richard's dynasticism in spite of its absurdity, allows us to interpret Richard as a dynastic claimant and thus makes Richmond's charismatic victory over him all the more significant. It is a victory not only of savior over tyrant, but of charismatic authority over dynastic.

The play's preoccupation with heirs and inheritance is made apparent early on, when a prophecy is introduced "which says that G / Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be" alongside Edward's fear that "His issue disinherited should be" (I.i.39-40, I.i.57).[12] Brian Walsh notes that Shakespeare's histories are "almost without exception, centered in some way on contested kingship and crises of succession" (19). Having removed Clarence, when the king dies, the two contenders with the most valid claim are the Prince of Wales, also named Edward, and Richard. Richard orders Buckingham to "Infer the bastardy of Edward's children" to persuade the Lord Mayor to sanction Richard's kingship (III.v.75). Even when this is successful and Richard is on the throne, he is still preoccupied with the princes and the threat they pose to the faux sanctity of his succesion: "Ha! Am I king? 'Tis so. But Edward lives" (IV.i.14). Richard's concern for

[11] It is Richard in *Henry VI, Part III*, the precursor to this play, that murders King Henry VI (Act V, Scene VI) and with the help of his brother, Clarence, kills Henry's son Edward, the Prince of Wales (Act V, Scene V). In doing so, he removes the obstacles in the way of the crown for his brother, Edward IV.

[12] "G" is taken to refer to George, Duke of Clarence, and thus it is he that Edward has imprisoned. In fact, the "G" seems to indicate "Gloucester," Richard's title.

dynastic legitimacy is prominent. He not only wishes to have the power, but also to make it look as legitimate as possible by making himself the rightful successor to the crown.

Thus, in *Richard III*, Shakespeare presents two types of ruler, one a tyrant, the other a sort of people's king, whose rebellion is a success at least in part because the English people are so willing to abandon Richard to support him. Richmond in a sense is also a usurper; but because he is presented as freeing England from insufferable tyranny, he is not branded negatively for deposing Richard III in the way that Bolingbroke will be *Richard II.* Richmond's coup is approved of, and indeed, welcomed by the people. His killing of *Richard III* is tyrannicide, not regicide. Irving Ribner notes that due to the Tudors and their supporters' "tacit exception of Henry Tudor from their general doctrine of passive obedience" Shakespeare would not have "wish[ed] to brand Henry VII as a rebel" ("*Richard III* as an English History Play," 61). The difference between the traditional usurper and Richmond is evident in the religious framing of the play, by which Richard functions as a divine scourge and Richmond as his eradicator. This serves to downplay the negative connotations of rebellion in the play. However, Ribner's point, while it accounts for the discrepancy between the divine right view of the Tudor myth and the Tudors' willingness to ignore the rebellion led by their progenitor, does not reach far enough in its analysis of what Shakespeare presents about kingship. At the same time that he is acknowledging Queen Elizabeth's ancestor as a good leader, certainly better than Richard, he is also questioning the legitimacy of dynastic rule, and by Richmond's example, aligns his views much more with a model of charismatic kingship and furthermore, with medieval kingship. As Kristin M. S. Bezio explains, medieval kings were dependent on "popular designation–the ratification of the monarch by the people" and thus held charismatic leadership authority (33).

In crafting Richard III as one conscious of succession and legitimacy and Richmond as a people's savior rather than deleterious rebel, Shakespeare is thus able to compare the ideas of dynastic authority, modeled by Richard, and charismatic authority, embodied by Richmond. Richard is presented as a tyrant, and thus our dynastic claimant is portrayed in a negative light. He is plotting, manipulative, and holds little regard for human life, even that of his brothers. All this he blames on his physical deformity and the unusual circumstances of his birth: "I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion, / Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature, / Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time / Into this breathing world scarce half made up" (I.i.18-21). Richard reviles "this weak piping time of peace" and immediately in the first act, he acquaints the audience with his sinister plot to remove his brothers from his path and claim the throne (I.i.24).

Richard achieves many of his ends through deception and appeals to pity. Shakespeare allows no room for the audience to be convinced by Richard's trickery. In Act I, Scene III, Richard browbeats Queen Elizabeth and her supporters to show that he is the one who secured queenship for her: "Let me put in your minds, if you forget, / What you have been ere this, and what you are; / Withal, what I have been, and what I am" (I.iii.131-133). The deposed Queen Margaret comments, "A murd'rous villain, and so still thou art" to repudiate Richard's claims. Shakespeare uses Margaret as a tool in this scene in a series of asides, she makes it clear what Richard's true nature is. (I.iii.134).

If his actions and Margaret's undercutting were not enough to assure the reader of Richard's evil, Shakespeare's heavy-handed use of "tyrant" to describe him makes it quite clear. In Richmond's speech to his soldiers in Act V, Scene III, he uses "tyrant" to refer to Richard three times, and even Richard's own minions apply the word to him and his actions. Richard's

most heinous crime in the play is his ordered murder of the two young princes, his nephews. In informing Richard III that the murders had been carried out, the henchman Tyrrel says "The tyrannous and bloody act is done, / The most arch deed of piteous massacre / That ever yet this land was guilty of" (IV.iii.1-3). Richard shows no remorse; rather he is happy and bids that Tyrrel "shalt tell the process of their death" in further detail (IV.iii.32). Under Richard's rule, the body of the kingdom suffers, much in the way that Richard's body is deformed. While Ernest Kantorowicz's seminal study *The King's Two Bodies* ties the concept of the king's body as legal fiction to *Richard II*, we can see that England and its king's bodies are linked by Shakespeare even in this earlier work.

While Richard's "murd'rous" nature cannot be denied, given his brutal killings in *Henry VI, Part III*, it is significant that he does not himself actually kill anyone in this play to gain the throne. He uses hired murderers to dispose of Clarence and the king's sons in order to distance himself from their deaths and make his succession look as legitimate as possible. Weber argues that traditional or dynastic leadership "is bound to the precedents handed down from the past and to this extent is also oriented by rules" (*Economy and Society* 244). While certainly Richard is violating "rules" by having his competition murdered, this is all done underhandedly so as to present a façade of a legitimate succession in which these rules appear to be followed. This is reinforced by his performative reluctance to accept the crown: "Will you enforce me to a world of cares?" (III.vii.223). That this is so transparent for the audience and many of the characters perhaps makes Shakespeare's avidity in portraying Richard's dynasticism more siginificant.

The alternative to the underhanded Richard is Richmond; though he appears only briefly in the play, arriving at the end of the fourth act and overthrowing Richard in the fifth, as with Richard, Shakespeare makes his "kingly" qualities clear. Of course, Shakespeare compresses

time for the sake of drama, but even so, we are left in awe at the rapid pace at which Richard's hold on power disintegrates. In scarcely 60 lines, from the time that Richmond arrives in England from France, he has garnered a significant rebel force while Richard's supporters are "dispersed and scattered" (IV.iv.511). Charismatic leadership, Weber specifies, is "a specifically revolutionary force" (*Economy and Society* 244). As a messenger informs Richard, "every hour more competitors / Flock to the rebels, and their power grows strong" (IV.iv.504-505). Therefore, it is clear that Richmond fits the model of a compelling, charismatic leader, one who can garner and utilize the support of the people to achieve his ends. Furthermore, while Richard relies on deception to gain the throne, Richmond's confrontation is completely overt. In fact, he is sent for by his stepfather, Stanley, as soon as Richard is named king, in order to depose him (IV.i.49-50). Thus, Richmond is singled out and chosen by Queen Elizabeth and her supporters.

It is not only the nobility's support that Richmond holds, however. The common people play an essential role in *Richard III*. Anticipating Richard II's jealousy of Bolingbroke's easy way with the commoners, Richard III is enraged when Buckingham reports that he was unable to rouse a crowd into pledging support for Richard. He says, "I bid them that did love their country's good / Cry, 'God save Richard, England's royal king!'" (III.vii.21-22). There is a dark, humorous irony in Buckingham asking for the cheers of those who "did love their country's good," as it is clear that the people recognize Richard's corruption and tyranny. As it happens, "they spake not a word" (III.vii.24) and Richard is angered by their lack of loyalty to him, referring to them as "tongueless blocks" (III.vii.42). By contrast, Richmond speaks to the common people respectfully and gains their loyalty.

In his speech in Act V, Scene III, Richmond addresses his soldiers as "loving countrymen"; by both acknowledging their fidelity and speaking to them as "countrymen,"

Richmond creates a commonality between himself and the soldiers through their love for England if not in other ways (V.iii.237). These, who follow Richmond, are those people that "did love their country's good." The contrast between "gentleman" and "countrymen" and "tongueless blocks" is apparent. Richmond here asserts that "Richard except, those whom we fight against / Had rather have us win than him they follow. / For what is he they follow? Truly, gentlemen, / A bloody tyrant" (V.iii.243-246). Richmond points out that Richard does not really even have the support of those following him and again classes him as a tyrant.

We see then that Shakespeare has created two figures with an "important distinction" between them: "the lawful king and tyrant" (Ribner 61). Richard's defeat and by necessity Richmond's triumph, must be justified, and in Irving Ribner's view, Shakespeare makes their difference in character so clear-cut in order to show that this rebellion, unlike others, "had ushered in the great age which God had granted to England for atonement for her sins" (61). In this play, the ruler and the challenger are characterized in such a way that none can read the play and believe that unseating Richard was unjust, and none can think that Richmond will not be a better king than Richard. Aside from this moralistic or religious interpretation, we can infer a political reading of two types of kingship. We can extend this comparison of "lawful king" and "tyrant" to encompass the difference between dynastic and charismatic claimants. Richard's careful constructed (albeit weak) dynastic claim comes to mean nothing, and Richmond easily wins over Richard's supporters.

Richard's triumph is thus a charismatic victory. After Richmond defeats Richard at the Battle of Bosworth, he proclaims his intention to "let Richmond and Elizabeth, / The true succeeders of each royal house, / By God's fair ordinance conjoin together! / And let their heirs, God, if thy will be so, / Enrich the time to come with smooth-faced peace, / With smiling plenty,

and fair prosperous days!" (V.v.29-33). In a nod to Queen Elizabeth I, one of Richmond's "heirs," Shakespeare predicts that Richmond's reign will be characterized by stability and peace. What is interesting about this conclusion, however, is what it means for Richmond's charismatic claim. Weber argues that charisma in its pure form is unsustainable (*Economy and Society* 246). Once the moment of charismatic revolution passes, charisma becomes either "traditionalized or rationalized, or a combination of both" (246).

Although he proclaims himself to be a "true succeeder," Richmond's dynastic claim is even more tenuous than Richard's, being a descendent of "John of Gaunt's bastard offspring," the Beaufort family (Saccio 10). In securing a match with Elizabeth, Richmond is grafting himself onto her Yorkist family tree. It is significant to note that this comes at the very end of the play, in the last speech, and that her acceptance of his offer is not depicted. Though we certainly understand that the marriage will take place, since it occurs off-stage and after the resolution of the drama, Shakespeare is downplaying the importance of dynasticism in Richmond's kingship.

In showing Richard III, whose primary concern is with legitimacy through succession, overcome by Richmond, who embodies charismatic leadership authority and has an extremely tenuous dynastic claim authenticated only through marriage, Shakespeare is doing two important things. Firstly, he is affirming the validity of charismatic leadership over that of dynastic authority. Richmond's ascendancy is based on popular support and a true political understanding and ability. Interestingly, Edward Hall's account of Richmond's crowning on the battlefield almost perfectly models the charismatic leader: it was "as though he had byne elected king by the voice of the people…and this was the first signe and token of his good lucke and felicite" (Hall 299). As strongly as other characters in the play are repelled by Richard, they are attracted by Richmond. He has what Richard lacks, which is the love and backing of the people. Secondly, he

is showing that Richmond's rise to power is ironic by exposing the hypocrisy of the Tudor myth by showing that a regime that professed the unlawfulness of rebellion was in fact founded by one. Shakespeare is presenting a ruler whose power base is built upon his ability to garner popular support rather than his lineage. The figure who was to begin one of the greatest dynasties in English history has no dynastic authority himself.

If we look at this play alongside *Richard II*, we see that in both cases Shakespeare depicts the overthrow of a tyrannous, bad king by a ruler whose authority does not arise from divinely ordained dynasticism (or a charade of it), but rather from their ability to utilize the support of the people to help their cause. Though predating *Richard II,* there are notable dramatic, and indeed historical, parallels between Henry VII's overthrow of Richard III and the political struggle between Bolingbroke and Richard II. In each, a tyrant (a Richard) is overthrown in favor of a more charismatic ruler (a Henry). This follows on from the theme of exchange we can observe throughout *Richard III*, for example, Margaret's "Thy Edward he is dead that killed my Edward" (IV.iv.63).[13] Yet, as David Bevington notes, an Elizabethan audience accustomed to the Tudor myth was "taught to see history as revealing God's intention and to view Henry VII's accession not as a parallel to the deposing of Richard II by Henry IV but, instead as a divinely sanctioned deliverance of the English nation, to which Elizabeth's subjects were the happy heirs" (646). Indeed, Richard III is a wicked and corrupt leader who will stop at nothing to gain power, resented by his people, whilst Richmond pledges to lead his people out from "underneath the yoke of tyranny" (V.ii.2). Buckingham's ghost tells Richmond, "God and good angels fight on Richmond's side, / And Richard fall in height of all his pride!" (V.iii.175-176).

[13] Margaret is preoccupied throughout the play with exchanges and balance. See also IV.iv.98-104. Furthermore, there is a plethora of doubled names (Edward, Elizabeth, Richard, Henry) that serve to create a notion of interchangeability between characters which Margaret reflects in these lines.

Though *Richard II* also features a Henry-Richard power struggle, the conflict in that play is by no means an exact reconstruction of this one. There is greater moral ambiguity in Richard II and Bolingbroke, and it is not as easy to place them firmly into categories of "good" and "bad." However, each still represents a different type of leadership authority. Whereas in *Richard III*, Richmond's charisma is emphasized about all else and his dynastic claim through marriage downplayed, in *Richard II*, dynasticism and charisma are more equally balanced.

RICHARD II

What sets *Richard II* apart from the other plays in this study is its single-usurpation model. It forces us to address the problem of why Bolingbroke, as usurper, is allowed to prosper while Richard III and Macbeth are not. The explanation is in the deposition itself: Richard has agency in his abdication, and is not killed until after he resigns the crown. The result of this is a brief temporal window in which Richard and Bolingbroke *share* the name of king. By allowing this, Shakespeare invites us to consider the pair's kingly qualities alongside one another. What one lacks, the other has in excess: Bolingbroke is reticent, Richard is verbose; Richard lacks support, Bolingbroke inspires scores of followers. If we understand the play in Weberian terms, Richard II and Henry IV represent two forms of leadership. While Richard has a dynastic claim to the throne and rules by "custom," Henry is one who asserts his authority through "charisma" (Weber, "Politics as a Vocation" 34). What is made clear is that neither is a perfect king. Bolingbroke *is* ratified at the end of the play, but his reign, too, is troubled by civil strife. It is not until the end of this tetralogy that Shakespeare presents us with the ideal ruler in the figure of Henry V.

It is important to understand the basis of Richard II's dynastic claim. Like the Tudors, it was rooted in the idea of the divine right to rule. In all of Shakespeare's histories, Richard II is "the only English king…who is not a usurper or the heir of a usurper, and has therefore the strongest title to legitimacy" (Kiernan 53). If we think of legitimacy in the Weberian sense, however, we can understand it as "a relationship…based on the legitimate use of force (that is to say, force that is perceived as legitimate)" (Weber, "Politics as a Vocation" 34). While Victor Kiernan asserts that this type is the "strongest legitimacy," Weber would argue that a charismatic claim to authority is often enough to overpower traditional legitimacy. Indeed, Richard's lords

are at first reluctant to act away from him, but as the action of the play progresses and he takes more liberties, they begin to turn against him. Bolingbroke's claim to authority is charismatic, and indeed, he is able to gain enough power so as to make Richard feel that he has no choice but to abdicate: "What you will have, I'll give, and willing too, / For do we must what force will have us do" (III.iv.206-207). Richard "relies for his royal legitimacy on the antitheses of personal charisma–hereditary…and traditional authority," and under these circumstances, Bolingbroke's charismatic claim is enough to prevail over Richard's divine right (Falco 66).

Richard's actions weaken his legitimacy. In the first three acts, Richard is presented as tyrannical, a bad king who abuses his power. Richard's deleterious nature is emphasized early in the play; he mismanages the kingdom's finances, admitting that,

> We are enforced to farm our realm,
> The revenue whereof shall furnish us
> For our affairs at hand. If that come short,
> Our substitutes at home shall have blank charters,
> Whereto, when they shall know what men are rich,
> They shall subscribe them for large sums of gold
> And send them after to supply our wants (I.iv.45-51).

Richard allows his lords the rights to these forced loans, showing apathy for the common people. He is also guilty of abuses of the rights of the nobility. He is accused of having had Gloucester murdered ("God's substitute / His deputy anointed in His sight, / Hath caused his death" [I.ii.37-39]), and even of usurpation when he disinherits Bolingbroke. York cautions Richard against this action, reminding him of the sanctity of inheritance: "Is not Gaunt dead? And doth not Hereford live?... / ... Is not his heir a well deserving son?" (II.i.191,194). Richard's own authority rests on his succession to the throne after the death of his father, Edward. York warns him that by denying Bolingbroke "You pluck a thousand dangers on your head, / You lose a thousand well-

disposèd hearts" (II.i.206-207). Quite simply, Richard is breaking the implicit "rules" on which the legitimacy of his kingship rests (Weber, *Economy and Society* 244). As David Bevington observes, "by offending against the most sacred concepts of order and degree, he teaches others to rebel" (Bevington 741). Richard's authority is lessened by his own actions.

The play shows a growth in Bolingbroke's power, but his "exemplary" charisma and political touch is recognized from the start by Richard himself (Weber, *Economy and Society* 215). He notes from the beginning with consternation that Bolingbroke behaves "As were our England in reversion his, / And he our subjects' next degree in hope" (I.iv.35-36). Bolingbroke's advantage over Richard is his "courtship to the common people," which Richard is both threatened by and considers below his station: "How did he seem to dive into their hearts / With humble and familiar courtesy, / What reverence he did throw away on slaves" (I.iv.24-27). Richard's diction, particularly "reverence" being "thrown away" (and therefore wasted on) "slaves" reinforces that Richard does not care for the plight of the common man. Though Richard is more stately and certainly better spoken than Bolingbroke, he nonetheless lacks his rival's populist sentimentalities.

While Richard loses favor over the course of the play, Bolingbroke gains credibility. He is first figured as something of an upstart at the beginning when he challenges Mowbray (and by proxy, Richard) for the death of Gloucester. Bolingbroke, however, comes to stand for the law: when he is banished by Richard, he consents readily: "Your will be done" (I.iii.144). Richard, on the other hand, ignores legal custom after Bolingbroke's father's death, even when his advisors urge him not to: "Think what you will, we seize into our hands / His plate, his goods, his money, and his lands" (II.i.209-210). In taking Bolingbroke's rightful property, he is "frown[ing]… / …against his friends," and in doing so, Barbara J. Baines argues, he is undercutting hereditary

succession in England, and thus invites his own deposition (II.i.178-179, Baines 25). While Bolingbroke breaks his banishment, and thus Richard's law, by returning to England, he does so in defense of the rights of property, and thus, his action is justified in the eyes of the nobles.

Bolingbroke's justification in returning to England is still not enough initially to override divine right. Richard may be a bad king, but in the eyes of most of the lords, he is still a divinely anointed king. Carlisle reassures Richard, "Fear not, my lord. That Power that made you king / Hath power to keep you king in spite of all" (III.ii.27-28). While the noblemen recognize Richard's tyrannous actions, in the first three acts, they adopt a model of passive obedience. They model the Tudor myth whereby it is not the place of the subject to intervene in the actions of a divinely sanctioned king, regardless of how badly they might behave. Gaunt expresses this most clearly to the Duchess of Gloucester: "God's is the quarrel" (I.ii. 37), he tells her, demonstrating that it is not the place of earthly beings to intervene, and that it is up to God to right any wrongs done by Richard: "Let heaven revenge, for I may never lift / An angry arm against His minister" (I.ii.40-41). Gaunt's choice of "minister" is an allusion to Romans 13:1-7, the scripture with which the Tudor myth was justified.[14]

Gaunt's reasoning shows that Shakespeare is grafting these views onto a period that held very different views of the rights of kings.[15] C. G. Thayer argues for the anachronistic nature of this sentiment: "the historical Gaunt…would have found [his words] bizarre, if comprehensible at all" (1). Gaunt's willingness to sit by while Richard abuses his kingly powers is rooted in the

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[14] Recall Romans 13:1-7, in which Paul argues that kings are the "ministers of God" and as such fulfill a divine purpose, not only to reward and praise but also to punish.

[15] Shakespeare's projection of theories of kingship relevant to his own time onto *Richard II* had notable political implications at its time of writing. The scene of Richard's deposition was censored while Elizabeth as alive, and there is some evidence that Shakespeare's company was hired to perform the play on the eve of the 1601 Essex coup against Elizabeth. It is rumored that Elizabeth remarked "I am Richard II–know ye not that?" but this claim has never been properly substantiated. For more on the play in conjunction with Essex, please see Helen Hackett's *Shakespeare and Elizabeth: The Meeting of Two Myths* (2009).

"legal fiction," of the Tudor myth (34). While Carlisle asks, "What subject can give sentence on his king?" with the implied answer than none are capable of doing so, in the historical reality of the Middle Ages, a king's followers were meant to stop him from "abusing his God-given authority" (IV.i.123, Strayer 265). This is a more charismatic view of kingship; kings were divine insofar as their power was recognized and accepted by their peers.

As the action unfolds, we see that the value of Richard's divine status depreciates. In latter two acts, Richard's supporters begin to question their resolve. Even York, who tries to prevent Bolingbroke's coup, eventually switches sides. Richard is unwilling to change his style of rule, and becomes unable even to see himself as a king. Kantorowicz's famous study of Richard's "cascading" indicates that by the beginning of Act IV, Richard is "incapable of expounding his kingship himself" (27, 34). As a result of Richard's impotence, Bolingbroke gains more support, enough to become "the de facto king…in York's view, he must be acknowledged and obeyed" (Bevington 742). As Raphael Falco explains, his return to England signifies the fulfillment of the "salvationistic promise of the charismatic bond, satisfying his followers' charismatic hunger and instantly reorganizing the symbolic order around his charismatic vision" (Falco 98). Richard does not even really fight for his kingship, and his followers turn instead to Richmond.

All of this relates to the play's valuation of Richard's claim to divine right. As Thayer states, "some very specific words in *Richard II* express Tudor views on divine kingship, obedience, and the almost unthinkable evil of rebellion. But the *action* of the play and the entire tetralogy mitigates these words and undercuts their credibility" (15). He becomes an ineffective leader, and indeed is willing to hand over the kingship himself. The result of the play, Richard dead and Henry on his throne, seems to suggest that divine right is not the only thing that is

"credible" in the play. Rebecca Lemon concurs that *Richard II* is "critical of an absolutist political theory–the divine right of kings" (261). Even though Richard is "a legitimate king by the criteria of Shakespeare's own time," the play seems to advocate for a more medieval-charismatic understanding of legitimacy, and promotes the idea that deposition is acceptable, even necessary at times (Thayer 48).

Despite Carlisle's reassurances and Richard's own claim that "Not all the water in the rough rude sea / Can wash the balm off from an anointed king" Shakespeare proves this to be false (III.ii.54-55). Richard's misstep is relying too heavily on divine right; Baines argues that there was potential for Richard to right his wrongs, but that "obsessed with the idea of his divine right and virtual infallibility, cannot bend to such a compromise" (30). He does not realize that it alone is not enough to maintain his position, and his followers gravitate toward the charismatic Bolingbroke.

The gardener's scene serves as political allegory; he complains of the weeds growing throughout "our sea-wallèd garden," England, and explains of the role of the "gardener," a strong ruler who must "cut off the heads of the too-fast-growing sprays" (III.iv.43,34). The gardener admonishes Richard for allowing Bagot, Bushy, and Green to gain too much power, and applauds Bolingbroke for having them executed:

> The weeds which his broad-spreading leaves did shelter,
> That seemed in eating him to hold him up,
> Are plucked up root and all by Bolingbroke:
> I mean the Earl of Wiltshire, Bushy, Green (III.iv.48-53).

Richard allows others to abuse their power, while Bolingbroke is strong, capable of keeping England "trimmed and dressed" (III.iv.56). The gardener adds, "Bolingbroke / Hath seized the wasteful King" (III.iv.54-55). Bolingbroke has taken the kingship from Richard and

demonstrated that he will be able to build a "good government" where Richard has failed (Thayer 15).

In the same scene, the gardener shows the Queen the essence of the difference between Richard and Bolingbroke:

> Their fortunes both are weighed:
> In your lord's scale is nothing but himself
> And some few vanities that make him light;
> But in that balance of the great Bolingbroke,
> Besides himself, are all the English peers,
> And with that odds he weighs King Richard down" (III.iv.84-88).

Richard is "light," whereas Bolingbroke himself is "great," before even considering the "weight" of his supporters. Bolingbroke, therefore, differs from Richard not only because he has the "great" qualities necessary to kingship, but also because of his charisma; he is able to win others over to his cause.

Bolingbroke's ascension to the throne is constant with Weber's representation of the recognition of charisma by the group. Once Richard has abdicated, York invites Bolingbroke to "Ascend his throne" (IV.i.112). Bolingbroke is thus "designated" by the community, and his "legitimacy is acquired" by "recognition on the part of the followers" (Weber, *Economy and Society* 247). Obviously, it is not just Henry IV's ascension that is affirmed in this scene, but also Richard's downfall. By Northumberland, Richard is deemed "worthily deposed" (IV.i.228). Richard's authority has been totally diminished, and his divine right was not enough to preserve him.

Yet, we still see that Richard is not totally weak. While Richard is unable to maintain control of his kingdom, he demonstrates a control of language unrivaled by others in the play, even through his deposition. While Shakespeare demonstrates quite clearly that divine right to

rule is not enough to maintain one's authority, he does allow Richard a certain eloquence and splendidness that is not available to Bolingbroke. As David Bevington puts it, in performance "the play belongs to Richard" (744). Some of his most sophisticated rhetoric emerges when he is at the brink of losing his power. In his speech in Act III, Scene III, he realizes that he has lost to Bolingbroke. This is signified by his use of "king" throughout; in the beginning of the speech, he is referring to himself, but by the end, the "king" is Bolingbroke. Richard achieves this transition using anaphora: he repeats the form "My…for…" in which he will trade in his kingly vestments for items of lowliness (for example, "my figured goblets for dishes of wood" (III.iii.148-152). The speech is bookended by two questions: "What must the king do now?" in reference to himself, and then "What says King Bolingbroke?" (III.iii.143,173). Over the course of the speech, Richard relinquishes his authority and instead looks to Bolingbroke, but in doing so, he delivers a linguistically sophisticated and compelling speech.

While Act III, Scene III is the point at which Richard gives up his power, it is not until Act IV, Scene I, that Bolingbroke officially takes the throne. Shakespeare juxtaposes Richard's lengthy speeches with Bolingbroke's one-line orders and replies. In response to Bolingbroke's curt, "Are you contented to resign the crown?" (IV.i.201), Richard delivers a twenty-two line monologue, rich with figurative language. He begins, "Ay, no; no, ay; for I must nothing be, / Therefore no, no, for I resign to thee" (IV.i.202-203). While the written text of the speech seems to imply confusion or indecision on Richard's part, if we look more closely, we see that the polysemy of "ay" and "I" and furthermore "no" and "know" creates the heard meaning "I know no I." Here, Richard asserts that his self as king has ceased to exist, as reinforced by "I must nothing be." Even as what Richard felt was central to his identity, his divinely appointed status, is lost, he still maintains an elevated elocution. Richard rescinds his earlier assertion that "Not all

the water in the rough rude sea / Can wash the balm off from an anointed king" (III.ii.54-55) with the revision "With mine own tears I wash away my balm, / With my own hands I give away my crown" (IV.i.208-209). Though Richard loses the kingship, here he finally recognizes that his loss is in some part due to his conduct, while at the same time asserting some agency in his own deposition. The crown is *not* taken from him by Bolingbroke; Richard concedes to him. While he says that he is "unkinged by Bolingbroke" it is in fact he that unkings himself (V.v.37).

By the end of the play Richard has been deposed more or less with ease, and a king has been installed who, though lacking a dynastic claim and divine right, still holds promise as a charismatic leader. However, Richard's deposition is portrayed differently from those in *Richard III* and *Macbeth*. In those plays, the deposed king is killed in order for the usurper to take control. In this play, Richard not only lives to see Bolingbroke become king, but Shakespeare cleverly allows Richard and Henry to *share* the title of king for a brief period. Falco asserts, "They are not interchangeable, yet they seem at times to occupy a similar imaginative space, a limbo between improvisational personal power and established traditional rule" (67). Clearly, Shakespeare does not condemn the deposition. Yet, by allowing this brief coexistence of Richard and Henry both as king, we see that Shakespeare is not valuing one's leadership authority exclusively over the other's, but is inviting us to compare the merits of the two types of kingship and emphasizing that each king lacks what the other has.

We see Richard's continued kingship in the play text itself– even after he gives Bolingbroke the crown and scepter, he is still referred to as "King Richard." Furthermore, he continues to refer to himself as "king." He says, "crushing penury / Persuades me I was better when a king; / Then am I kinged again, and by and by / Think that I am unkinged by Bolingbroke, / And straight am nothing" (V.v.34-38). Even as Richard wavers between being

"kinged" and "unkinged" it is significant that he defines himself around the term of "king" and that it is again, he who holds the agency in deciding what he is. Even when he refers to Bolingbroke, it is because he "think[s]" about him, rather than any concrete action of Bolingbroke's. In this scene, for Richard, kingship is crafted as a state of mind.

Perhaps more significant than Richard's own conception is the way other characters refer to the deposed ruler. They too seem to have trouble discerning whether he is king or not. When Richard meets one of his old servants, the man tells him, "I was a poor groom of thy stable, King, / When thou wert king" (V.v.72-73). The groom's urge to refer to Richard as "King" is perhaps a check on Bolingbroke's legitimacy– certainly no one is trying to overthrow Henry and restore Richard, but still, Henry's charisma does not seem to have erased from the minds of all the remembrance of Richard's kingly status and authority. By allowing this joint ownership of the title of king, Shakespeare is hesitating to order charismatic authority ahead of dynastic. Rather, we are forced to consider each of them as a "king," and in doing so, Shakespeare encourages a comparison of Bolingbroke and Henry.

In the instance of Richard's murder, the comparison is furthered. Just after Richard is killed, Shakespeare reiterates his dynastic claim, through the murderer, Exton: "As full of valor as of royal blood. / Both have I spilled. Oh, would the deed were good!" (V.v.113-114). This allusion to Richard's "royal blood" is one last reminder to the audience of what it is that Henry IV lacks: despite the positive qualities that Shakespeare commends, Bolingbroke is nonetheless a usurper. Indeed, even in death, Richard is given equal status to Henry: "This dead king to the living king I'll bear" (V.v.117). This final parallel of the "dead king" to the "living king" again emphasizes the contradictions in their kingship. What one is, the other is not. Richard is divinely anointed, the hereditary successor, while Henry is the usurper. Richard is a politically

incompetent ruler, Henry has been validated by the people for taking Richard's place. Richard is dead, Henry is living.

While the focus of this argument centers on *Richard II*, it is important to consider this play in its context as the first in a series. Though the Tudors assert that rebellion is of the worst sort of undertaking, Thayer argues that this tetralogy, *Richard II*, *Henry IV Parts I and II*, and *Henry V*, largely shows that "England is not punished for allowing Bolingbroke to depose Richard…it is rewarded" (12). In these circumstances, Henry IV's charisma overcomes Richard II's divine right. While there is no immediate backlash against Bolingbroke's actions in this play, we are still able to see that Henry IV has flaws, and that his reign as depicted in the succeeding two plays is not untroubled. Henry IV's famous line "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown" is a reflection of the difficulties of kingship and guilt for his probable involvement in Richard's murder (*II Henry IV,* III.i.31). Much as Richard's hand in Gloucester's murder is never confirmed, Shakespeare creates moral ambiguity for Bolingbroke as well. Although neither Bolingbroke nor Richard is the perfect king, as a result of the events of *Richard II*, we are given Henry V, who comes to embody the good qualities of both rulers.

Over the course of the tetralogy, we see a transformation of Prince Hal. At the start, he is a riotous youth who ignores his responsibility in order that "My reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault, / Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes / Than that which hath no foil to set it off" (*I Henry IV,* I.ii.207-209). Indeed, the figure we see in *Henry V* has matured and proves himself to be an apt leader. He embodies the good qualities of both Henry IV and Richard. He seemingly "inherits" Richard's way with words, and Bevington notes "skill in rhetoric is key to Henry's success" (874). Like Richard, Henry V speaks in such as way as to inspire sympathy and allegiance. Since he has received the crown from his father, and is not himself a usurper, he has a

dynastic claim with which to legitimate his rule. Unlike Richard, however, his claim does not rest simply on inheritance, but on his charismatic ability as well. The chorus of *Henry V* interprets the action of the play for us; at the start of Act IV, Henry is described as going about in disguise to talk to his soldiers: he "Bids them good morrow with a modest smile, / And calls them brothers, friends, and countrymen" (IV.n.33-34). Like Bolingbroke, he has political ability and has fellowship with the common people, figured as "A little touch of Harry in the night" (IV.n.47). This political touch and his rhetorical ability merge in his St. Crispin's Day speech just before the Battle of Agincourt:

> The fewer men, the greater share of honor….
> We few, we happy few, we band of brothers.
> For he today that sheds his blood with me
> Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
> This day shall gentle his condition. (*Henry V,* IV.iii.22, 60-63).

Henry uses rhetoric to bolster his men; he is in an unfavorable military position, being outnumbered, but by presenting this as "the greater share of honor," makes it as if their circumstance is ideal. His use of "we" emphasizes the commonalities between him and the soldiers rather than their class difference, and in fighting with him the men "shall be [his] brother," and "gentle [their] condition." Henry V, similarly to Richmond's use of "countrymen," thus elevates his soldiers in such a way as to rally their strength and loyalty. In this speech, we can see plainly the way in which Shakespeare figures Henry V as an inheritor of the best of Richard II and Bolingbroke.

If we understand Henry V as the third point of a triangle representing three types of kingship in this tetralogy, then we can understand why Shakespeare allows Henry IV to carry on when the usurpers in *Richard III* and *Macbeth* are denied. While in *Richard II*, Bolingbroke's

charisma wins out over Richard's divine right and dynasticism, Bolingbroke's real "triumph [is] through the glory of his heir" (Baines 24). Bolingbroke is not punished in order that the crown can pass to his son, and we can therefore understand Henry V as a figure who holds both a dynastic and charismatic claim, and his military success over France makes him the ideal English ruler. Such a ruler creates stability, in being part of an established line of succession, and also inspires loyalty. Indeed, the chorus at the end of *Henry V* highlights these two qualities:

> This star of England. Fortune made his sword,
> By which the world's best garden he achieved,
> And of it left his son imperial lord.
> Henry the Sixth, in infant bands crowned King
> Of France and England, did this king succeed (Epilogue, 4-10).

While "garden" in this line refers to France, it also connotes the gardener scene in *Richard II.* Henry V, like his father, has become a good gardener and ruler, and also passes his kingdom onto a son, Henry VI. Audience members would know that the fate of Henry VI from the first tetralogy, but the play nonetheless ends on a triumphant notes and upholds Henry V as an ideal English king. We can thus see a progression from *Richard III*, in which Henry VII has no dynastic claim of his own (he gains traditional legitimacy through his marriage to Elizabeth, and only after the close of the play), to Henry V as the greatest of a trinity of kings presented in this tetralogy. Shakespeare shows the qualities of two kings coming together in one supreme figure.

MACBETH

Macbeth was written roughly a decade after *Richard II.* James's ascension to the English throne in 1603 created a new political environment with its own set of complications. While we can consider *Richard III and Richard II* to be tragic in form, after Elizabeth's death, Shakespeare largely abandoned the formal history genre; his collaboration with John Fletcher on *Henry VIII*, performed in 1613, was his last effort.[16] Instead, he turned to tragedy: as Raymond Williams theorizes, tragedy reflects the "fundamental beliefs and tensions of a period" (69) and thus, like *Richard III* and *Richard II*, we can consider Shakespeare's Jacobean work as an extension of his study of kingship begun in the Elizabethan theater. In this play, Shakespeare creates another ideal ruler like Henry V with a dual dynastic and charismatic claim in Malcolm. While in *Richard II*, there were two kings representing charisma and tradition, with each having good and bad qualities, in this play Macbeth is anathema to both types of authority and stands in for absolutism. While Henry V was the end product of an entire tetralogy, in *Macbeth*, Shakespeare achieves the transition from tyrant to idealized king in one play.

To understand how kingship functions in this play, we must understand *Macbeth* in terms of its local political-historical context. Drama itself underwent changes as a result of the succession. Shakespeare's company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, was famously brought under royal patronage and became the King's Men. The Stuarts' interest in plays "dignified" theatrical performance, but Alvin B. Kernan argues that the Stuarts also possessed "a heightened appreciation of the usefulness of art for the state" (xvi, 173). By bringing playing companies under royal patronage, "the state was thus in control of the theater," and indeed, James made use of drama in a way that his predecessors had not (9). Under the Stuarts, the King's Men

[16] While it is difficult to be definitive, most scholarship believes that Shakespeare is responsible for I.i-ii, II.iii-iv, III.ii, and V.i. The remainder, including the prologue and epilogue, are credited to Fletcher.

performed an average of 14 plays a year for the court, compared to a mere 32 total in the last decade of Elizabeth's life (xvi). While the King's Men still performed in public theaters, and indeed, continued to generate much of their revenue that way, their affinity to the court also increased Shakespeare's awareness of his royal audience.

While *Macbeth* might seem like a play that caters to James's "personal interests"; through its Scottish setting, references to the Gunpowder Plot, the Stuart line of succession through Banquo, and interactions with and allusions to James's own writings, notably *Daemonologie*; it is also a play, like *Richard II* and *Richard III*, that expresses views about a certain type of kingship, and not necessarily one that James approved of (Hadfield 82). Just like the Tudor myth, the Stuart view of kingship centered on the adherence of the divine right to rule. Kernan observes that in the seventeenth century, "now divine-right monarchs appeared who claimed authority directly from God over all the areas of the civil and much of the personal life of all ranks of subjects" (1). With James's ascension to the English throne, Scotland was united with England and Ireland by personal union of James as the king, and he presided over them as "absolutist state[s]" (Sinfield 95). Indeed, throughout his reign in England, James had a great difficulty working with his Parliament: he felt it was his place as an absolute and divinely appointed ruler to rule unquestioned.

James was himself an intellectual, and he wrote many discourses on proper government. His 1598 treatise, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies,* outlines the duties of subjects to their king. In keeping with the Tudor view, he condemned rebellion, even against tyrants: "the wickednesse therefore of the King can neuer make them that are ordained to be iudged by him, his Iudges….For a king cannot be imagined to be so vnruly and tyrannous, but the common-wealth will be kept in better order, notwithstanding thereof, by him, then it can be by his way-taking"

(78-79). Furthermore, he believed the king to be above the law and direction of others. His speech to his parliament in 1610, though dated four years after *Macbeth* was first performed, is nonetheless a good representation of his views and the contention they found in England. He reprimands Parliament for chastising him, and lists three things to avoid:

> First, that you doe not meddle with the maine points of Gouernment; that is my craft…to meddle with that were to lesson me…I must not be taught my Office. Secondly, I will not haue you meddle with such ancient Rights of mine, as I haue receiued from my Predecessors *More Maiorum* [by ancestral claim]: such things I would bee sorie should bee accounted for *Grieuances*… ("Speech to Parliament, 21 March 1610," 190-191).

That James defends his "ancient Rights," "craft," and "Office" and refuses to be "lesson[ed]" demonstrates his valuation of his own individual rights above those of the collective, his parliament. As an absolute ruler, James believed himself to be outside of the law, and his reign, though more or less peaceful, was characterized by disagreement with Parliament.

It was in this context that Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth.* In the same way that Shakespeare used *Richard III* and *Richard II* to address the ironies of the Tudor myth, he uses the "Scottish play" to comment on James's views on absolutism. While Shakespeare sets up the drama of this play as a conflict between primogeniture and usurping tyranny, it is important to note that the historical reality upon which Shakespeare based *Macbeth* was a very different political climate. Kingship in Scotland, rather than following a rule of primogeniture like that established by Duncan early in the play, was in fact more based around tanistry, a model in which a successor, though not necessarily a hereditary one, was elected before the end of the king's lifetime. Still, in the reality of Scottish history, many of the historical forerunners of Duncan and Macbeth had been killed in "what was fairly standard procedure in medieval Scotland" (Wortham 113). Furthermore, the historical Macbeth actually ruled peaceably for several years, before being

himself killed and replaced. By contrast, in *Macbeth,* Shakespeare takes something that was commonplace for its time (regicide) and makes it shocking by aligning the characters in the play with more modern conceptions of kingship. By taking *Macbeth* out of its historical source context, we see that Shakespeare is able to use the action of the play as a means of commenting on the contemporary kingship of James.

Many scholars have argued that the play promotes the Stuart worldview and, as Shakespeare's art was patronage art, was concerned mainly with "legitimation" (Kernan 185). While the play ultimately affirms Stuart lineage and seems to support the divine right to rule advanced by James's conception of kingship, when we look critically at the contents of the play and the types of rulers it examines, we can see that it is not without censure of some of James's beliefs and practices. In a similar way to the rise of the Tudors in *Richard III*, Shakespeare is dramatizing this historical moment both to tell the story of Stuart succession through Banquo's line and also to critique absolute rule. Thus, with *Macbeth*, Shakespeare compares two types of kingship: absolute, embodied in an extreme way by Macbeth, and a more feudal and charismatic model, represented first by Duncan, and later Malcolm, and affirmed by the ending of the play. We will see, however, that Malcolm's claim is not simply purely charismatic; Malcolm embodies both a dynastic claim through the primogeniture established by Duncan and a charismatic claim validated by Macduff and the thanes. Like Henry V, Malcolm represents the ideal ruler: one who combines both traditional and charismatic leadership authority, both creating stability and inspiring loyalty.

In this play, absolutism is inextricably linked with individualism; it is the privileging of the king above all others and places their practices outside of the realm of "assessment" (Sinfield 98). J.K. Walton characterizes Macbeth as one who "consciously and unvaryingly puts what he

conceives to be his own interests before those of his fellow men" (102), corroborated by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's assessment that "nothing makes him budge…neither divine nor human claims–he withdraws from them all into himself and persists" (Walton 102, Hegel 207). It is not that Macbeth is simply evil–indeed, he recognizes the moral shortcomings of his plan to murder Duncan, and yet, proceeds in it nonetheless. He almost laments, "I have no spur / To prick the sides of my intent, but only / Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself" (I.vii.25-27). Macbeth is unable to check his "vaulting ambition," and the use of "o'erleaps" indicates that Macbeth knows something of what will happen if he commits this crime. The events of the play are catalytic, stemming from this "o'erleap" of Macbeth's.

Interestingly, Shakespeare does not depict Macbeth's crowning as king; rather the audience is informed about it in a small scene with Ross and Macduff, who reports that Macbeth is "gone to Scone / To be invested" (II.iv.31-32). This off-stage ceremony serves to further emphasize the individual nature of Macbeth's kingship. David Lucking, in his persuasive article on the concept of naming in *Macbeth* observes, "what the individual is essentially doing in assuming a title that is not his by birthright or otherwise vouchsafed to him by society is *naming himself*, something that is a contradiction in terms given the communal nature of the language of which names comprise a vital element" (417). Macbeth's murder of the rightful king, and thus disruption of the primogeniture Duncan established by naming Malcolm his heir, is essentially Macbeth's forceful taking of the "name of king" upon himself. It is not a title given, but rather stolen. He not only is the enemy of dynasticism by denying Malcolm's succession, but because he is not affirmed as king, or "named" to understand it in Lucking's terms, he also stands in contrast to charismatic authority.

Though Macbeth assumes the role of king and acts as such, by excluding the actual coronation from the action in the play, Shakespeare is removing society from the act and thus is underscoring that Macbeth's individualized seizure of the crown is not truly sanctioned by the collective. Indeed, Weber states that legitimacy on the part of a ruler is dependent upon "recognition of the part of those subject to authority" (*Economy and Society* 242). The mode of representation of Macbeth's kingmaking ceremony stands in direct contrast to that of Malcolm at the end, who is on-stage and receives the approval of his peers. Furthermore, Macbeth is never hailed as king (except by the witches) in the play. By portraying Macbeth in this way, Shakespeare is taking away something of the legitimacy of his kingship as we understand it in Weberian terms, in that he lacks both traditional and charismatic authority.

After Macbeth's usurpation of Duncan, the differences in the two rulers are pronounced. While Macbeth is isolated by his guilt and developing madness, Duncan relied on his kinsmen, acknowledging their valor and loyalty to him against the Thane of Cawdor. He says to Macbeth, "Would thou hadst less deserved, / That the portion both of thanks and payment / Might have been mine!" (I.iv.18-20). Indeed, Duncan's gratitude is such that he conveys the traitorous Thane of Cawdor's title upon him, stating rather ironically "What he hath lost noble Macbeth hath won" (I.ii.70). It seems that Macbeth inherited the treachery of the previous Thane in claiming his title. Macbeth, in contrast to Duncan, acts individualistically, suspicious of all those around him and paranoid that his crime will be discovered. Despite Banquo's assurance to Macbeth that he may "Command upon me, to the which my duties / Are with a most indissoluble tie / Forever knit" (III.i.16-18), Macbeth fears that as the only other person to have heard the witches' prophecy, Banquo is a threat to his sovereignty. Furthermore, the witches' prophecy to Banquo that he, not

Macbeth, "shalt get kings" threatens Macbeth's hold on the throne (I.iii.67). He admits, "Our fears in Banquo / Stick deep" (III.i.50-51) and has him murdered to strengthen his position.

Macbeth's status as an individual, apart from the collective, only intensifies as the play goes on, not only as a result of his mistrust of others, but of his developing madness. At the banquet, Macbeth sees the ghost of Banquo and is seized by fear in its presence. Despite the efforts of the lords and of Lady Macbeth to calm him, Macbeth is nearly senseless to them. It is almost as if he and the ghost are alone, in the total disregard that Macbeth holds for those listening, as he speaks openly about murder: "The time has been / That, when the brains were out, the man would die, / And there an end; but now they rise again" (III.iv.79-81). Fearful that he will reveal their crime, Lady Macbeth sends the guests away. She tells Macbeth, "You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting / With most admired disorder" (III.iv.110-111). That the "good meeting," a communal gathering, is broken up by Macbeth's "disorder," is representative of the negative effects of the individual or absolute ruler on a country; indeed, the trope of Scotland as plunged into chaos and as being ill after Macbeth's accession is one which is carried out through the play, much as in *Richard III*.

All this stands in contrast to Macbeth's opening lines in the scene, in which he asserts "Ourself will mingle with society" (III.iv.3). Shakespeare's diction here is interesting, as "society" here means company, but also connotes a larger communal group. Despite Macbeth's claim, it is quickly shown that Macbeth can't hold with "society." Lady Macbeth's orders to the lords not to try to communicate with Macbeth are equally interesting: "If you much note him / You shall offend him and extend his passion" and "I pray you, speak not. He grows worse and worse; / Question enrages him" (III.iv.56-57, III.iv.118-119). These directives help to model absolute rule and recall James's command to Parliament not to "lesson" him. To question

Macbeth's action would only "offend" and "enrage" him. The banquet shows that he is isolated in every way from others– he is not only unaware of the presence of others, but is exempt also from their advice and guidance. We see from this scene that now even Lady Macbeth is unable to hold much influence over him.

Macbeth's greatest and final separation from the collective comes at the end of the play, as the castle is being attacked by Malcolm and Macduff's forces. Rather than taking the field, Macbeth remains solitary in the castle, and we learn as Siward reports to Malcolm that "The castle's gently rendered: / The tyrant's people on both sides do fight, / The noble thanes do bravely in the war, / The day almost itself professes yours, / And little is to do" (V.vii.25-29). This indication that some of Macbeth's number have abandoned his cause and his physical placement apart from his troops reinforces once again Macbeth's separation from his peers. This cowardice is a disparity from his military bravery in Act I. By contrast, Siward and his other men are recognizing Malcolm, much like Bolingbroke, as the *de facto* leader, and this is also reminiscent of the opening battle and the way that his followers address Duncan. Macbeth garners no such support or respect from the thanes; rather he is left to speak only to Seyton, the servant. The proximity of this report by Siward to Macbeth's stand off against Macduff reinforces that Malcolm is a ruler who commands and is supported by the collective, whereas Macbeth is left to fight for himself as an individual. By placing these two scenes closely together, Shakespeare is priming Malcolm for the recognition of his kingship that comes at the end of the play.

Shakespeare compares Malcolm and Macbeth not just by showing one supported and one in isolation, but also in their characterization. In presenting Malcolm, Shakespeare inserts explicit discourse about what it means to be a good king and ruler. This "debate," found in Act

IV, Scene III, is "at the centre of the drama, oddly out of place" (Asquith 212). If we agree with this characterization, than we must ask what purpose Shakespeare is serving in including this discourse within the play. As Malcolm describes "the king-becoming graces" to Macduff thus, "As justice, verity, temperance, stableness, / Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness, / Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude," Shakespeare is able to use Malcolm as a mouthpiece for what a good ruler must be (IV.iii.92-95). By contrast, Macbeth is "bloody, / Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful, / Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin, / That has a name" (IV.iii.58-61). In other words, Macbeth is an absolute ruler, a tyrant, while Malcolm claims that "What I am truly / Is thine and my poor country's to command" (IV.iii.132-133). This idea that Malcolm, as the model of the good ruler, is Scotland's "to command" emphasizes the need for approval of the ruler by his peers; the true king is not one who acts individually, as Macbeth does, but one who is in the service of the collective. To act otherwise would be to act in tyranny. Indeed, James himself wrote that the "vsurping Tyran" was one who put himself before this subjects by "inuerting all good Lawes to serue onely for his vnrulie priuate affections" (*Basilicon Doron*, 20). Both absolutism and tyranny are tied to the idea of individualism, and Shakespeare shows us that the progression from one to the other is easily achieved.

The very way this exchange between Malcolm and Macduff is structured is intriguing; evoking Hal's speech in *I Henry IV*, Malcolm tests Macduff's "good truth and honor" by pretending that "of the king-becoming graces" he has "none" (IV.iii.118, IV.iii.92).[17] "Tyranny" and "tyrant" feature heavily in this scene, and when asked if such a person as Malcolm poses as is fit to govern, Macduff responds,

Fit to govern?

[17] Henry too pretends to be unruly and irresponsible before he assumes power as king; recall his speech in *I Henry IV*, I.ii.207-209.

> No, not to live. O nation miserable,
> With an untitled tyrant bloody-sceptered,
> When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
> Since that the truest issue of thy throne
> By his own interdiction stands accurst
> And does blaspheme his breed? (IV.iii.102-109).

On one level, Macduff equates Malcolm to Macbeth, and is unafraid to condemn him. Since Stuart ideology, much like the Tudor myth, proclaimed that tyrants were meant to be endured, and never to be spoken out against, Shakespeare is here making a statement about absolute rule. It is clear from this scene, with its discussion of the good qualities of a ruler and its exhibition of Macduff standing against a tyrant, that *Macbeth* is not a play that supports this mode of governance.

On another level, however, Macduff is setting Malcolm and Macbeth up for comparison, even as he condemns them for having similar qualities. Macbeth is an "untitled tyrant," totally lacking legitimacy. His use of "untitled" underscores that Macbeth's kingship is not valid. By comparison, Malcolm is modeled as "the truest issue of [Scotland's] throne" and it is here that we can see the basis of Malcolm's dynastic claim. Malcolm has not only charismatic leadership authority, evidenced by his commitment to the Scottish people and their later affirmation of his leadership, but he has also traditional authority, being the "issue" which Duncan appointed as his successor. Thus, even when Macduff is denouncing both of them as tyrants, there is still a distinction being made between their two claims: Malcolm has dynastic right, while Macbeth is simply a usurper, lacking both charismatic and traditional authority.

While Shakespeare opposes Duncan and Malcolm against Macbeth to demonstrate two contrasting kinds of kingship, at the end of the play on type is firmly reinforced over another. On a superficial level, Macbeth's kingship is diminished by virtue of his death at the hands of

Macduff. More telling, however, is what happens in the short scene following. While we saw that with Macbeth, Shakespeare removed his coronation from the stage and thus emphasized the individuality of Macbeth's kingship, Malcolm's affirmation as king takes place before the thanes and is presented to the audience as the close of the action.

Supporting a Weberian understanding of charismatic leadership authority, Lucking's logic that "there can be no kingship without community, for the monarch's distinctiveness can be defined as such only in relation to that social matrix of which he is inseparably apart," demonstrates that indeed, Malcolm's kingship is not something he takes upon himself, as Macbeth did, but rather it is something bestowed by Macduff (Lucking 415). "Hail king! For so thou art" Macduff tells Malcolm, and "I see thee compassed with thy kingdom's pearl, / That speak my salutation in their minds, / Whose voices I desire aloud with mine: / Hail, King of Scotland!" (V.viii.54, V.viii.56-59). That Malcolm is "compassed with thy kingdom's pearl" demonstrates that like a crown encircled by pearls, Malcolm is surrounded by his noblemen. Macduff's proclamation of Malcolm as ruler, and confirmation by the thanes affirmed by the lords' repeated "Hail, King of Scotland!" shows that it is not simply enough to restore the law of primogeniture, but that Malcolm must also be recognized by the other nobles as king for his kingship to be legitimate.

Some scholars have noted that "although other plays by this same dramatist dignify their protagonists with the name of king even if they too are usurpers, Macbeth is pointedly denied this courtesy" (Lucking 422). Indeed, the absence of "King" not only from the title of the play, but throughout the play itself in reference to Macbeth is striking. This is in spite of the fact that "the audience [is] asked to identify to such an extent with the evildoer himself" (Bevington 1255). Bevington notes that even in *Richard III*, which also features an evil protagonist, that "the

spectators are distanced by the character's gloating and are not partakers in the introspective soliloquies of a man [Macbeth] confronting his own ambition," and yet, we see that Macbeth is denied the title of king even where Richard was allowed it. Thus, the contrast between the kingship of Macbeth throughout the play and the comparatively brief portrayal of Malcolm's at the end shows that while one monarch is denounced, isolated, and indeed, never truly recognized as king, only as "tyrant," the other is hailed, legitimated, and celebrated.

The final underscoring of the contrast between these two kinds of kingship, Macbeth's as individual and absolutist, lacking any Weberian grounds for legitmacy, and Malcolm's as a more feudal and charismatic type in which the ruler must be affirmed as such, can be found in Malcolm's last speech, which closes the play. He tells the thanes that "We shall not spend a large expense of time / Before we reckon with your several loves / And make us even with you" (V.viii.61-63). Thus, like his father, Malcolm is recognizing those among his noblemen who have helped his cause and the debts of gratitude he owes them. Furthermore, his declaration that the thanes will "Henceforth be earls" is not only a departure from traditional Scottish titles, but also an elevation of their status, as earls were of a higher standing than thanes (V.viii.64).[18] In doing so, Malcolm embodies the charismatic practice to "reward…political loyalty" with "prizes to flatter [supporters'] vanity" (Weber, "Politics as a Vocation" 36).

Finally, alluding to the earlier report of Macbeth's coronation is the closing couplet: "So, thanks to all at once and to each one, / Whom we invite to see us crowned as Scone" (V.viii.75-76). Malcolm's thanking of the new earls is significant because it demonstrates his dependence upon them; unlike Macbeth, who brought kingship upon himself unlawfully, Malcolm

[18] Definition of "thane" from The Oxford English Dictionary: "One who in Anglo-Saxon times held lands of the king or other superior by military service; originally in the fuller designation *cyninges þegn*, 'king's thane, military servant or attendant'; in later times simply *thegn*, as a term of rank, including several grades below that of an *ealdorman* or *eorl* (earl *n.* 2) and above that of the *ceorl* or ordinary freeman."

recognizes that it is only with the earls' military help and compliance with his position as king that he is able to rule Scotland. Furthermore, Macduff's synecdoche of the crown and this reference to his coronation fit Weber's concept of charismatic ritual, with "the most important transfer of…royal authority [from the collective to the bearer of charisma] by anointing and by coronation" (*Economy and Society* 248-249). The earls' invitation to Scone, contrasted with their absence from it for Macbeth's coronation, reiterates that "with the accession of Malcolm at the conclusion of the play, the king's voice once again merges with that of the people whose nomination he has received, and the name of king is therefore restored to the possession…of the entire community in which he participates" (Lucking 425). Thus, in paralleling two kingmaking scenes, Shakespeare clearly affirms Malcolm's kingship, and reject Macbeth's. In doing so, he presents us with a ruler with a dynastic claim ("truest issue") as established by Duncan, and with a charismatic claim, confirmed by the earls and Macduff's bestowal of the title him.

We see in *Macbeth,* as in the Ricardian plays, Shakespeare is using drama as a means of acting out and passing judgment upon kingship. Here, he is engaging with James's ideology centered on divine right to rule and absolutism, just as he did with the Tudor myth. Though the play sees the fall of the tyrannous Macbeth and affirms Stuart lineage through Banquo, if we look at Malcolm and Macbeth as representing two kinds of kingship, we see that Shakespeare is expressing anxieties about the absolute rule approved of by James and carried to the limit of tyranny by Macbeth. Though James is certainly not a tyrant in the way that Macbeth is, the commonalities between Macbeth's view of his role as king and James's are quite similar. We see through James's speech to Parliament and political writings that he subscribed to the view of the king as superior and separate from his peers, which is much more in line with Macbeth's

isolation and individualism in the play than the communal-feudal kingship modeled by Duncan and Malcolm.[19]

In *Macbeth,* we see that Shakespeare has continued the study of kingship that began in the Elizabethan theater. The three plays in this study fit as stories of regicide, usurpation, and civil strife. Together, they show a progression of sorts in the type rulers upheld at the conclusion. First, we see the charismatic Richmond, in contestation with a faux dynastic claimant. Next, we have Henry V, the synthesis of a divine right, traditionalist king, and his charismatic challenger. Finally, in this play, we are presented with Malcolm: opposed to Macbeth, who can claim neither true charismatic nor dynastic legitimacy, Malcolm is the confluence of primogeniture and a medieval, charismatic kingship whereby the ruler must be chosen and approved of by the community. Malcolm is "planted newly with the time," holding the promise of a hopeful new era, and has the charismatic "king-becoming graces" of "mercy, lowliness, / Devotion, patience, courage" (V.viii.66, IV.iii.92, 94-95). Thus, we are left with the ideal ruler, a claimant with traditional and charismatic authority.

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[19] Perhaps one could even argue that like Macbeth, James really holds no true dynastic or charismatic claim. Not a direct successor, and certainly not popular with his parliament, the king might in fact have more in common with Macbeth than with Banquo. While reading into these similarities, like the Richard II-Elizabeth I parallel, might be going to far, we can nonetheless conclude that Shakespeare continued to use representations of kingship in his plays as a means of continuing the monarchical critique he established in his Elizabethan plays.

CONCLUSION

These three plays explore ideas of what it means to be a successful ruler. Much like Shakespeare, we now conclude our study of kingship. Using the form of tragedy and the device of usurpation, Shakespeare presents us with pairs of kings in conflict: Richard III and Richmond, Richard II and Bolingbroke, Macbeth and Malcolm. In aligning these figures with different Weberian grounds for legitimacy (or none at all, in the case of Macbeth), Shakespeare allows for a comparison of the virtues of each.

In *Richard III*, importance of a dynastic claim is minimized by associating traditional authority with Richard III's charade of lineal succession. We do have a combination of charismatic and dynastic authority in Richmond, whose marriage to Elizabeth serves to "routinize" his charisma and bring him into the York line, but this takes place off stage and after the conclusion of the play.

The conflict between Bolingbroke and Richard II is perhaps the most equally balanced between traditional and charismatic authority. In *Richard II*, we are presented with a hereditary, divine right king who abuses his kingly powers and lacks any real political ability. Bolingbroke, by contrast, serves as a representative of the law in the play and shows himself to be a populist king. However, while both rulers are associated clearly with one model of kingship, they are still characterized by ambiguity in the way they carry out their leadership. Richard is a weak king who easily resigns his own power, but we are not left without sympathy for him. In the circumstances of the play, Bolingbroke is supported instead of Richard II, but we are not confident that Bolingbroke will be a perfect king either.

Shakespeare allows Richard and Bolingbroke to coexist as kings in order to highlight the merits of each. This is what sets this middle play apart from the others; whereas Richard III and

Macbeth, as usurpers, are punished, Bolingbroke is allowed to rule, albeit not entirely peacefully. This is so that the rowdy Prince Hal can undergo a transformation to become the ideal English king. Because he inherits the throne from his father rightfully from his father (though this is qualified by Bolingbroke's usurper status), Henry V has a dynastic right to the crown. His eloquence in speaking is similar to Richard's sophisticated rhetoric, but while Richard was not able to accomplish much by way of his, Henry uses rhetoric in conjunction with his charisma to inspire loyalty. His carousing with the common people in *Henry IV, Parts I and II* develops into a communalistic camaraderie with his soldiers in *Henry V*. Thus. Henry V is the synthesis of the best qualities of Richard II and Henry IV. It is often colloquially remarked that the French king Louis XV inherited all of the vices and none of the virtues of his father, the revered Sun King; in the case of Henry V, the opposite is proven true.

Finally, in *Macbeth* we are presented with a similar scenario as the second tetralogy, but with important revisions. Malcolm, like Henry V, holds a dual claim of traditional and charismatic authority, but his foil, Macbeth, differs from the others Shakespeare presents. In the Weberian understanding, Macbeth holds no leadership authority. He lacks charismatic affirmation and disrupts the line of succession by taking the throne. Though this is fitting with the historical reality of Scotland at this time, in the reality of the play it brands him a tyrant. That his coronation is off stage and that he is only hailed as king by the Weird Sisters indicates that the play does not recognize his kingship. Macduff's defeat of Macbeth at the end serves a dual purpose: it restores the line of succession, and also creates a situation in which the communal group endorses Malcolm's kingship. In renaming the thanes "earls" at the close of the play, Malcolm is both establishing a traditionalist hierarchy and modeling the charismatic reward given to show gratitude toward one's followers.

Furthermore, through local references to Elizabeth and James within each play, we can also see that Shakespeare uses the medieval settings of these plays to work through and comment on the political discourses of his own time. His engagement with the Tudor myth, especially in *Richard III*, allows Shakespeare to both applaud the rise of Henry Tudor while also exposing the hypocrisy and irony of a dynasty that condemned rebellion being founded by one. Aside from Shakespeare's critique of divine right in *Richard II*, historical evidence suggests that a performance of the play was used by the Earl of Essex to incite revolutionary fervor against Queen Elizabeth. While the veracity of Elizabeth's "I am Richard II–know ye not that?" remark can never be known with certainty, critics have asserted that "many (including the queen) saw striking parallels between her insecurity and Richard's" (Moseley 87).

Stuart absolutism, which followed hard after the Tudor myth in its attitudes and doctrines, found its critique in the character of Macbeth. While Macbeth, as a tyrant, models absolutism taken to an extreme limit and is not a direct analogue of James, he is nonetheless connected to the king through their shared commitment to individualism. Macbeth is isolated throughout the play, and although it is Lady Macbeth who spurs him on to murder, he is soon out of her control, and barely reacts to her death. James made his own views of the separate nature of kings from their subjects clear in his political writings and speeches to Parliament. The rhetorical similarities between *Macbeth* and James's writings suggest that even though Shakespeare tells the story of the Stuart rise to greatness through Banquo, the central focus of the play is really on the absolutism of Macbeth rather than James's progenitor.

Shakespeare's work holds infinite complexity, and it has been the purpose of this study to illuminate one aspect of the Ricardian plays and *Macbeth*. Using Max Weber's theories of leadership authority and bases of legitimacy, we can understand the kings depicted in these plays

as representing varying combinations of dynastic and charismatic authority. What we see when we look at these plays in order is a further and further condensation of the creation of the idealized dynastic-charismatic king: with Richmond, his dynasticism is minimized and corroborated only after the end of the play; in the second tetralogy, we are presented with a trinity of kings, of which Henry V is the culmination of his two predecessors; and in *Macbeth,* this process which took four plays for Hal is streamlined into one, with a resulting figure, Malcolm, who has an even firmer dynastic claim than Henry V. What Shakespeare presents us with, in understanding these plays together, is a prototype of an ideal ruler: one who is both his "grandsire's son's son," a hereditary claimant, and "his own carver," a politically capable and astute leader able to attain the devotion of his followers (*Richard II*, II.i.104-105, II.iii.144).

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