Machiavelli's Political Theory in *Tamburlaine the Great*

By Tyler J. Bowers

A Senior Comprehensive Project in English and Political Science

Submitted to the Departments of English and Political Science at Allegheny College

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Bachelor of Arts Degree

4/3/2015

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Professor Smith _____

Professor Votava _____

I hereby recognize and pledge to fulfill my responsibilities as defined in the Honor Code and to maintain the integrity of both myself and the college community as a whole.

_____

Tyler James Bowers

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Introduction: Machiavelli and Marlowe

One of the most common tropes of English theater, the Machiavel, was used by Christopher Marlowe to great effect in *Tamburlaine the Great.* This project seeks to analyze and interpret *Tamburlaine the Great* after first presenting an analysis of the work of Niccolò Machiavelli. In doing that we might better understand the actions and that were taken by Christopher Marlowe during the writing of such a stylistically different take on Machiavelli and maybe we will be able to discover why Christopher Marlowe seemingly utilized the full scope of Machiavelli's *The Prince.* Marlowe utilized *The Prince* in a way that was drastically different from the rest of the English dramatists and writers of his time period. Hints of Machiavellian ideas can be seen in nearly any passage. Through close readings of both Machiavelli's work and through close readings of Marlowe's drama we will discover that Marlowe was writing to make the English people think of the idea of succession and the merit of those who gain the throne by succession.

The political theory of Machiavelli has gone through multiple periods of interpretation; ranging from thinking that Machiavelli was an inherently evil man who wanted to place a supremely powerful dictator on the throne to thinking that Machiavelli was only promoting principalities on the face of things and that he was actually supporting the creation of a republic through a strong leader. The first chapter of this project will explore the threads of republicanism that run through *The Prince* and to a lesser extent *The Discourses* in an attempt to render a counter-argument of sorts to the typical English interpretation of Machiavelli that Marlowe's audience would have been familiar with. Machiavelli does not come right out and say that he is supporting republics. The message is found in what he does not say and in how he seems to view

the inherent nature of republics. Machiavelli believes that they have achieved a higher level of society than what can be achieved through a principality. However, Machiavelli does like strong leaders and some of what he is saying would actually support a prince in his quest for power. The trick of Machiavelli's work manifests through the knowledge that most of the leaders who he references actually either die or fail in their quests for power. In the case of Romulus and Moses, arguably his two favorite case studies, they both achieve greatness and lead to the creation of lasting civilizations before being killed by their followers.

The second chapter will focus on discovering and understanding the influence of Machiavelli in England. Some scholars argue that the English were not ready for any interpretation of Machiavelli except for one that was focused solely on morality. Without actually reading and understanding Machiavelli as a whole, his most notorious chapters concerned with cruelty and honesty, and his message for how a prince should act in those regards is hard to not perceive as something immoral. To someone who does not know the entire text, which the English masses did not, understanding Machiavelli as anything other than an immoral and possibly evil man is quite difficult. The interpretation of Machiavelli as an immoral man permeated English drama. When the Machiavel made it onto the stage he was portrayed as a character that was driven by his own thirst for power and his immorality. At least one example from Shakespeare and an example from some of the other work of Christopher Marlowe will be looked at closely.

The third chapter focuses on Christopher Marlowe and *Tamburlaine the Great*. When modern scholars look back at Christopher Marlowe they see a mystery. He was an enigma. Allegations have ranged from arguing that he was a spy for Queen Elizabeth to arguing that he was an immoral atheist. His work in the theater was instrumental in shaping the styles that

Shakespeare would later master. Many of his plays had political undertones and it is my belief that the most significant of those are found in *Tamburlaine the Great*. In the third chapter I will highlight the Machiavellian undertones that are present in the text and I will attempt to figure out whether or not Marlowe was actually making a significant political message about the state of current English politics. The Machiavellian ideas of virtue, opportunity, and fortune run rampant through the text, as well as some deeper examples of Machiavellian political thought. During *Tamburlaine the Great Pt I,* Marlowe seems to follow Machiavelli's *The Prince* quite closely. Marlowe creates a Tamburlaine who is driven by his own virtue and his ability to capitalize on the situations that his good fortune places him in. The other moments that truly emulate Machiavelli are largely to do with cruelty and what treatment is actually justified displaced rulers like Bajazeth. Machiavelli argues that former leaders should be killed and because of that Tamburlaine's cruelty is actually in line with *The Prince*.

The last act of *Tamburlaine the Great* warrants a look completely on its own. It is vastly different from what would have typically been presented to an English audience because Tamburlaine survives. Although Tamburlaine was of a different class of character, he was still a Machiavel and that would have been obvious to the people watching the play. They would have been shocked that he did not die on the stage he to some tragic betrayal that resulted from his own immorality. Tamburlaine's focus was ever on the prize and not on his own morality. However, with a brief look into *Tamburlaine the Great Pt II* we can see that he changes once he has secured his empire. He becomes cruel and bitter. He orders the death of an entire city because they held out against him. He was not killed at the end of *Pt I* and he was constructed in such a way that the crowds could probably have sympathized with him. At the end of *Pt II* he has become and animal and he no longer follows the Machiavellian teachings.

Chapter 1 – Machiavelli and Republicanism

Machiavelli has been considered by many to be a strong supporter of a dictatorship that is held in the iron fist of a talented and ruthless Prince. *The Prince,* in many ways, supports those claims and in some locations makes it hard to believe that there could be any other meaning. However, upon close reading it becomes apparent that there is more to Machiavelli than what appears simply on the pages of *The Prince* and *The Discourses*. There is a thread of republicanism that runs deep through the text that is illustrated not necessarily in words but in the results of those who are used as case studies by Machiavelli. Although Machiavelli does not seem to support the simple creation of a republic from nothingness without a strong initial leader, he does support the establishment of a republic as the end result of the labors of those strong princes. Machiavelli says in a letter to a friend, "it has been a long time since I have said what I think or have believed what I said, and if I do speak the truth sometimes, I hide it among so many lies that it is difficult to find it again." That is the Machiavelli that we are dealing with here; the liar, the manipulator, and the man who has spawned more debate than any other theorist.

This chapter, although it will not speak to any length about the drama of Christopher Marlowe, will provide a lens into a greater understanding of the possible source material that he used to create the character Tamburlaine. The analysis of the greater work of Machiavelli allows us to see the differences in interpretation between those who have actually read *The Prince* closely, and what someone who has only heard of *The Prince* through the propaganda and word of mouth of the day. Later in this project we will learn that the understanding of the basic Englishman of the period differed greatly from what the learned few believed about Machiavelli. The opinions of the commoners were focused on morality and a misinterpretation of Chapters

17and 18. What I truly seek to do here is to provide a deep look into Machiavelli so that we can draw upon that reading for the interpretation of *Tamburlaine the Great* that is coming in the latter half of this comp.

To understand the prince we must first determine what makes the prince what and who he is. The prince that Machiavelli concerns himself with in *The Prince,* is the new prince; the new leader who has either risen from nothing, like Hiero from Syracuse, or the young noble seeking to carve out new land like Cesare Borgia. Each of these figures possesses a few key fundamental strengths. Without them they cannot succeed. Machiavelli says "For there are three types of intelligence: one understands on its own, the second discerns what others understand, the third neither understands by itself nor through the intelligence of others; that first kind is most excellent, the second excellent, the third useless."(Machiavelli 154) The first of which can be described as a first rate mind. The first rate mind is the master who pulls the strings, the man who controls the puppets which put on the show. The second rate mind is a man who assists the first rate mind and realizes that he is being tricked but he is incapable of orchestrating such a deed on his own and so he joins the first rate mind. The third rate mind is the unintelligent vessel who simply exists and is manipulated by those of higher intellect than he. In Machiavelli's opinion, the world consists of mostly third rate minds. The first rate mind is extremely rare and he demonstrates his mental prowess by being the master of the trick. The second rate mind assists the first rate because he can understand the tricks of first rate but he cannot create them on his own.

The second strength that Machiavelli's potentially successful Prince possesses is the mastery of three things: virtu, opportunita, and fortuna. Fortuna is the only one of those elements that is not entirely in the Prince's control. Fortuna is the presence of fortune, be it a moment

where the new prince has the potential to make something happen or it could be something as banal as being born with the wealth and status to ensure that he would have the ability to attempt to gain power. Opportunita is a different beast because it is one that is presented by fortuna. In plane terms it is a moment in which the prince can act for some sort of advantage. Virtu is what drives the Prince. Virtu gives him the ability, the strength, and the desire to act when fortuna presents him with opportunita. The new prince utilizes his virtu to see the opportunita that is presented by fortuna. This passage, which is speaking of Machiavelli's list of great rulers, describes the idea, "And examining their deeds and their lives, one can see that they received nothing but the opportunity from Fortune, which then gave them the material they could mold into whatever form they desired; and without that opportunity the strength of their spirit would have been extinguished, and without that strength the opportunity would have come in vain." (Machiavelli 93)

Therefore, it can be seen that those two traits have to work together in order for the Prince to become ultimately successful. The truly great princes of the past had their first rate minds so that they were capable of realizing what opportunities had been presented to them by fortune. Their strength and virtu would carry them the rest of the way to success, unless fortuna, virtu, or opportunita decide to leave. Without all of them the Prince will not be able to continue his efforts and he will undoubtedly fail. It should be noted that *The Prince* was not written to advise only those who possess first rate minds. A person who truly possesses first rate mind does not need a book like *The Prince* to guide their choices. *The Prince* was written for the second rate mind, the mind who is cunning enough to see a trick but not great enough to devise one on his own.

Machiavelli has a series of leaders who he thinks have risen above all others: Moses, Cyrus, Theseus, and Romulus are the great founders who have made it onto his list. Hiero of Syracuse is added as a footnote to those great men. This paper will concern itself mostly with the workings of Moses and Romulus, since Machiavelli devotes a great amount of time to those two cases studies. Moses is an interesting study. Machiavelli at one point says "And although we should not discuss Moses, since he was a mere executor of things ordered by God, nevertheless he must be admired, if for nothing but that grace which made him worthy of talking with God." (Machiavelli 93) However, Machiavelli continues to speak about the capabilities of Moses to great length, which makes it highly possible that Machiavelli believed what Freud would later say which is that Moses was not a Jew following the word of God, but rather he was an Egyptian who saw his opportunity to raise a kingdom of his own. His rule has perhaps been continued for longer than any other, since his Ten Commandments are still read and obeyed by many today. If that is to be believed, then Moses was the ultimate trickster and the ultimate Prince.

According to biblical legend, Moses does not reach the Promised Land because he is called to heaven. If we believe that Machiavelli is thinking as Freud did, then it can be assumed that he believes that Moses was likely killed by his compatriots once he was no longer needed. Machiavelli seems to place the highest esteem in the one who never got to reap what he had striven so hard to sew. It changes his teachings considerably to realize that his most successful founder never lived to see the effects of his work. The apparent hopelessness of even the most blessed Prince, the one whom fortuna, opportunita, and virtu have all chosen to accompany brings up the idea that the creation of a dictatorship was not what Machiavelli was counting as a success. Success to him could have been the fate that happened to Moses because there is no doubt that Moses was successful in at least a few key ways. He established a long standing series

of laws that have surpassed the physical realm and become religion. The tenants that he laid out are still followed today. In spite of all of his wit and ability he may have fallen to the knives of his enemies but not before he established a very long lasting nation.

From the topic of Moses the idea of Machiavelli's "armed prophet." Machiavelli believes that to be successful as a prophet of any kind one must be armed. The passage says:

> From this comes the fact that all armed prophets were victorious and the unarmed came to ruin. Besides what has been said, people are fickle by nature; and it is simple to convice them of something but difficult to hold them in that conviction; and, therefore, affairs should be managed in such a way that when they no longer believe, they can be made to believe by force. Moses, Cyrus, Theseus, and Romulus could not have made their institutions long respected if they had been unarmed; as in our times it befell Brother Girolamo Savonarola, who was ruined by his new institutions when the populace began no longer to believe in them; and he had no way of hold steady those who believed nor of making the disbelievers believe. (Machiavelli 95)

Essentially, what Machiavelli is saying here is that a Prince has to hold his subjects in check by two means; the first is by physical strength and force of arms and the second is through a form of admiration or captivation of some sort. Although Machiavelli uses religion in this particular situation it is not the only manner in which to contain and motivate a people. The most important concept to gather is that one will not be truly successful without both of those means in check. This is especially pertinent for those who are seeking power in a way that utilizes religion or idolization in some manner. Hypothetically, if there was a prophet who was gaining great ground

and truly convincing people to join him, he could lose everything if things turned sour and he did not have the means to control or contain his people.

The other supreme prince who warrants a very close inspection is Romulus, the founder of Rome. There is a lot of legend around Romulus, and he suffers a fate of mythical proportions, much like Moses. It is said in legend that Romulus is carried up into the heavens by the Gods once his task is complete and Rome has been established. This occurs via the lowering of a heavy fog down upon Romulus and his compatriots and when the fog lifts he has disappeared. (Smith 63) Mythology ends up playing a very important role in the establishment of the Roman civilization so such an end to their greatest leader would have been fitting. However, Livy tells the story that Romulus was actually killed by his closest associates and his body was consumed so as to hide the evidence from the people. Once again, it is a grisly end to one of the most prominent leaders of Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Interestingly, when Machiavelli returns to his list of great leaders at the end of the book, his list does not include Romulus. This is not because Romulus failed in some manner and it is not because of some simple mistake by Machiavelli. He is left out so that we investigate him. His absence causes the astute reader to wonder why he was missing. It makes the reader seek out the history of Romulus and through Romulus the rest of the leaders come under investigation. This investigation will be carried out in greater length later during this chapter.

The agenda of the new prince upon conquering new areas is sometimes brutal but ultimately very necessary. Machiavelli states that "anyone who acquires these lands and wishes to maintain them must bear two things in mind: the first, that the family line of the old prince must be extinguished; second, that neither their laws nor their taxes be altered; as a result they will become in a very brief time one body with the old principality."(Machiavelli 82) This

essentially means that the prince must remove his competition entirely because if he does not than he will always have a political adversary who is stirring up some sort of rebellion. After all, Machiavelli says that it is better to be feared than loved, so long as you are not cruel without cause and therefore hated, and the execution of an opposing royal family shows your resolve and will do much to inspire fear. Hatred must be avoided at all costs. Cesare Borgia, also known as Duke Valentino, teaches an important lesson about hatred and it is one of delegation. Cesare established a cruel man in charge of Romagna, since it was populated by powerless and inept men. The man Messer Remirro de Orco, who was a "cruel and able man," (Machiavelli 99) was given absolute authority. Cesare then distanced himself from the situation, allowing Remirro to control the city in a brutal but effective manner. Cesare then returned and had Remirro killed and displayed publicly, therefore accomplishing two things. The first is that he quelled the people, and the second is that he ensured that they did not hate him for the cleansing of their city, but they did understand that he could and would take sudden and violent action.

The mannerisms of the new prince are under strict guidelines. The prince must first be frugal with his own money, but generous with money gained upon conquest or his men will rebel against him. Machiavelli says "A prince, therefore, must be very careful never to let anything slip from his lips which is not full of the five qualities mentioned above: he should appear, upon seeing and hearing him, to be all mercy, all faithfulness, all integrity, all kindness, all religion. And there is nothing more necessary than to seem to possess this last quality." (Machiavelli 135) These guidelines establish the prince as a liar. The prince is to seem to be all of those things but nowhere in *The Prince* does Machiavelli say that the prince must truly be any of those. In fact, he condemns many of those traits. The idea of the great prince as a liar goes back to the concept of

the first rate mind, the mind that has mastered the ability to carry out a trick. The newly fledged prince must become a liar to deal with what Machiavelli considers the nature of men:

> For one can generally say this about men: that they are ungrateful, fickle, simulators and deceivers, avoiders of danger, greedy for gain; and while you work for their good they are completely yours, offering you their blood, their property, their lives, and their sons, as I said earlier, when danger is far away; but when it comes nearer to you they turn away. (Machiavelli 131)

Thinking again of Duke Valentino, we see that his great ploy in Romagna was nothing more than elaborate trick to eliminate the weakness of his new city, but in doing so he would have gained the hatred of the people for being unnecessarily cruel, so he devised a trick and used a tool of man to accomplish his ends.

The concept of the prince as a liar is one of those which is condemned by the English citizenry at large. However, there is more to it than simply lying to further yourself. The prince might have to lie but does so in order to maintain a form of stability. The prince cannot afford to become hated. Hatred would prove to be his ultimate downfall so even if he is lying about certain things he has to take care that they are not matter which would result in drastic changes in public opinion. The next matter is the cruelty of the prince. The prince cannot be needlessly cruel. He cannot be a Messer Remirro and expect to gain and hold any power. However, cruelty is not a bad thing when at the head of an army that is actually engaged in some manner of conflict. Cruelty, Machiavelli argues, is necessary to maintain the fighting force's effectiveness. Machiavelli's example for this is Hannibal, who was a cruel leader but still loved by his men because he led them to victory. Scipio, on the other hand, led his men in a very soft manner and

because of that had men openly rebel against him. If he had led with an iron fist they would not have been able to rebel against him.

Cesare Borgia warrants a closer look because the same failures that are present in the great leaders mentioned above can be seen in him. He was the son of the Pope, that was his gift from fortuna and he used that status to fund his conquests. Duke Valentino was wise enough to realize that mercenaries would detrimentally affect his chances of carrying out effective campaigns so he removed them from his armies and he also proved to be the master of the trick. There were four things which he had to do in order to be successful:

> [F]irst, by putting to death all the relatives of the lords he had dispossessed in order to prevent the Pope from employing that opportunity; second, by gaining the friendship of all the noblemen of Rome, as already mentioned, in order to hold the Pope in check by means of them; third, by making the College of Cardinals as much his own as he could; fourth, by acquiring such a large territory before the Pope died that he would be able to resist an initial attack without need of allies. (Machiavelli 100)

In all but the last he was successful. He fit the book in nearly every way to be a perfect Machiavel, and yet he failed in the end. So far, Machiavelli's favorite rulers were only successful for short periods of time.

All of what we have seen so far leads to the idea that Machiavelli is not truly writing the guidelines to become a new prince. On one hand, his guidance could lead one to success but on the other, that success often means death. His advice is perfectly applicable to one who wishes to place himself in a position of power but his support for the efficacy and the endurance of his methods is drastically thin. One could be as great a leader as Moses and yet still be murdered by

your compatriots. The exclusion of Romulus from the end of *The Prince* draws us to what happened after his disappearance and that was the establishment of a Roman republic which endured and thrived for four-hundred years. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli says on republics: “But in republics there is greater vitality, greater hatred, greater desire for revenge; the memory of ancient liberty does not and cannot allow them to rest, so that the most secure way is either to destroy them or to go there to live (Machiavelli 92).” This is the most obvious nod towards republicanism by Machiavelli and it comes at the conclusion of Chapter Five, which deals with freshly conquered territories that once governed themselves. A territory that was held in the throes of dictatorship will not have a hard time slipping under the rule of a new leader, as long as the ruling family that held power before has been discredited and removed, preferably killed.

The creation of a republic or a lasting society in some other manner was the ultimate goal of Machiavelli and only in understanding that can you interpret his morality in a way that is not negative. The brief mentions of republicanism in *The Prince* and the focus on republics in *The Discourses* clue us into the inner-workings of Machiavelli’s mind. He seems to believe that it is better for a nation to be subjected to the tyranny of a harsh prince, a prince who is willing to make drastic changes and truly alter civilization, than it is to exist in the perpetual dictatorships of the principalities that were then in power. The prince, as Machiavelli would structure him, is not cruel by nature. He does exactly what he has to do in order to gain and maintain power. A truly great prince, like Romulus or Moses, will create a lasting form of government that is not dependent on bloodlines. Machiavelli believes that bloodlines can often ruin a principality. The successor to a great prince will often not live up to the standards of the original founder. This is something that we will explicitly see in the second part of *Tamburlaine the Great*. If a great prince realizes that his successors have the potential to ruin all that he has created then he will

likely seek to establish some form of government in which his name and legacy will live on but the nation itself will not fail. The prince would be tasked with establishes good laws and a good framework for the nation to build itself upon. Ultimately, a republic would be the end result.

Knowing that a republic may have been his end goal we can look at the morality of Machiavelli through a somewhat different lens. In many ways in is more moral to suffer the short rule of a tyrant, since he will likely be killed by his followers, than it is to suffer the indignity of living under a lifetime of servitude to an inept dictator in a society in which there is no way for the common man to truly advance himself or to satisfy the desires and ambitions that he holds dear. Machiavelli's prince would lead to the creation of a much more moral society, a society in which every man gets to carve out his own place in the world. In *The Discourses* Machiavelli talks about how he believes that every man should have the right to feed his ambition. McCormick goes so far as to argue that this is evidence for Machiavelli being the first modern humanist.[1] This does not mean that ambition is necessarily a good thing but it does mean that Machiavelli supports the idea that all men should be free. This interpretation of Machiavelli is seemingly lost on the English citizens of Marlowe's period.

As was mentioned above, the chief area of concern for English interpretation of Machiavelli has traditionally been chapter 17, "On Cruelty and Mercy and Whether it is Better to be Loved than to be Feared or the Contrary" and chapter 18, "How a Prince Should Keep His Word." On the matter of being loved or feared Machiavelli states that it is best to have both but in the event that you cannot possess both traits you should strive to be feared because it is the

1 See McCormick, John P. "Subdue the Senate: Machiavelli's "Way of Freedom" or Path to Tyranny?" This is an interesting essay in which McCormick argues that some enlightened few during the Renaissance had realized that Machiavelli was taking a humanist approach but that they did not fully understand what he was saying.

safer of the two choices. Fear keeps men in check, as can be seen by looking at the military history of Hannibal. However, to maintain this fear the prince must not become too cruel. Machiavelli says “if he must take someone’s life he should do so when there is proper justification and manifest cause; but, above all, he should avoid the property of others; for men forget more quickly the death of their fathers than the loss of their patrimony.” (Machiavelli 132) Therefore, Machiavelli is saying that you must remember justice and prudence. Although you might be at the head of a state and your power might seem enormous you must follow the laws of the area in which you are governing. We must not forget that when capturing new principalities it is best to leave their laws in place so that they have an easier transition to your rule. When founding new principalities you have to create laws that are both fair and strong. Fair so that the people do not want to leave and strong so that they could not even if they wanted to.

On the matter of keeping promises Machiavelli is not coy in his assertion that princes who lie are more likely to be successful. A prince needs to understand that he needs to play both the part of the fox and the lion, as Machiavelli says, and therefore he must be able to utilize the cunning of the fox to understand and analyze all potential traps, including becoming trapped in your old promises. Machiavelli says:

> A wise ruler, therefore, cannot and should not keep his word when such an observance of faith would be to his disadvantage and when the reasons which made him promise are removed. And if men were all good, this rule would not be good; but since men are a sorry lot and will no keep their promises to you, you likewise need no keep yours to them. A prince never lacks legitimate reasons to break his promises. (Machiavelli 134)

From a moral perspective this does not look the best but one must understand that the prince will have to make promises during his rise to power that may not be conducive to maintaining his position. For example, some military treatises and the like would be better off annulled once the prince has secured his own position. As was already discussed, it is better to be under the rule of a prince who is following Machiavelli's guidelines because such a leader will not be cruel or unfair and his leadership may lead to the formation of republican ideals. If a government official has to lie to maintain his hold on peace or something of the nature than it should not be the concern of the citizen; if the lies actively hurt the citizen than it has become immoral.

It is incredibly important to remember that the new prince has to win his fame at the head of an army. Brilliant political prowess alone will not win you much if you do not conquer and if you do not have an enemy to defeat. The passage in question states:

> Without a doubt, princes become great when they overcome difficulties and obstacles that are imposed on them; and therefore Fortune, especially when she wishes to increase the reputation of a new prince, who has greater need to acquire prestige than a hereditary prince does, creates enemies for him and has them take action against him so that he will have the chance to overcome them and to climb higher up the ladder his enemies have brought him. Therefore many judge that a wise prince must, whenever he has the occasion, foster with cunning some hostility so that in stamping it out his greatness will increase as a result (Machiavelli 148).

The idea of conquering to maintain your power is not something that is exclusive to *The Prince;* in fact, it could be applied to *The Discourses.* Rome is Machiavelli's study during *The Discourses*, but not Rome under the Emperors, Rome the republic. That is to say that it was the

Rome that was established on the backs of Romulus and Remus. There was a delicate balance of power between the two main demographics of Rome: the rich and the poor. The rich held political power but that power was countered by the people who made up the armies. This gave the citizenry the ability to rebel at any time if the rich got out of hand. Machiavelli admired this form of government.

Machiavelli did not admire Rome after the collapse of the Republic. In *The Prince* he mentions numerous Roman Emperors, nearly all of whom ultimately failed and were killed by their subjects. One of the reasons for their downfall is that the conquests which were the main source of power for the people stopped with the loss of the republic. Modern scholars like to say that democracies and republics do not make war; Machiavelli would say that war is essential to unify the people. His dismissal of post-republic Rome as a successful state is on its own a very significant nod to his feelings about the creation and maintenance of republics and how they compare to the principalities that he is attempting to create in *The Prince*. Nowhere in *The Prince* does Machiavelli make the bold claims of the theorists who would come later about personal freedoms and the right of all to a say in the government but he does leave enough open for interpretation that inferences can be made.

In some ways it can seem as if Machiavelli is setting his princes up to fail. He does not explicitly state that the path that he is placing them on will lead to their failure but even his most prominent examples failed to keep their lives after their successes were had. In other words, if the prince does not change he will fail. Machiavelli believes that you are either a fox or a lion, cautious and calculating or impetuous, all of which have their own issues which will ultimately prevent success in the face of adversity:

> If a man governs himself with caution and patience, and the times and conditions are turning in such a way that his policy is a good one, he will prosper; but if the times and conditions change, he will be ruined because de does not change his method of procedure. Nor is there to be found a man so prudent that he knows how to adapt himself to this, both because he cannot deviate from that to which is by nature inclined and also because he cannot be persuaded to depart from a path, having always prospered by following it. (Machiavelli 160-161)

This is a bleak outlook for an aspiring prince because if he comes to power by the cautious application of the Machiavellian trick he will at some time find himself in a situation in which he needs to act swiftly, impetuously, with a scarcity of information available for cautious calculation and planning. In that situation he will find himself incapable of acting and then he will fail. In the same manner, the impetuous man will succeed until the pace of his conquests slows and he has to change his ways. His failings will be political in nature and he will find that he cannot rule a government without an obvious enemy to fight.

Fortune plays a role in this. Machiavelli says that men will always stay the same but fortune will either assist them or hinder them. Men are at the mercy of fortune and "being a woman, she is always the friend of young men, for they are less cautious, more aggressive, and they command her with more audacity." (Machiavelli 162) What this means is that fortune will leave you eventually and you will undoubtedly fail without it. For Machiavelli all successes seem to have a ticking timer counting down to failure. The temporary success that Machiavelli is attempting to set up is not the establishment of bloodlines or dictatorship, but rather the fate of Rome that was caused by the actions of Romulus; the establishment of a lasting republic in which there is a balance of power; a place that would endure without the need for fortune to

continually bless one man. The Spartan's in *The Discourses* are an example of this idea. They endured for 800 years but because their system was not perfect they crumbled as soon as fortune decided to leave them.

Machiavelli has written a web of lies and tangential thoughts and his true meaning can be hard to discern. Deep within *The Prince* a respect for republicanism can be found and from that respect we can see that Machiavelli was a supporter for the establishment of a republic through the actions of a great founder. What Machiavelli seeks to do is craft a Moses; a man with the virtue to create greatness. A man who established a religion that has endured for centuries and although he died, he did not fail. Machiavelli also desires to create a Romulus, who like Moses, was killed by his countrymen but not before paving the way for the creation of the Republic of Rome which Machiavelli admires so much. Although his methods may not have been the most morally sound, the end result of following his guidelines for the prince is the creation of a civilization in which all men have the ability and the right to express themselves and to do, or attempt to do, whatever their ambition requests of them.

Chapter 2 – The Machiavel and the English

Interpretation of Machiavelli

The influence of Machiavelli's work on political theory has been broad reaching and timeless. Even today *The Prince* and *The Discourses* are still being fervently debated by scholars who are attempting to discover the real message that Machiavelli was saying about principalities and republics. This chapter will focus on how the English interpreted Machiavelli's political work and how their interpretations made their way into the limelight through politically charged plays. In doing that this chapter will interpret the typical English trope of the Machiavel and the significance behind how that trope was used. This will be accomplished by studying the history of the migration of Machiavelli's ideas to England and then by looking at specific examples of how Machiavelli has manifested in drama. The dramatists that will be discussed in this chapter are Shakespeare and Marlowe. After discovering the extent of the trope and how it has travelled through England, we will then be better able to understand the distinct separation that Marlowe creates in *Tamburlaine the Great* from the rest of the English. This chapter will also provide an English interpretation of Machiavelli so that the interpretation that was rendered in the previous chapter can show its increased depth and usefulness.

England at this time was and at the time in which Machiavelli's work was gaining traction was thoroughly a monarchy. Power was consolidated in the royal family and republicanism was not a topic that was on the tongues of many. Surprisingly then, because one might think that documents that seemed to praise dictatorship would be well received, Machiavelli's documents were perceived to be immoral and evil. Pocock theorizes that this comes as a result of Machiavelli's insistence on creating a man, or rather a prince, who is driven by his own virtue and not by his morality or by the good of the people. Civic engagement during

this time period was nearly nonexistent. The people were not rioting in the streets about free and fair elections or anything remotely similar. The main cause of domestic strife in England of the period was religion. Elizabethan England is a post-reformation England and the Puritans were an important facet of that society.

Pocock argues that the English had not yet truly discovered what it meant to be a citizen in a government. The Puritans were the first to address those ideas of citizenship but Pocock argues that their chiliasm was their downfall because they were so obsessed with their coming thousand years of bliss. They had begun to think of things other than the crown but because of their obsession with their religion they ultimately failed in all of their rebellions and many of their other ventures. A notable passage reads:

> But we have premised that in post-Reformation England, such a consciousness would have to contend with others - […] – which defined the individual as public actor, while fixing his activity at levels lower than that which made Machiavellian man existentially dependent on his own virtue. As long as those modes of conscious held, it would be difficult if not unnecessary to envisage the Englishman as Machiavellian citizen or England as Machiavellian Rome; and as long as it was presumed that the individual acted in stable scheme of moral authority, consciousness of Machiavelli would be confined to – and would distort – the disturbing and morally subversive aspects of his thought. The distortion may be further explained by the hypothesis that his moral subversion can only be fully understood when his republicanism has been fully understood and digested. (Pocock 350)

This passage means that the English were simply not ready to understand Machiavelli in any deep manner. They were limited to reading him on the most basic of levels which is that of Machiavelli as a moralist. It is hard to take such a reading and not see Machiavelli as a bad person. This interpretation of Machiavelli is very easy to find in the plays of the period. The Machiavels which turn up on the stage are usually defined by their immorality. The above section might make it seem as if the English were entirely unfamiliar with the concept of a republic. That is not true; they were just not applying those concepts to their day to day lives. Pocock's example for this idea is that *Coriolanus*, by William Shakespeare, would not have been as well received by the masses as it was had the people been unfamiliar with the concept of republican ideals and values.

George Watson has a slightly different argument than Pocock for the spread of English Machiavellianism and how the derogatory nature of the term Machiavel came to be. Watson thinks that the regular Englishman simply could not be bothered to learn a great deal of Machiavelli since he was a foreigner from a place that had a different history. A great deal of English criticism is focused entirely on *The Prince*, particularly chapters 17 and 18. In spite of the commoners not knowing or truly understanding Machiavelli, Watson argues that the learned few, amongst who the dramatists would have been, had at least a passing knowledge and understanding of Machiavelli. He says:

> There can be no reasonable doubt then that Machiavelli's chief political writings were known to learned opinion in England; and that must have been true at least as early as the 1570s. Gabriel Harvey, writing in his letter-book in 1579, about a year before Marlowe came up to Cambridge as a freshman, warned against Machiavelli's influence at Cambridge, and complained that the *Discorsi*, the

> *Istorie florentine*, and the *Arte della guerra* were much studied there; and if when he spoke of "a certain parlous book" he meant *Il Principe*, then that work too was read at Cambridge. If Marlowe wrote The Jew of Malta some ten years later, the sources for his prologue could easily have been more direct and reliable than a Latin epigram by Harvey. (Watson 637)

This idea sheds some light on the way in which Machiavelli was portrayed on the stage. Even if the dramatists and the educated few understood the inner-workings of Machiavelli's mind, such ideas would not have appealed to the masses that would have flocked to the public theaters to watch plays. The playwrights were writing to support themselves after all. This is similar to the idea of patronage in that the playwrights are writing what they need to write in order to fill their theaters. Roe supports the argument that Shakespeare and the other playwrights had access to the materials written by Machiavelli. When speaking of Shakespeare he says:

> Shakespeare (an impressionable twenty-year-old in 1584, and on the verge of a theatre career) can hardly have failed to have access to Machiavelli, either directly or at a slight remove. The most notorious ideas of *Il Principe,* such as how best to dispose of one's enemies, and further, those of one's friends or allies who had become an embarrassment, would certainly have been the subject of discussion beyond any mention of them that we find in contemporary sources. (Roe)

Roe contends that discussion of Machiavelli would have been a very hot topic for the intellectuals in Shakespeare's time. The question then arises about why Shakespeare utilizes him in such a different way from Marlowe. Shakespeare writes using the Machiavel quite frequently

but he does not make the same sort of point that Marlowe does. Shakespeare's Machiavels usually die.[2]

The pamphleteers of the time period did not help the situation that the ghost of Machiavelli was being placed in. Machiavelli became a rallying point for all things evil and immoral in Tudor England. Weissberger notably says:

> Through the pamphleteers and the playwrights, Machiavelli, by the end of the century, gained the reputation of being a sort of arch-fiend. There was actually no crime in connection with which his name might not be invoked. Thus, we have conycatching, poisoning, atheism, heathenism, hedonism, avarice, fraud, deceit, selfishness, hypocrisy, treachery and murder; and to make the list well-nigh complete we have Nashe's imputation, in *Christ's Teares Over Jerusalemn*, of sexual profligacy. (Weissberger 590)

Machiavelli essentially never had a chance in England. The first large scale interpretation of his work was written by a Huguenot who focused on the morality of Machiavelli and the rest of the English speaking world ran with the idea that he was immoral. Eventually his name became akin to a curse.

The English interpretation of Machiavelli was driven by the perceived immorality of *The Prince.* The majority of the English criticism was focused on two chapters, which means that had a very incomplete understanding of what Machiavelli was really attempting to say. The threads of republicanism that were drawn out in the previous chapter could not have been found without reading and understanding the entire book. Since the vast majority of the English only heard of two chapters of *The Prince*, their argument for Machiavelli as an entirely immoral individual is

2 See D'Andrea's "Aspiring Minds: A Machiavellian Motif from Marlowe to Milton" for further reading on Elizabethan sentiments about Machiavelli.

weak and largely unfounded. What follows is an attempt to recreate their argument. In other words, I will be reading chapters 17 and 18 as a moralist would have done. The question that Machiavelli raises is whether or not it is better to be feared or loved, cruel or kind and his answer is that one must be feared to be successful. Machiavelli says “a prince must not worry about the reproach of cruelty when it is a matter of keeping his subjects united and loyal; for with a very few examples of cruelty he will be more compassionate than those who, out of excessive mercy, permit disorders to continue.” (Machiavelli 130) The English moralists would argue that this does not justify the cruel treatment of anyone. The future is unknown and being cruel to stop any future wrongdoings is not fair to the people or in any way justified. To the English interpreters of Machiavelli the ends do not justify the means.[3]

In the eighteenth chapter of *The Prince* Machiavelli argues that the prince should only keep his word when it is beneficial to him. He should lie and break promises in any situation in which doing so will help him maintain his position and his power. Seeing this as an English Puritan would have been immensely distressing as such a position towards honesty would have been taken as inherently evil. It should be noted that scholars such as Watson make an argument that the Puritans and the other Protestants of England were not actually opposed to Machiavelli simply because of his religion. Undoubtedly, in that time period the tensions between the two forms of Christianity were incredibly high and those tensions were the reason for many conflicts, but as far as understanding Machiavelli they were more interested in what they could actually see, hear, and encounter in their day-to-day lives. The wars of religion and the personal religion of man who lived in another time and was from a different area probably did not make it into

3 Also see Kahn’s "Reading Machiavelli: Innocent Gentillet's Discourse on Method” for a historicist reading of humanism in Machiavelli.

their analysis of *The Prince*. What did surface was the way in which Machiavelli seemed to disregard morality for personal gain.

All of this leads us to how Machiavelli made it into the popular performances of the Elizabethan period. The term itself, "Machiavel" was used as a derogatory term for "a person who acts on principles recommended, or supposed to have been recommended, by Machiavelli in his treatise on statecraft; an intriguer or schemer." (OED) A perfect example of this term in use is in one of Marlowe's plays, *The Jew of Malta*, in which the prologue is spoken by a character named Machiavel. He says:

> To some, perhaps, my name is odious,
> But such as love me guard me from their tongues,
> And let them know that I am Machiavel,
> And weigh not men, and therefore not men's words.
> Admired I am of those that hate me most.
> Though some speak openly against my books,
> Yet they will read me, and thereby attain
> To Peter's chair, and, when they cast me off,
> Are poised by my climbing followers.
> I count religion but a childish toy,
> And hold there is no sin but ignorance.
> Birds of the air will tell of murders past.
> I am ashamed to hear such fooleries!
> Many will talk of title to a crown.
> What right had Ceasar to the empire?

> Might first made kings, and laws were then most sure
>
> When, like the Draco's, they were writ in blood. (Marlowe 0.0.5-21)

The speaker is referring to himself and he highlights the very stereotypes that the English Machiavel is known for possessing. He disregards morality and religion and instead talks of rightful bloodshed. This emphasis on bloodshed and on murders past is an English mistake in the interpretation of Machiavelli that can be attributed to their lack of care for truly understanding their source material. The commoners did not actually read *The Prince* so they would not have known that there were no passages that called for rivers of blood to be spilt. This introduction by a figure named Machiavel sets the stage for the true Machiavel of the play, Barabas, to take the stage. Barabas is an immoral man who, upon being robbed of his riches, takes to vengeance and murders nearly everyone in his path until he finds himself in the position of Governor of Malta, before he too, is killed for his deeds. Barabas is not a Machiavellian prince; his characteristics do not lend themselves to the values that are laid out in *The Prince*. Barabas murders to cover his tracks and leaves a blood soaked trail behind him. It is safe to say that Machiavelli would not have approved of his actions. However, in the English sense he is an irrefutable Machiavel. Also worth noting is that scholars such as Arthur Lindley are more likely to consider Barabas the typical Marlovian[4] hero or anti-hero and not Tamburlaine. Not because of his thirst for power or for revenge but because of his immorality and his ruthlessness.

The conclusion of *The Jew of Malta* brings about the death of Barabas. He betrayed everyone around him and eventually he was betrayed. This is the moral end that the English would have expected for a character that embodied all of those traits of the English Machiavel.

4 See Lindley's "The Unbeing of the Overreacher: Proteanism and the Marlovian Hero." It is an exploration of how Marlowe's heroes and anti-heroes were typically structured. He argues that Tamburlaine is a failure of a character.

Perhaps the most famous Machiavel to grace the English stage was presented by Shakespeare. *Richard III* shows the immoral rise to power of King Richard, who was considered by many to be a criminal who did not deserve the throne. The play covers his ascent to power which includes murdering his brother and committing numerous immoral acts in the name of power. Shakespeare is not subtle with the way in which Richard is formed. In his opening soliloquy he says:

> Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
> Have no delight to pass away the time,
> Unless to see my shadow in the sun
> And descant on mine own deformity.
> And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
> To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
> I am determined to prove a villain
> And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
> Plots I have laid, inductions dangerous,
> By drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams
> To set my brother Clarence and the king
> In deadly hate the one against the other.
> And if King Edward be as true and just
> As I am subtle, false, and treacherous,
> This day should Clarence closely be mewed up
> About a prophecy which says that ‘G’
> Of Edward’s heirs the murderer shall be. (1.1.24-40)

Shakespeare does nothing to hide the fact that Richard is driven entirely by his thirst for power. Although the content is different the tone is similar to Marlowe's Machiavel in *The Jew of Malta.* Here, Richard is determined to seek his power, even if it means both regicide and the death or imprisonment of his brother. Since Richard has nothing to do to pass the time he has decided to dethrone a king and "prove a villain." Richard does gain the throne and then the country spirals down into a civil war which results in his death. Once again, in a way that is similar to the conclusion of *The Jew of Malta*, the Machiavel of the play is defeated and killed.

In the two examples above, which serve as good examples of the Machiavel in action, we see that the plays end morally. The death of the Machiavel is often attributed to their immorality. Barabas and Richard were both immoral individuals who lied, cheated, and murdered their way to the top of their societies and then fate and god chose to punish them for their sins. In many ways that punishment at the end defines them as English Machiavels. Those characters are driven by greed and power, not a desire to perform a trick like Machiavelli's own characters in *The Mandrake*. If the term Machiavel were applied to the characters that were created by Machiavelli himself we would define a Machiavel as someone who uses his superior intellect, his first-rate mind, to influence those around him for the joy of carrying out a trick and perhaps for making some minor gains of his own.

Chapter 3 - “I am a lord, for so my deeds shall prove”

Christopher Marlowe was an enigma in his own time. He has been considered a spy, a scholar, a traitor, and he was a well-regarded playwright. His plays were known for their political assertions. This chapter discovers the Machiavellian message behind *Tamburlaine the Great*, and why that message differs from the typical English Machiavel that was illustrated in the previous chapter. *Tamburlaine the Great* embodies the characteristics of the new prince that are developed by Machiavelli through the course of *The Prince*. Tamburlaine is a man who created his empire through his own virtue and his ability to capitalize on the opportunities that were given to him by the graces of his God, for whom he considers himself a scourge upon the earth.[5] In this chapter we will exam the manifestation of Machiavelli's ideas of virtu, fortuna, and opportunita; also, we will look at specific examples of behavior that emulates the teachings of Machiavelli. The treatment of Bajazeth and the behavior of Tamburlaine on campaign will be looked at with a lot of care.

Marlowe's plays were written with a political message behind them. They did not simply exist in open space with no purpose except for the entertainment of the masses. Irving Ribner, when comparing *Tamburlaine* to *The Jew of Malta*, says “In *Tamburlaine,* however, we have a history play, and one of the functions of such plays was to deal with political problems. *Tamburlaine* presents important political doctrine, and doctrine very close to Machiavelli's actual thought.” Ribner is not the only scholar to claim that Marlowe was making a very deliberate political message about Renaissance England. Ribner also claims that Marlowe, by creating Tamburlaine as a character who succeeded through his own *virtu*, is discounting the role of religion and divine providence. Therefore, there is a multifaceted message to weed out of the

5 See Battenhouse, Roy W. "Tamburlaine, the "Scourge of God" He essentially argues that Tamburlaine was God’s Punishment to the vile people of his world.

text. It is an argument both against the power of the Church and against the power of the crown. Tamburlaine was not the typical villain of the time period or even of Marlowe's own work.

Graham Hammill also argues that Marlowe was deliberately writing politically charged plays. However, Hammill takes it one step further and contends that Marlowe wrote politically because of his own experiences with the politics of the day. The government's actions led Marlowe to:

> Explore absolutism and its tendency towards militarism.[3] Moreover, his employment as an operative for the Elizabethan state - continually exposed to the whimsical decisions of those in power - both nourished his radical intellectual tendencies and made him a perceived security threat to that state during one of these government crackdowns. (Hammill 291)

Hammill argues that Marlowe was a political theorist in his own right and that he was echoing the teachings of Jean Bodin who argued that "every legal entity implies an absolute power that can stand above the law and judge it." (Hammill 293) This argument for Marlowe's reason for writing essentially says that Marlowe was writing to show that an absolute monarch with tremendous power is actually good for a society. The textual evidence that Hammill uses is largely drawn from *A Massacre in Paris* and does not surface in *Tamburlaine the Great.*

When comparing Tamburlaine to the other Machiavels of English drama there appears a distinct difference in how they are presented. Even in the other work of Marlowe, for example Barabas in *The Jew of Malta*, the Machiavel was simply a shallow and stereotypical trope that did not really possess any deep understanding of Machiavelli or attempt to make any sort of point, political or otherwise, except that Machiavelli was an immoral being. The play used only the simplest notions of Machiavelli's work; the ideas that were exposed to Englishman through

chapters 17 and 18. In *Tamburlaine the Great*, Marlowe creates a character that is much more Machiavellian in composition. He seems to embody the characteristics of the new prince as Machiavelli would describe him. In that regard Tamburlaine is vastly different from the majority of the English Machiavels. In Tamburlaine, according to Leslie Spense, Marlowe "was actually drawing his own spiritual portrait." (Spense 604) With this taken into consideration it makes his accuracy to Machiavelli's new prince significant for the overall message of the play.

Tamburlaine is not a member of the nobility; he has no ties to the nobility and at times he seems to possess disdain for those who have come to their positions through inheritance. When speaking of emperors and kings he focuses on their folly. Their trusting of royal blood to distinguish merit is highlighted by Theridamas, who in Tamburlaine sees great potential. Tamburlaine says upon meeting him:

> In thee, thou valiant man of Persia,
> I see the folly of thy emperor.
> Art thou but a captain of a thousand horse,
> That by characters graven in thy brow,
> And by thy martial face and stout aspect
> Deserv'st to have the leading of a host? (1.2.166-71)

Tamburlaine recognizes in Theridamus the same virtu that is present in him. He realizes that Theridamas has great potential to rule and that he would be a great leader to have under his command. The folly of those who used to command Theridamas was that they trusted only to royal blood to lead nations and they let a man like Theridamas hold a position that was beneath his stature. The treatment of Bajazeth is also an accurate representation of Tamburlaine's views on royalty. He makes Bajazeth act as his footstool. He has no respect for the nobility.

The portrayal of those who came into power by succession is not positive. They are portrayed as foolish and power hungry. The dynamic between Mycetes and Cosroe warrants inspection from a lens of succession. Mycetes is the King of Persia which is a position that he inherited. His younger brother Cosroe is next in line for the throne. Mycetes is shown as being foolish and mentally slow. He relies on the words of his counselors for nearly all things. The first scene of Act 1 gives a good look into Mycetes' folly:

MYCETES Brother, I see your meaning well enough,
And through your planets I perceive that you think
I am not wise enough to be a king.
But I refer me to my noblemen
That know my wit and can be witnesses.
I might command you to be slain for this. –
Meander, might I not?
MEANDER Not for so small a fault, my sovereign lord.
MYCETES I mean it not, but yet I know I might. –
Yet live, yea, live; Mycetes wills it so. –
Meander, thou my faithful counselor (1.1.18-29)

Mycetes, the ruler of a kingdom, cannot make the simplest of statements without referring to his counselors. He is entirely reliant upon Meander. He says that his noblemen know of his wit but the more likely thing is that they are manipulating a weak lord by placating and flattering him. This man is the opposite of who Machiavelli would rule a principality. He does not use his own virtu and he keeps too many counselors who are actually using him for their own ends. Counselors, according to Machiavelli, are not to be trusted.

Tamburlaine comes into power by his own virtu. Virtu, as was discussed in earlier chapters, is essentially the ability to capitalize on the opportunities that are presented by fortune. Not all men can possess virtu and Tamburlaine's possession of that trait, in collusion with his other characteristics; makes him a Machiavellian force to be reckoned with. Tamburlaine is a Scythian shepherd with the drive to succeed. His virtu is perhaps the most easy to discern in the play. It is very obvious from the very onset when he uses his wit to turn the armies of his enemies into his loyal followers. Instead of leaping headlong into a bloody battle in which he may have lost, since he was outnumbered and notably outmatched, he lays out the captured riches of Zenocrate in order to tempt his would-be foes. The passage reads:

> Stay, Techelles, ask a parley first.
> Open the mails, yet guard the treasure sure.
> Lay out our golden wedges to the view,
> That their reflections may amaze the Persians.
> And look we friendly on them when they come;
> But if they offer word or violence,
> We'll fight five hundred men-at-arms to one
> Before we part with our possession (1.2.138-44)

This demonstrates virtu for two reasons: the first is that it shows that Tamburlaine is willing to take advantage of the situation around him and the second is that it shows that he possesses enough military knowledge, which is a crucial skill of the new prince, to know that he was facing a fight that he could not win in a traditional fashion.

Tamburlaine seems to be dominated and defined by his sense of virtu; his every action seems to play out exactly as he wants it to and he never falters. He never seems to falter in his

desires or his will to carry out whatever is necessary to achieve those desires. He capitalizes on each moment that opportunity presents to him. He is both Machiavelli's fox and the lion, in that he uses people but he still retains ability to act viciously and violently to meet his goals. He is evenly openly referred to as a fox by Mycetes who says, “Which is, God knows, about that Tamburlaine, / That like a fox in midst of harvest time / Doth prey upon my flocks of passengers[.]”(1.1.30-32) The first example of Tamburlaine’s virtu that is the use of Cosroe. Cosroe, who has his own aspirations of greatness, is used by Tamburlaine to defeat the larger armies of Mycetes. Tamburlaine then permits Cosroe to take the crown of Mycetes before turning on him and defeating him and his army. This leads to the death of Cosroe which removes any other claimants to the throne. A man with lesser virtu and lesser ambition would not have been able to pursue such a risky endeavor or they would have simply failed.[6] Cosroe was aspiring to greatness on his own but he did not see the tricks of Tamburlaine coming. His vision was lacking and his arrogance was too strong to allow him to see that a Scythian shepherd like Tamburlaine could ever aspire to rule a large kingdom.

Fortune and opportunity are harder to find. As we know from Machiavelli, the first rate mind, the master of politics and the potentially successful Prince, separates himself from others who would seek to gain power by being able to locate and act upon moments of opportunity. Moses seeing that he can lead the Jews to the Promised Land is one such example of that opportunity. It takes a person with great virtue to be able to successfully lead those people on their long journey. However, the whole process is started with Fortune. Without Fortune you are unlikely to get the opportunity to utilize your abilities to lead. Fortune can be seen in the first act of the play, as Tamburlaine's small party captures Zenocrate and her riches. Those riches then

6 In Leech’s *Marlowe; a Collection of Critical Essays* there is an essay by Roy Battenhouse about the passions of Tamburlaine and how they dominate him.

give Tamburlaine the ability to convince Theridamas to join his side. He promises him gold and power. Tamburlaine makes some bold claims in the beginning of the play. He claims that he is the scourge of God and he also says “I hold the Fates bound fast in iron chains, / And with my hand turn Fortune's wheel about, / And sooner shall the sun fall from his sphere / Than Tamburlaine be slain or overcome.” (1.2. 174-177) The significance of the passage is that Tamburlaine is attempting to bend fortune to his will, at least for some time. This shows a mastery of fortune beyond what would have been considered normal by Machiavelli. At least in *The Prince,* men are subject to their own fortune which will eventually leave them, resulting in their downfall. Tamburlaine claims to be able to make his own, to bend the will of Fortune to fit his own ends.

Throughout the play, Tamburlaine asserts that he is both chasing fortuna and that he is the fortuna’s master. Fortuna, or fortune, has classically been depicted as a woman spinning the wheel of fate. Machiavelli asserts that fortuna will either assist the prince or not and when she chooses to no longer accompany the prince on his journey he will fail. Zenocrate can be considered as a metaphor for fortuna throughout the play. If we consider that she was captured in the beginning of the play in an act which allowed the rest of the plot to develop, since it was her gold that was required to raise Tamburlaine's army, then we can apply Tamburlaine's earlier statements about how he seeks to control fortuna for his own desire. At the end of the play, Zenocrate is married to Tamburlaine in a way that is seemingly just an act of love. Tamburlaine is a schemer and because of that there must always be something more than what meets the eye. He knows that attempting to continue his campaign by force alone could result in a much longer and costlier campaign than simply making himself the heir to Zenocrate's father and his empire.

In taking Zenocrate's hand in marriage, Tamburlaine has essentially bedded down with Fortune herself, therefore guaranteeing the continued success that is seen in *Tamburlaine Pt II.*

The treatment of Bajazeth, however brutal, is compliant with the teachings of Machiavelli. The third chapter of *The Prince*, "On Mixed Principalities" states that "anyone who acquires [...] lands and wishes to maintain them must bear two things in mind: first, that the family line of the old prince must be extinguished; second, that neither their laws nor their taxes be altered; as a result the will become in a very brief time one body with the old principality." Bajazeth, and his wife, were the rulers of an empire that was taken by the forces of Tamburlaine. Following the guidelines of *The Prince,* he has to eradicate the bloodline of the former rulers or risk insurrection. Bajazeth, although defeated, was still the ruler of this people and if he had been allowed to go free, Tamburlaine would likely have been forced into a protracted civil war. The manner in which Bajazeth is dealt with may not be the most civil or the most acceptable, since Tamburlaine locks them in cages and publicly humiliates them, eventually causing them to go insane and kill themselves by repeatedly bashing their own skulls off of the walls. If ever Marlowe errs in his application of Machiavelli it is here because he becomes unnecessarily cruel and he draws out the punishment of Bajazeth and Zabina in a situation in which it would have been better to kill them quickly and place their bodies on display. In fact, he rather botches the whole thing because it becomes apparent in *Tamburlaine Pt II* that Bajazeth's son was not killed. He then manages to escape and start a rebellion.

Machiavelli contends that it is better to be feared than to be loved, especially for a new prince. Tamburlaine does his best to inspire fear in his opposition. The siege of Damascus, in which Tamburlaine uses his colored tents to convey his plans for the city, is a perfect example of how he effectively uses fear. He tells the governor that if he does not comply the effects on his

people will grow gradually worse. As the situation progresses, the governor decides to send virgins to Tamburlaine, in the hopes of satiating his bloodlust. Tamburlaine responds to the pleas for mercy with:

> Your fearful minds are thick and misty, then,
> For there sits Death, there sits imperious Death,
> Keeping his circuit by the slicing edge.
> But I am pleased you shall not see him there.
> He now is seated on my horseman's spears,
> And on their points his fleshless body feeds. –
> Techelles, straight go charge a few of themselves
> To charge these dames, and show my servant Death
> Sitting in scarlet on their armed spears. (5.1.110-118)

We see here an opportunity for Tamburlaine to make a mistake; to side on the side of compassion. Fortunately, for his sake, he does not make any such mistake. He holds his word and puts the virgins to the sword. The cruelty displayed here illustrates a Machiavellian point in action. If Tamburlaine would have abstained from killing them he would have appeared weak and his power would have been lessened. Clemency is not an option for a conquering prince who has already said that there would be no such thing. This is an effective use of Machiavelli's principles by Tamburlaine. Many theatergoers probably simply interpreted those actions as simply those of a cruel man but it was not that simple. They were the actions of a shrewd leader who understands the principles behind gaining a lasting kingdom.

The role of religion in the play is an interesting one. Tamburlaine considers himself to be the scourge of God but he does not align himself to any single faith. He fights and he frees

Muslims and Christians alike. His religion is power. “[H]e should appear, upon seeing and hearing him, to be all mercy, all faithfulness, all integrity, all kindness, all religion. And there is nothing more necessary than to seem to possess this last quality.” (Machiavelli 135) Tamburlaine seems to embody the ability for a man to seem to be of many religions or none. His religion is not some obvious and basic regurgitation of holy texts; he shows an understanding of Greek mythology, a respect for Islam, and respect for Christianity. He seeks to free enslaved Christians at one point of the play. This multifaceted form of religion is important for a conquering man such as Tamburlaine. Even if he does not practice the religions of the areas in which he is conquering, he is not seeking to change or convert the people. Therefore, he leaves himself in a much more stable and tenable situation. It shows great foresight.

Tamburlaine also believes that he is the scourge of god and that he has received might from the heavens. This passage, that follows a slew of curses leveled at Tamburlaine by Bajazeth, illustrates his beliefs perfectly:

> To let them see, divine Zenocrate,
> I glory in the curses of my foes,
> Having the power from the empyreal heaven
> To turn them all upon their proper heads. (4.4.28-31)

This is reminiscent of the idea of Machiavelli’s “armed prophet” that was mentioned in the first chapter. What Marlowe is doing here is more than just saying that Tamburlaine is divinely blessed. He is saying that Tamburlaine is an actor of the gods and as we know from Machiavelli, for such a person to be successful they have to be armed and willing to take action to maintain the power that they are given. Tamburlaine has no qualms about dealing out violence to advance his cause. However, where this similarity falls short is that Tamburlaine does not explicitly state

for what religion he is a prophet or attempt to gain followers of his own in more than a physical sense. Tamburlaine does not captivate the souls of his followers. He is no Moses.

There are some correlations between the ways that Tamburlaine positions himself in power and between some of the examples that are given in *The Prince*. The story of Duke Valentino, whom Machiavelli thinks would have been successful if fortune had not left him before he could finish his journey to power, resonates with the story of Tamburlaine in a few ways. Perhaps the most obvious similarity between the two was their combined capacity for cruelty. Valentino made the mistake of being known as a cruel leader and yet he was not hated by his subjects because he brought them order and peace. Tamburlaine is also not hated. In fact he is revered by his followers, even before he comes to great power. He has a look of greatness about him which inspires men to follow him. Upon laying eyes upon Tamburlaine for the first time Theridamas says:

> A Scythian shepherd, so embellished
> With nature's pride and richest furniture?
> His looks do menace heaven and dare the gods;
> His fiery eyes are fixed upon the earth
> As if he now devised some stratagem,
> Or meant to pierce Avernus' darksome vaults
> To pull the triple-headed dog from hell. (1.2.155-61)

Before Theridamas even knows the depths of Tamburlaine's ability he is inspired by the very potential that is seen in him. All others, with the exception of the other kings which Tamburlaine seeks to overthrow, are inspired in the same way.

Throughout the play, Tamburlaine reveals to us that he is interested in matters of succession and the right to rule. Those interests of Tamburlaine's are the interests of Marlowe himself coming into the play. Lisa Hopkins tells us that Marlowe had a vested interest in matters of succession and that he was politically involved with some prominent actors of his time. The history of Marlowe is clouded in rumors and guesses, with the two sides of the coin saying very different things. The first side says that Marlowe was a spy for Queen Elizabeth. He served her from the background in order to root out the true enemies to her monarchy. The opposition to that point of view claims that Marlowe truly was an opponent to the monarchy and that he wanted her to be overthrown or replaced in some way. Both beliefs have their merits for interpreting the character Tamburlaine as a political statement.

It is important to locate the instances in which Marlowe separates himself from the Prince. Obvious moments where Marlowe diverts from the text could are contextually quite important since the majority of the play seems to be following the guidelines for new princes in a very strict manner. The most vivid separation from *The Prince* manifests itself in a weird way. Tamburlaine survives. He does not fail in his conquest. Even at the end of *Tamburlaine Pt II,* Tamburlaine simply passes away from old age. Many of the Princes that Machiavelli outline do not survive either their ascension to the throne or any sort of extended rule. Looking at the Romans that are outlined as good leaders, nearly all die, both the good and the cruel. Looking at some of Machiavelli's favorite examples of good Princes, Duke Valentino for example, we see that although they were successful in some ways, most of them end up ultimately failing. What this means for the deeper meaning of the text is not really clear. Marlowe was clearly interpreting Machiavelli on a deeper level than his counterparts but he has yet to make the final leap towards republicanism that I drew out in my first chapter.

He has disregarded the traditional trope of the Machiavel but he does not yet truly support the teachings of Machiavel. Marlowe focuses too much on the potential for cruelty for someone who is following the teachings of Machiavelli. Instead of seeing the potential for a great leader to lead to the creation of a republic, he sees the Machiavellian path to power as a method to place a cruel man in a position of power that he cannot be easily removed from. Once Tamburlaine gains his position he does not lose it. At the end of *Tamburlaine the Great* he is at the height of his power. At the end of *Tamburlaine the Great Pt II* he dies on his bed after conquering even more lands. However, by the end of his reign his cruelty has increased tenfold. He puts whole cities to the sword for fighting him.

Chapter 4 – The Closing Moments of *Tamburlaine the Great* and the Greater Implications of the Play

The final chapter of *Tamburlaine the Great* is presented in sharp contrast to what would typically be shown to a crowd of English theater goers at the time of Marlowe. Tamburlaine is not a savory or clean character. As was discussed in the previous chapter; he is not a moralist either. He has been cruel and merciful; he acts only how he needs to act to insure that he increases his power. His focus is ever on the expansionist doctrine that is preached by Machiavelli in both *The Prince* and *The Discourses*. Such expansionism and savagery would not typically end well for a Machiavel in English Renaissance drama. As was discussed earlier, most dramas of the time would have ended with the death of the Machiavellian character due to his immorality. What separates *Tamburlaine the Great* is that Tamburlaine does not die or fail in his endeavors. At the end of the play he is in a position of power and he ultimately achieves all that he wants before passing away in his bed at the end of the *Tamburlaine Pt II.*

The end of *Tamburlaine the Great* does not come close to a morally satisfying ending. In fact, the ending is a mockery of the punishment that usually befell other characters who were constructed in the same way as him. In the second chapter we covered what befell the typical Machiavel of English drama and for the vast majority and for the most famous examples of the trope the Machiavel comes to a savage and often quite theatrical end. *Tamburlaine the Great* ends with a wedding. He is at the very peak of his power and in wedding Zenocrate he has metaphorically captured Fortune and he has secured a political hold over her father's lands. In many ways the marriage is a sarcastic form of punishment for the very free willed marriage. After all, a marriage is a loss of some freedoms so it is very possible that Marlowe deliberately used marriage as a jab at the usual constraints of morality within his genre. Instead of leaving

Tamburlaine dead on a field of battle like Richard or stabbed in the back like Barabas, our last image of Tamburlaine is of him becoming happily wed to the object of his desires for the entire play.

The wedding does grant him even more power than he had though, so that supports the decision to marry. This happy scene secures him even more land through the rights of marriage. Instead of using the sword and violence, he gains these lands by royal blood and the right of ascension; two notions that Tamburlaine scoffs at earlier in the play. All other leaders who had gained power through ascension were portrayed as weaker and dumber than Tamburlaine. Perhaps his marrying Zenocrate assures the downfall of his empire because now his sons will have to deal with the difficulties that are associated with living up to a great father such as him. In light of all of this the ironic thing with Tamburlaine is that he still seeks to have noble blood. That is why he seeks to marry himself to Zenocrate. This situation could be a moment in which Tamburlaine shows a critical lack of foresight, which is a fundamental flaw. Also, the crowning of Zenocrate lessens Tamburlaine's power:

> Then sit thou down, divine Zenocrate,
> And here we crown thee Queen of Persia
> And all the kingdoms and dominions
> That late the power of Tamburlaine subdued.
> As Juno, when the giants were suppressed
> That darted mountains at her brother Jove,

He then promises to lay down his weapons for her, an act which he ultimately does not do in *Pt II*, but the idea that Tamburlaine is giving up his ability to conquest for a woman does not do him credit. If we believe that Zenocrate is the manifestation of fortuna then we can interpret this as

Tamburlaine giving himself to the fates instead of relying on his own virtue. On that regard, this is a mistake by Tamburlaine that could cost him dearly. Machiavelli says that although men can be at the whim of fortuna they must continue to advance on their own behalf because "Fortune is the arbiter of one half of our actions, but that she still leaves the control of the other half, or almost that, to us." (Machiavelli 159) In other words, even though fate might hold a great sway over us we should still attempt to be the master of our fortunes.

The end of the play shows us a Tamburlaine who is torn between continuing his expansion and between settling down. When speaking to the Sultan and then to Zenocrate, he contradicts himself in an obvious way. He tells the Sultan:

> 'Twas I, my lord, that gat the victory,
> And therefore grieve not at your overthrow
> Since I shall render all into your hands
> And add more strength to your dominions
> Than ever yet confirmed th' Egyptian crown.
> The god of war resigns his room to me,
> Meaning to make me general of the world.
> Jove, viewing me in arms, looks pale and wan,
> Fearing my power should pull him from his throne. (Marlowe 5.1 433-453)

That speech says that he will continue to conquer the world until he is the emperor of it all. The god of war himself will vacate his place amongst the gods in order to give it to Tamburlaine. He then takes it a step farther and says that Jove, the king of the Gods, looks upon him in his battle raiment and feels weak. Such supreme arrogance fits with the Tamburlaine that we see throughout the play. He frequently draws upon Greek and Roman mythology throughout the play

so this is nothing special until you jump forward to the last speech that Tamburlaine makes in the play. He says, “Hang up your weapons on Alcides’ post, / For Tamburlaine takes truce with all the world. (Marlowe 5.1 528-529)” Tamburlaine is either lying to Zenocrate or to her father, unless he had a change of heart in the couple of minutes between those two speeches. That change of heart is unlikely. The rest of the play supports the theory that Tamburlaine was lying to Zenocrate. He is merely appeasing her. He is clearly not content with the lands that he has currently gained because otherwise he would not say that the very gods fear him and expect him to conquer the world. We have seen him make extravagant promises earlier in the play, such as those that he made to Cosroe, and when it suited him he abandoned those promises and that is what he will do here. His goal is simply to gain power.

If this is a ploy for power and not a true promise to settle down, Machiavelli would be impressed. As a prince who is only seeking to enlarge the borders of his empire through conquest, a political attempt to gain power may have been seen as acceptable. Such a ploy would have been a trick which Machiavelli could have supported. Although bloodlines created in such a manner would be weak and therefore quite likely to fail, the establishment of such a great empire would secure Tamburlaine’s place in the history books, which is something that the aspiring prince wants greatly. In fact, the plot of *Pt II* is largely concerned with the failings of succession. Tamburlaine has a weak son who he eventually kills for hiding from battle. After killing him Tamburlaine says:

> By Mahomet, thy mighty friend, I swear,
> In sending to my issue such a soul,
> Created of the massy dregs of earth,
> The scum and tarter of the elements,

Wherein was neither courage, strength, or wit,

But folly, sloth, and damned idleness, (4.2.46-52)

Tamburlaine curses Mahomet, the Prophet Muhammad, for giving him such a miserable son to carry on his empire. This is Marlowe making a jab at succession and the inherent chance there is for weakness to manifest itself in royal blood. Few sons could live up to a man so talented as Tamburlaine and as a result of that the empire that Tamburlaine has constructed was not likely to last. He has great governors in place but they are more likely to form their own principalities rather than stay under the rule of a weak emperor.

The establishment of a bloodline by Tamburlaine may have been perceived as a mistake by Machiavelli and as such this could be a fatal diversion from Machiavelli's teachings by Marlowe. However, this could also be evidence that Marlowe did not read *The Discourses* because he has stuck fairly true to *The Prince.* In *The Discourses*, Machiavelli tells the story of the founding of Rome and how it endured for its four hundred years of freedom. He tells how Romulus, even though he was a dictator, established a system of government that was capable of existing beyond his lifetime. Instead of establishing a bloodline or a ruling family, he laid the foundations for an intricate republic that was formed by balancing the power of the people and the power of the upper class through a series of checks and balances. The senators had the money but the people had the military. Machiavelli also says in *The Discourses* that establishing a bloodline from a great prince is likely to deem a civilization a failure because the new rulers will neither have the capabilities or the desire to rule like the founder of the kingdom.

At the end of the play the world's view of Tamburlaine has changed sharply from viewing him as a Scythian shepherd and barbarian. His opponents now respect and fear him. Machiavelli

says that it is better to be feared than loved, as long as you are not hated for being unfair. Tamburlaine has captured the fear of his opponents. The Governor of Damascus says:

> Still doth this man, or rather god of war,
> Batter our walls and beat our turrets down,
> And to resist with longer stubbornness
> Or hope of rescue from the Sultan's power
> Were but to bring our willful overthrow
> And make us desperate of our threatened lives.
> We see his tents have now been altered
> With terrors to the last and cruelest hue.
> His coal-black colors, everywhere advanced,
> Threaten our city, with a general spoil;
> And if we should, with common rites of arms,
> Offer our safeties to his clemency,
> I fear the custom proper to his sword,
> Which he observes as a parcel of his fame,
> Intending so to terrify the world,
> By any innovation or remorse
> Will never be dispensed with till our deaths. (5.1.1-17)

The reference to Tamburlaine as the God of war is interesting. As was discussed earlier, Machiavelli favors the idea of an armed prophet and from the viewpoint of the Governor of Damascus; he very well may be one. The important distinction between someone like Tamburlaine and Moses is that Tamburlaine does not actually view himself as a prophet who is

doing the bidding of God. By Tamburlaine's own omission of such a detail we know that he is not a self-proclaimed prophet. The closest that he comes to such an assertion is his emphasis on the idea that he is the scourge of God. This passage illustrates the depth of the fear that Tamburlaine has begun to inspire in the principalities around him. They fear him and so they know that resistance is nearly futile; it is similar to the might of expansionist Rome during the days of the Republic.

By the end of the play we are presented with a Machiavel of astronomic proportions. He has risen from the lowest of position to one of almost absolute power. He has achieved all that he has with his own skills and his own prowess, both on the battlefield and on the political arena. The significance of this is that Marlowe has created a character that argues against every political foundation in Elizabethan England. Lisa Hopkins makes an argument that Marlowe was writing with succession in mind. She says:

> [T]he play reaches out beyond the immediate situation to raise the whole issue of what are the proper qualities for ruling a kingdom. To some extent, all of Marlowe's plays can be seen to be asking this question, since they all focus on, or at least feature, important roles, rulers, and their children. (Hopkins 198)

In other words, Marlowe does not come to any true conclusions about what he wants to do about the succession of the English crown. He writes about it only to draw our attention to what should be expected of a good and powerful ruler and he does it using a Machiavellian character in order to show the English public what a truly powerful and engaging ruler could be capable of doing. In the time of Marlowe it was forbidden to speak out against the crown in matters of succession. (Hopkins) It would have been an act of treason. For Marlowe to make any sort of point he had to

make it in a subtle way. Marlowe was convicted of having atheist views and believing that he would take his beliefs a step further is not that inexplicable.

Although the focus of this project has been *Tamburlaine the Great Pt I*, the transformation of Tamburlaine in *Pt II* should be looked at in close detail. Tamburlaine dies in his bed after passing the power to his son to rule. He wishes for his son to take up his father's crown and to rule as he would have done if he would have been able to live forever. Throughout the series Tamburlaine becomes crueler, with the ultimate act being the savage killing of the Governor of Babylon and then the murder of all of the inhabitants of the city. The passage reads:

TAMBURLAINE Go now, and bind the burghers hand and foot,
And cast them headlong in the city's lake.
Tartars and Persians shall inhabit there;
And, to command the city, I will build
A citadel, that all Africa,
Which hath been subject to the Persian king,
Shall pay me tribute for in Babylon.

TECHELLES What shall be done with their wives and children, my lord?

TAMBURLAINE Techelles, drown them all, man, woman, and child;
Leave not a Babylonian in the town.

TECHELLES I will about it straight. Come, soldiers. (5.1.160-70)

The death of the governor is excusable and the Tamburlaine of *Part I* would have done the same thing. The murder of the civilians is an incredibly cruel action that goes beyond the limits of what Machiavelli would have found acceptable. Tamburlaine can be cruel to his soldiers in the interests of keeping them in line but cruelty towards civilians cannot be accepted. Those civilians

who have already lived under a prince before would not have had a hard time adapting to Tamburlaine's rule. The slaughter of those innocents helps highlight a greater divergence from *The Prince* in *Tamburlaine the Great Pt II.*

The question of whether or not Tamburlaine is an effective Machiavellian prince has yet to be answered. The answer cannot be satisfied with a simple yes or no answer. All we know for sure is that Tamburlaine was a shocking character that made people think about their own political situation. When watching or reading the play it is hard to not think of your own government. I know that today we could apply a reading of *Tamburlaine the Great* to many political leaders in our own time period. It is quite easy to do and to think that people in Marlowe's day would not do that does not them justice. We know that the average commoner did not possess a very workable knowledge of Machiavelli's work. He was just an immoral person to them. However, Tamburlaine is not presented as a normal Machiavel and the people who were watching would have realized that there was something special or different about him. It is clear that Marlowe knows and understands his work on a much deeper level but he uses that knowledge to a much better extent in the first part of the play. The Tamburlaine of *Tamburlaine the Great Pt II* is no longer the cold and calculating ruler that Machiavelli would have envisioned.

Marlowe utilizes the three mechanics of a princes rise to power; virtu, opportunita, and fortuna. In the beginning of the play a reader of *The Prince* could almost predict his rise to power and the actions that he takes. He kills displaced leaders; he rallies people around him; he is not unnecessarily cruel to large numbers of people and most notably he spares the lives of those who live in Damascus even though they hold out on him for too long. Until the end of *Tamburlaine the Great Pt I*, when he takes Zenocrate's hand in marriage and vows to settle down, he was

predictable. It is the final act of the play that is perplexing to readers of Machiavelli. Tamburlaine survives. He endures when he should have been defeated. He should have fallen because he was an English Machiavel and he should have fallen or failed because even Machiavelli's greatest founders ultimately were killed or displaced. The first explanation for survival of Tamburlaine is that Marlowe was utilizing *The Prince* in the way that he deemed necessary for the creation of the perfect ruler. The second explanation is that he never noticed that Machiavelli's princes usually failed. Even the great emperors of Rome whom Machiavelli uses as examples die in the end, usually at the hand of their own Praetorian Guard.

Conclusion

Niccolò Machiavelli was not an easy man to interpret. His real ideals are hidden deep within a web of lies and misdirection. Within those lies there is a thread of republican thought that shows that Machiavelli thought that republicanism was an ideal form of government which should be the ultimate goal of new states. This goal could only be achieved on the back of a great leader who could rally the people behind him for long enough to create something lasting and great. It is for that man whom *The Prince* is targeted. Machiavelli's great admiration of Romulus and Moses and the civilizations that they managed to create stems from his knowledge that Moses created a following that has lasted for millennia and that Romulus set in motion the creation of an incredibly successful republic that flourished for nearly four-hundred years. *The Prince* does offer so advice appears to be immoral at a glance but upon understanding the deeper motivations for Machiavelli it can be seen that he was thinking that the ends justify the means. It is better for a strong and immoral leader to establish a strong government that has the potential to become a republic than it is to stay locked in a cycle of weak dictators that do not allow people to advance at all.

The similarities between Machiavelli's great leaders and Tamburlaine are not as far-fetched and fleeting as one might initially think. Through Tamburlaine, Christopher Marlowe shows a considerable understanding of much more than the typical English interpretation of Machiavelli. Marlowe utilizes the very traits that Machiavelli says are required to make a good leader. Tamburlaine is driven by his virtu, just like the greatest of Machiavelli's examples. In *Tamburlaine the Great Pt I* the use of Machiavelli is closer to an application of political theory than just a rehashing of common tropes in order to please a crowd. A reader of *The Prince* can almost predict his actions in certain situations. His treatment of Bajazeth was entirely

predictable, although the more efficient and Machiavellian way to deal with him would most likely have been a quick death. Unfortunately, the second part of *Tamburlaine* does not contain such a compelling rendition of Machiavelli's teachings. Marlowe digresses from *The Prince* and instead creates a new Tamburlaine that is seemingly defined by his twisted morality. His potential for cruelty has increased and his shrewd and calculated use of violence has been diminished.

The reason why Marlowe was writing with such a keen focus on Machiavelli was not out of any desire or attempt of his to make a bold statement about the crown. Such a statement would not have been acceptable in his day and age. However, the way that he wrote the character Tamburlaine forces the reader to look at their own leaders. Marlowe brings up matters of succession in a way that forces the reader or the watcher to think about succession in their own time. This means that Marlowe's crowds would have been thinking about Elizabeth's rise to power and how maybe Mary would have been the better choice. Marlowe does not come out and say anything quite so pointed though. That would have been criminal. Marlowe points out the merits of a strong leader who is willing to make hard choices. Tamburlaine does things that are considered immoral and evil but in doing so he helps the cause of his followers. Tamburlaine also ends up ultimately successful. At the end of the *Pt 1* he marries the object of his desire and in doing so secures his Fortune and at the end of the *Pt II* he dies peacefully in his bed as an old and successful man.

It would have been fantastic if there was any support for Marlowe harboring republican sentiments hidden in *Tamburlaine the Great.* Unfortunately, support for such an idea could not be found. What Marlowe does do effectively is demonstrate a substantially more in-depth knowledge of Machiavelli than his contemporaries. He may not have a modern interpretation but

he certainly possessed the knowledge and the ability to portray Machiavelli's teachings as something that was driven by far more than immorality and thirst for power. Even though he does not ultimately follow the guidelines of *The Prince* to the letter, he does utilize it in such a way as to force his readers to realize that a leader like Tamburlaine is not necessarily a bad thing when faced with the potential weakness of a hereditary line. *Tamburlaine the Great* and *The Prince* are two pieces of literature that are undoubtedly intertwined. There would never have been a Tamburlaine without *The Prince* to guide his creation. This was Marlowe's most obvious use of the real Machiavelli. In *The Jew of Malta*, which is a play with great political significance, the Machiavel was nothing more than a character type to be used on the stage. Barabas was more of a set-piece than an ever evolving Machiavellian prince.

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