AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL APPROACH OF JOHN DRYDEN'S PLAYS AND THEIR APPRAISAL THROUGH THE IDEAS OF EDMUND BURKE

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ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL APPROACH OF JOHN DRYDEN'S PLAYS AND THEIR APPRAISAL THROUGH THE IDEAS OF EDMUND BURKE

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This thesis is an analysis of the political approach of the plays of John Dryden and an analysis of it through the ideas of Edmund Burke. This work establishes that Dryden had a political program, it being the use of his literary work to promote the concept of monarchical legitimacy so as to support Charles II and the legitimate succession to his rule. Dryden engages in this program in his dramas by depicting the legitimate rulers within them as exceptionally virtuous. He additionally uses his plays to make further political points within the framework of his program. In order to explain the relevance of the political concerns of Dryden, this thesis relates the historical and theoretical context in which Dryden wrote about kingship. It also provides an examination of his political program within his poetry and playwriting during the reign of Charles II before making a more detailed analysis of four specific plays. After this analysis, this thesis then analyses the political approach of Dryden through the ideas of the conservative political thinker Edmund Burke. By using the ideas of Burke, it is revealed that whilst he would concur in the main with Dryden on his political program, there is in fact a flaw within it. Burke shows that by coupling the idea of legitimacy with another concept, it weakens the concept of legitimacy itself. Hence Dryden, by linking virtue and legitimacy, actually undermines his whole political program.

Keywords: Dryden, Burke, Drama, Renaissance, Divine Right of Kings

ÖZ

JOHN DRYDEN OYUNLARINDAKİ SİYASAL YAKLAŞIMIN BİR ANALİZİ VE EDMUND BURKE'ÜN FİKİRLERİ ARACILIĞIYLA DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ

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Bu tez, Edmund Burke'ün fikirleri aracılığıyla John Dryden oyunlarındaki siyasal anlayışın bir analizidir. Çalışmada, eserlerini kralı II. Charles ve haleflerinin meşru iktidarını desteklemek, dolayısıyla monarşik meşruiyet düşüncesini teşvik etmek için kullanan Dryden'ın siyasi bir tasarısı olduğu gösterilir. Dryden, planını gerçekleştirmek için oyunlarında meşru hükümdarları benzersiz bir erdeme sahip şahsiyetler biçiminde vasıflandırır. Tezde oyunlarını öteki birçok siyasi noktaya değinmek için de kullanan Dryden'ın, siyasi kaygılarının anlaşılması için, hakkında yazdığı krallığın tarihsel ve teorik bağlam ile ilişkisi kurulur. Ayrıca, dört oyununun analizine geçilmeden önce, II. Charles dönemindeki şiiri ve oyun yazarlığı çerçevesinde Dryden'ın siyaset planıyla ilgili bir inceleme ortaya konur. Oyunların incelenmesinin ardından, muhafazakar siyasi düşünür Edmund Burke'ün düşünceleri aracılığıyla Dryden'ın politik yaklaşımı değerlendirilir. Bu yoldan Burke'ün görüşlerinde, ekseriyetle Dryden'ın siyasi düşünceleriyle çakışmasa da, uyuşmazlık gösterdiği bir noktaya dikkat çekilir. Burke'e göre meşruiyet fikri başka bir kavram ile birleştirildiğinde zayıflatılmış olur. Bu bakış açısından Dryden'ın, fazilet ve meşruiyeti birleştirmekle, aslında tüm siyasi tasarısını temelden sarsmış olduğunun altı çizilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Dryden, Burke, Drama, Restorasyon, Kralların Tanrısal Hakkı

To Jeremy Frank Dore

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AM	*Annus Mirabilis*
AR	*Astræa Redux*
Arist	Aristotle
Ben	*On Benefits*
C	*Comus*
Cast	Castiglione
CEP	*Complete English Poems*
Cic	Cicero
CPS	*The Complete Plays of Sophocles*
Dry	Dryden
Ds	*Dialogues and Essays*
Eth	*The Ethics*
EW	*Epistle to the Whigs*
FTO	*Four Tragedies and Octavia*
HMPT	*A History of Modern Political Thought*
HS	*Heroic Stanzas*
JC	*Julius Caesar*
KJ	*King John*
LRH	*Letter to Robert Howard*
Ls	*Letters from a Stoic*
Mil	*Milton*
Mont	Montaigne
Oed	*Oedipus*
Of	*De Officiis*
P	*Preface*
Pol	*The Politics*
PW	*Political Writings*
RL	*Religio Laici*

Sen	Seneca
SH	*Shakespeare's History Plays*
Shak	Shakespeare
SM	*To His Sacred Majesty*
Soph	Sophocles
SP	*Selected Poetry*
SPs	*Selected Poems*
TM	*The Medal*
TPs	*Three Plays*
TRP	*Three Roman Plays*
TTP	*The Three Theban Plays*
TP	*The Theban Plays*
Tusc	*The Tusculan Disputations*

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Seventeenth Century England and Its Political Literature

The political history of 17th-century England is dominated by questions as to what the political structure of the polity itself should be. These fundamental questions were widely debated and even fought over. It is therefore unsurprising that the two arguably greatest English political philosophers, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, belong to this century. Iain Hampsher-Monk has noted that "[t]he English Civil Wars" which took place in the middle of that century "were a forcing-house of European significance for political theory" (H-M *HMPT* xii). Yet, it should not be imagined that when the fighting came to an end, this "forcing-house" ceased to function. This is because, as Hampsher-Monk has noted, the issues over which these wars had been fought were not actually resolved by the ending of the conflicts (Ibid. 69), and thus the issues themselves continued to plague English politics for the remainder of the century. Within this general atmosphere, political views representing the Divine Right of Kings theory on one extreme and republicanism on another were seriously discussed within the body politic of England.

Moreover, within this particular century, not only are the aforementioned great political philosophers to be found, but also writers of literature who deal with the great political events of the day. Barbara Lewalski has indentified three great poets from this time period[1] and they are John Milton, Andrew Marvell and John Dryden. As is well-known, Milton involved himself in republican politics to such a

[1] Although the term "seventeenth-century" has been used in this paragraph, it really refers to the particularly tense political period that begins with the coronation of Charles I in 1625 and extends at least up to the Glorious Revolution of 1688; as such other poets who wrote in the seventeenth century, such as William Shakespeare or John Donne, either literally or effectively fall outside of its parameters.

degree that he abandoned his actual literary ambitions and became a propagandist and a political philosopher in his own right. His masterpieces from the Restoration period[2] have strong political interpretations, which will be investigated later. Marvell, who was a Puritan, also involved himself in politics in defence of "toleration as well as individual liberty" (Bradbrook 193) and he has also been described as "a staunch defender of constitutional liberties" (Gardner 316). It has been noted by R. G. Cox that "Marvell's concern with politics was to increase, and eventually to crowd poetry out of his life" (Cox 64). He became an MP in 1659 and remained one until his death in 1678. His political concerns, as a critic of the policies of the restored monarchy (Zwicker *DPC* 153), explain why in the Restoration period, he "wrote much prose and some verse satires" (Ford 269), and it was in these satires that, as Maurice Ashley puts it, he "punched the Royalists as hard as Dryden struck the Whigs" (Ashley 161).

1.2 John Dryden's Political Program

The contrast Ashley makes is an instructive one, because the third and youngest of Lewalski's poets, John Dryden, took a view of politics that opposed both Milton and Marvell. Whilst he had worked alongside these other two poets in the bureaucracy of the Commonwealth (Lewalski 344), upon the Restoration in 1660 he revealed himself to be an avid supporter of the newly-returned monarchy, and did not swerve in loyalty from what he regarded as the legitimate Stuart line for the rest of his career. Much like Milton and Marvell, Dryden put his literary talents to use in support of his political inclination. He did this with poetry in explicit praise of the king, and in satires that ruthlessly mocked the opponents of the restored monarchy. He also used his playwriting as a propagandist tool, by promoting unconstrained legitimate monarchy as a general concept. In order to understand the particular course he took with this, an observation of Maximillian

[2] It is assumed in this work that *Samson Agonistes* was finally completed after 1660, placing this work in agreement with E. M. W. Tillyard as well as Jonathan Goldberg and Stephen Orgel (Tillyard *Mil*. 278) (Milton *SP*. xii-xiii).

Novak is especially enlightening. In the introduction to his essay "John Dryden's Politics: The Rabble and Sovereignty", Novak includes the following observation:

> In the exchange between Thomas Hobbes and William Davenant, written at the time of the Interregnum, both authors agreed that it was the duty of the writer to glorify the sovereign by creating images of heroism and greatness that would make him or her appear to belong to a sphere beyond the reach of ordinary mortals. Such an aura of magnificence would serve the purpose of avoiding any future disturbance in the state by creating the illusion that the sovereign existed on a plane entirely different from that of his subjects (Novak 86).

Novak adds that "[c]ertainly Dryden followed such a program in his serious plays" (Novak 86). It is also the view of this work that this is the case, especially in Dryden's career as a dramatist during the reign of Charles II.

1.3 The Aim and Approach of the Study

This work will show that one of the purposes behind John Dryden's plays written during the reign of Charles II is to promote the concept of monarchical legitimacy in order to support the ruling king and the legitimate succession, and it will then critique his approach to this political purpose in addition to other political points made in the plays through the perspective of the ideas of the Edmund Burke.

Dryden follows his political program within his plays in seven ways. Firstly, and most significantly, he portrays the legitimate rulers within them as being the figures of greatest virtue and by doing so creates the impression that legitimate princes are deserving of full monarchic prerogatives. Additionally, he uses his plays to support the position of monarchy by depicting his legitimate rulers as ideally having no limitation on their freedom of action, save that which is self-imposed through their high sense of virtue. Moreover, he portrays regicide as an act of impiety, and depicts legitimacy as something that cannot be alienated. In addition, Dryden represents the populace as being unsuited to hold political responsibility, and by doing so seeks to undermine the concept of representative government. He also uses his plays to reject the nativist sentiment that can be

expressed by the populace regarding their monarch as illegitimately placing a limit on royal prerogatives. Lastly, he depicts within his dramas the effects of tyranny and instability that can lead to civil war. The solution to these two problems for Dryden is the stable system of primogeniture. It is important to note though that for Dryden princely legitimacy is more important than the system by which it comes about. Consequently, he depicts his legitimate princes as being the most virtuous even when they have come to the throne through a system other than that of primogeniture.

In order to illustrate the above points, four of Dryden's plays have been selected for this work. They are *Marriage à la Mode*, *Aureng-Zebe*, *Oedipus*, and *Secret Love; or, the Maiden Queen*.[3] Before discussing the reason for this specific selection, it is to be noted that, much like William Shakespeare and Ben Jonson earlier in the century and unlike his French contemporaries Molière and Jean Racine, Dryden wrote dramatic works in a variety of genres. The four plays mentioned here consist of two tragicomedies – *Marriage à la Mode* and *The Maiden Queen* – one heroic drama in *Aureng-Zebe* and one classical tragedy in *Oedipus*. Nonetheless, for his political project, the difference in genre is more apparent than real. This is because Dryden's tragicomedies consist of "scenes from a half-length love-and-honour verse play" which are "interspersed with scenes from a half-length comedy" (Collins 162). For this work, within the two tragicomedies, it is the scenes composing the "love-and-honour verse play" – and which Harold Love describes as the "serious" ones – that will be almost exclusively examined. Heroic plays are also "serious" being tragedies in their own right (Humphreys 90), although modelled more upon the contemporary works of Pierre Corneille (Barnouw 424) than ancient models. The principle reason that these four particular

[3] In this work the play has been abbreviated to *The Maiden Queen*. The title seems apt as Dryden himself abbreviates the play to "The Maiden Queen" in his own preface to the drama (Dry. *Vol2*. 386-7). Moreover, it appears to be suitable in that this work focuses on the political aspects of Dryden's play which predominantly revolve around the marital status of the Queen, and the fact that her character is the central one in the play.

plays have been selected for this work is that they each deal with different forms of princely legitimacy, yet they are all consistent in portraying the legitimate prince as the most virtuous potential ruler regardless of his or her source of legitimacy. The different forms of legitimacy that these plays deal with are primogeniture for *Marriage à la Mode*, and designation and the traditional Islamic system of equal hereditary male legitimacy in *Aureng-Zebe*. Oedipus deals with elective monarchy, and the central political concern of *The Maiden Queen* is legitimacy conferred through marriage to a legitimate princess.

Before reaching that stated aim of this work which includes the analyses of these plays, firstly the historical context in which Dryden wrote about kingship will need to be examined in order to understand the relevance of his political concerns. This work will present this context both in the significant events that occurred prior to Dryden's literary career, and then it will review the events of significance to the English monarchy that occurred in Dryden's lifetime and his response to them through an examination of his poetry and some of his playwriting. After this, as Dryden's plays deal with the aforementioned four different forms of legitimate political succession, these routes to the crown will be examined, along with that of illegitimate usurpation. Next, in order to contextualize Dryden's political outlook, the concept of the Divine Right of Kings, to which he adhered, will be examined. In order to be able to analyse Dryden's dramatic characters in terms of virtue, which will show that Dryden invariably presents his legitimate ruler as the most virtuous character, an enumeration of what virtues were seen as requisite in a ruler in Dryden's time will be presented. Following that, the four aforementioned plays will be examined. In them the analyses will show that a link between highest virtue and legitimacy is made, in addition to other political points that they raise. Finally, the political points raised in the plays will be discussed through the perspective of Burke in order to show that whilst Dryden's general political outlook conforms with that of the later conservative thinker, Dryden's specific linking of virtue and legitimacy contains an implied problem that undermines his whole political

program. This problem is that the coupling of the idea of legitimacy with another concept renders the concept of legitimacy itself seriously impaired.

1.4 The Use of Edmund Burke in the Study

It is now necessary to show why Edmund Burke is considered to be a suitable political thinker through whom to evaluate Dryden's political program. The choice of Burke for this purpose rests on three assumptions. They are that firstly, fundamental political controversies change over time, and thus an examination of Dryden can illuminatingly be made by a thinker on politics who shares the same zeitgeist, and would therefore be intimately acquainted with the same issues. Secondly, it can be assumed that those thinkers on politics whose reputations have withstood the test of time have achieved such posthumous reputations through being the most profound published thinkers of their times, and as such they can be expected to provide significant insights upon which a critical political analysis can be made. Thirdly, as this work seeks to make a profound evaluation of Dryden's political outlook, it can be assumed that a writer who is in the main sympathetic to this outlook will reveal more subtle observations within it, such as the implied problem referred to above, than would an opponent, who would either broadly attack it or be indifferent to it. It is such considerations that lead to Edmund Burke being a suitable political thinker with whom to analyse Dryden's work, as it is he who most suitably accords with the three assumptions made here in relation to Dryden. It is not to be assumed however that alternate political – or indeed any other – approaches to Dryden's work are in any way to be invalidated by this approach. This work simply presents one useful approach in its own right.

The reasons for why Burke closely conforms to the above assumptions are now to be presented. For the question of Dryden and Burke sharing the same zeitgeist, even though it is the case that the two men submitted their earliest significant works to the publisher roughly a century apart[4], they still belong to what can be regarded as the same cultural tradition. This has been called "the long

[4] Dryden published his *Heroic Stanzas* in 1659, and Burke his *Vindication of Natural Society* and *On the Sublime and the Beautiful* in 1756.

eighteenth century" (Barnouw 423), and its fundamental political dispute was over the relative power of the monarch *vis-à-vis* the Parliament. It is a period marked by "a practical humanism" which is brought about by its specific "political, economic, and intellectual conditions" (Humphreys 20) that were established after "dynamic and explosive conceptions of religion and politics" (Ibid 19-20) in the Civil War and its preceding period, and which "provoked a desire for harmony" (Ibid 20). Despite the expansion of scientific and philosophic thought, economic and military power, and the growing reach of English influence and trade around the world, the general intellectual "outlook" (Ibid 15) and taste in this period remained relatively stable. All in all, it was a period which, when surveyed retrospectively, allowed for slow steady progress but which distrusted radical change, and which can be summed up as a time of "Augustan sense and assurance" (Ibid 46). As such it was a period which Dryden helped to usher into being with his support for the stabilizing effect of a restored monarchy, and a period in which Burke passed most of his life, and in which he formulated his fundamental approach to the great questions of his time.

It is the impact of the French Revolution and the idea of popular sovereignty which it engenders that helps to bring this period to an end by creating what can be called a paradigm shift in the approach to politics, and Burke recognizes this (Burke 10), regarding the revolution as being similar to the great upheavals of the English Civil War era, as will be seen below. Burke saw the French Revolution as having the potential to destroy the common cultural milieu that had existed in England for over a century, and to which he and Dryden both belonged.

The status of Burke as a political thinker is also not in doubt. He is one of the great political thinkers of all time, and is recognized as such particularly, but not exclusively[5], in conservative circles. The Conservative MP and writer Jesse

[5] For instance, Woodrow Wilson a political theorist who would go on to become twenty-eighth president of the US and was known as a "Progressive" was also an ardent admirer of Burke. See Cooper especially pp. 8, 73, 245.

Norman for instance opens his book on Burke by describing him as "the greatest . . . political thinker of the last 300 years" (Norman 1), and in the conservative publication *The Chesterton Review*, Burke is described as "[t]he greatest conservative philosopher of them all" (*Chesterton Rev*. 248). This helps to explain why *Reflections on the Revolution in France* is described by the scholar John Whale as a "key conservative text" (Whale 13). It is indeed Burke's conservatism that places him in a position of broad affinity with Dryden. Dryden's work is aimed at the preservation of monarchical prerogative in a stratified society, and Burke, in his own words, speaks of his "affections" that "lead" him to value "the conservation of civil order" (Burke 165), with his concern for "[g]ood order" and his own belief in "natural subordination" in society (Ibid. 246).

If it is accepted that broad affinity of thought allows for interesting insights into specific concerns within it, neither Hobbes nor Locke – the two aforementioned great English political thinkers of the era – are as relevant as Burke for using in an analysis of Dryden. Locke's main political concern is to show when rebellion against a monarch could be legitimate, putting him at great odds with Dryden, and Hobbes, while favouring an all-powerful sovereign, shows no interest in legitimacy and tradition and this means that his arguments would not take into account or help us to discuss some of the most important parts of Dryden's discourse on kingship[6]. Burke, on the other hand, explicitly deals with the question of legitimate succession and is thus a very suitable source for the analyses presented in this thesis.

One other factor that provides a strong sense of affinity between Dryden and Burke is their shared fear of popular revolution. Dryden's work written in the Restoration is overshadowed by the recent experience of the Commonwealth, and the fear of a return to what was seen by most people in positions of power and

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[6] It was the case for Hobbes that whilst he argued for omnipotent sovereign, the birthright of this ruler was unimportant to him, and his ideas therefore, as Ashley reveals, "suited a Cromwellian dictatorship just as well as Stuart absolutism" (Ashley 162).

influence – including Dryden – as its extremism, instability and violence[7]. In Burke's case, the same fear is present, although in this case it is Burke's – remarkably accurate – prophetic powers which lead him to see the same potential in the French Revolution, which at the time of his writing the *Reflections* was still generally seen as having created a constitutional monarchy much like England's and whose act of regicide and "Reign of Terror" still lay mostly unsuspected in the future. Moreover, not only is it possible to draw parallels between the events of the mid-seventeenth century and the French Revolution, but it is especially significant that these parallels were drawn by Burke himself. This can be seen from the fact that he explicitly connects the Reverend Richard Price – a proponent of the French Revolution whom Burke regards with particular animus as will be seen later – with "the great preachers" of the seventeenth century, who "partook" in the "triumph" of overthrowing the king of England of that time (Burke 66), and remarks that his "sally . . . differs only in place and time, but agrees perfectly with the spirit and rapture of 1648" (Ibid. 66). Therefore, under the influence of their fear of revolution, both men felt a need to preserve the prerogatives, power and prestige of the monarchy of their time, in the form in which it was then found, as a bulwark against subversive ideas of popular sovereignty, providing further common ground between them.

There is however a potential objection to using Burke as a political thinker through whom to discuss Dryden, and it is that it is possible to portray Burke not as a political thinker in broad sympathy with Dryden, but rather one whose perspective is generally opposed to it. It is certainly the case that the Glorious Revolution which resulted in James II's loss of the British throne and Dryden's permanent fall from grace is supported by Burke. And it is also the case that in his

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[7] This fear was widespread enough in the political and intellectual world of the Restoration to explain not only the trepidation of conservatives, but also the reason reformers pushed for a constitutional monarchy rather than a republic which lacked popular support anyhow, and is most clearly symbolized in the fact that the Glorious Revolution marks a far from profound remodelling of the English constitution on what can be described Lockean rather than Miltonic lines.

political career, Burke was proud to have begun, through his reform program initiated during his short spells in office in 1782 and 1783, "a long process of reducing crown patronage and the influence the monarch could exercise over the composition of the House of Commons" (Dickinson 166). As such Burke belongs as much to the Whig tradition as the Earl of Shaftesbury, the object of Dryden's vituperation.

Burke's positions certainly seem to stand in direct contrast to that of a Divine Right of Kings theorist or supporter such as Dryden. Burke is indeed explicit in his condemnation of this absolutist doctrine which for him is "an absurd opinion", and one that debases the nation. He also condemns its advocates for having "speculate[d] foolishly, and perhaps impiously too, as if monarchy had any more of a divine sanction than any other mode of government" (Burke 26). As a parliamentarian, it is also unsurprising that Burke feels that "abuses . . . must accumulate in every monarchy not under the constant inspection of a popular representative" (Ibid. 127). Most noteworthy perhaps is Burke's view that rebellion against a monarch is sometimes legitimate. Burke is aware that there are such people as "real tyrants", and that these sometimes need to be punished (Ibid. 83).

However, there are two reasons to regard Burke as being much closer to Dryden in thought that these facts would indicate. In order to understand the first reason, it is useful to bear in mind the claim of the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer that "all men who think for themselves are in fundamental agreement; their differences spring only from their different standpoints" (Schopenhauer 92). It is the case that the central concern of both Dryden and Burke is to prevent dissolution in the body politic; it is merely their "different standpoints" on how this is to be achieved that leads them in somewhat different directions. Thus, to Dryden stability is best achieved by investing full power in the monarch, whilst to Burke it is best achieved by allowing for limited change in the polity, which in the English tradition meant increases of power to the parliament. However, for Burke, the purpose of this limited change is to preserve not to alter. As he himself famously expresses it, "[a] state without the means of some change

is without the means of its conservation" (Burke 21). This means that whilst a conservative should not "exclude alteration" within the polity, any change within one "should be to preserve" (Ibid. 248). This leads him to regard the reformer as one who "should approach to the faults of the state as to the wounds of a father, with pious awe and trembling solicitude [sic]" (Ibid. 96). He explicitly portrays himself as such a reformer (Ibid. 249-50).

Moreover, as for the specific condemnation of the Divine Right of Kings theory, Burke still does believe there are some positive advantages to absolute monarchy, without enumerating them (Burke 128), and his particular concern is with democracy, as he does not believe anyone any longer advocates absolute autocracy in his time (Ibid. 26). And even in the aforementioned situation that allows for rebellion against a despot, Burke does not believe that either Louis XVI or Charles I could be classed as one, and actually when a despot is to be overthrown such a step, for Burke, should be taken with "dignity" as "[j]ustice is grave and decorous" (Ibid. 83).

The second reason to regard Burke as closer to Dryden than may initially appear involves the lack of a rigid consistency in Burke's thought. David Dwan and Christopher J. Insole have noted that Burke's "thinking about politics is not easily reducible to a general or fully coherent philosophy" and moreover "he never set out to produce a systemic work of political philosophy, and he repudiated attempts to read his various pronouncements in this way" (Dwan 1). The reason for this is that, unlike other great British thinkers on politics, such as Hobbes or Locke, Burke was a person who spent much of his life engaged in practical politics. As such, "[h]is 'works' are largely a compilation of disconnected performances using practical responses to specific problems from rebellion in America to revolution in France to political corruption in England to the abuse of power in Ireland and India" (Dwan 1). Dwan and Insole then further note that, "[w]hether or not one can abstract from these contexts a general doctrine or corpus of thought is debatable. And if such abstraction is possible, it is far from clear that his thought was consistent across contexts" (Ibid. 1). However, whilst it is indeed the case that Burke's thought is

"derelict" on the "virtue" of consistency (Ibid. 1), the analyses that will be made of Dryden's political outlook in this work will be done using his *Reflections* – his "most famous" piece of writing – and will not refer to his other writings or speeches[8], as the *Reflections* is the one that is most illuminating in terms of understanding Dryden. Hence not only will Burke's own approach be rendered more consistent by using this single book, but the book used puts forward a conservative line of argument which is somewhat dissimilar to his earlier pronouncements, and closer than them to Dryden's views. Indeed it is this perceived change in Burke which explains why his "repudiation of the Revolution was unexpected" (H-M *RRF* 196), and that, as Gregory Claeys notes, there was a "general consensus that Burke had 'unwhigg'd' himself in departing so far from the established interpretation of 1688 with regard to natural rights and the popular nature of the British constitution in parliament" (Claeys 49). Put into other words, the Whig Burke moves closer to the Tory Dryden under the shadow of the revolution in France[9]. Next, the historic background to Dryden's political project will be examined.

[8] Save for some small employment of Burke's other writings that help to clarify his thought and which do not run in any way counter to the approach of the *Reflections*.

[9] It should however be pointed out that Burke did not regard himself as having "departed from his usual office" – that is having acted inconsistently – in his condemnation of the French Revolution (Burke 249).

CHAPTER 2

2. THE HISTORIC AND CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND TO DRYDEN'S POLITICAL PROJECT

2.1 Historical Background

It is in the period of the Restoration that begins in 1660 that Dryden is active as a supporter, through his literary work, of the prerogatives of the monarchy. In order to understand his political concerns at that time, there is a very important historical point to bear in mind, and that point is stated by Iain Hampsher-Monk. It is that, "[i]n important ways the English Civil War and the experiments of the Commonwealth failed to resolve the issues which led to them. The restoration of the monarchy in 1660 took place largely through the exclusion of other possibilities" (H-M *HMPT* 69). This meant that whilst the return of Charles II was "welcomed . . . with genuine relief, once the monarchy was re-established Parliament continued to be worried about the same issues as under his father, Charles I" (Ibid. 69).

Consequently, in order to properly comprehend Dryden's political outlook, it is necessary to understand the political concerns of his time, and that in turn entails a brief examination of the political concerns of the pre-1660 seventeenth-century. This is the case because, as has been noted, these concerns are no different to those of the Restoration, and it is necessary to see their roots in the rise of Parliamentary power *vis-à-vis* the monarch in order to understand them, and in turn Dryden, properly.

2.1.1 The Middle Ages to the Stuart Dynasty

Firstly, it must be pointed out that whilst the memory of the causes, conduct and outcome of the Civil War cast a long shadow over the reign of the restored Stuart monarchy, that conflict did not mark the first time in English history that a monarch was challenged by force of arms and deposed. As can also be seen in the history plays of William Shakespeare, the Medieval period was also a time of rebellion, usurpation and occasionally regicide. What is different about the case of

the 17th century was not the fact that a king was challenged in his rule, but the nature of the challenger, and the source of its challenge. For, in the Middle Ages, challenges to monarchs were made by those wishing to replace the king on the throne, and were thus made by those with at least some claim to royal blood; in other words, powerful nobles. Parliament, which would afflict the Stuart monarchs, could also cause great difficulties for the medieval kings, but due to the nature of aristocratic rebellion, the section of Parliament involved was different. The technical division of government in England into the monarchy, and parliament made up of the Lords and the Commons was established in the late Middle Ages. As serious challenges to the sitting monarch at that time inevitably had to be made by those of aristocratic lineage, it was the House of Lords which would threaten and limit the king's freedom of action[10]. The Commons on the other hand was effectively docile in that earlier period.

The Wars of the Roses that lasted from 1455 to 1485 brought purely aristocratic usurping machinations to a permanent end, although that would not have been immediately clear at the time[11]. It turned out that the power of the aristocracy had been permanently broken with many nobles having been "killed and many others impoverished" (Dahmus 358) during the long conflict. It also resulted in the rise of the social group underneath the nobility, and it was the Commons, that represented this section of society – which itself had helped to establish the Tudor monarchy – in which the seeds of the troubles of the seventeenth century were sown, although that also would not have then been apparent. Instead, what would have been progressively evident is that an almost absolute monarchy was founded with the support of the classes represented in the

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[10] For an example of this, see Myers p.197.

[11] Myers notes that "[b]y 1485 there had been so many upheavals within living memory that men were very dubious whether Henry could keep the throne for long" (Myers 185), and even into the reign of his son, Lord Buckingham was considered a serious enough threat to Henry VIII's rule to require his execution in 1521 (Bindoff 70), as can also be seen in Shakespeare's play *Henry VIII*.

Commons. Hence A. R. Myers notes that whilst "Henry VII came to the throne with a weak title[,] . . . the Crown was now so strongly supported by the rising classes of gentry and of merchants that Henry with his wise caution was able to overcome all difficulties" (Myers 193). Joseph Dahmus also points out that his "bid for absolutism" was supported by them too as they hoped Henry VII would "provide them with the peace and justice that aristocratic misrule had denied England for a large part of the century" (Dahmus 358). Such a perceived link between absolutism and stability would also underpin Dryden's political concerns over a century and a half later.

With this new state of affairs, the "Tudor kings had no trouble from the upper House of Parliament" (Myers 198), and the lower House was also generally amenable (Ibid. 198). It was the case, however, that requests for tax revenue could make the latter body less acquiescent (Ibid. 198). Indeed, the tradition of potential indignation towards the financial demands of the Crown was already established in the Tudor period, and would cause greater grief to the Stuarts when this Parliamentary house had increased in power.

Moreover, there is a specific way in which Henry VIII bequeathed a perilous legacy to his Stuart successors. This was through the Reformation Parliament. Whilst Tudor England remained Catholic, Myers notes it "might have been thought Parliament" was "a mere legacy from a troubled past that had become a hindrance to efficient government and would eventually be reduced to insignificance by the attrition of a powerful monarchy" (Myers 198). With the creation of the national church though, this was not to be the case, as Henry "called on" their support for the break with Rome (Ibid. 198), and "he continued to use Parliament for the exercise of that supremacy in the suppression of the monasteries, and for declarations of doctrine and the like" (Ibid. 198). With the monarchy and the parliament on the same side, this use of the latter by the former posed no threat to Henry's rule, but rather bolstered it. Nonetheless, and highly significantly for the future, it also "shook men out of their acceptance of the traditional limitations of Parliament's functions" (Ibid. 199). Consequently, Myers notes that by "unit[ing]

spiritual to temporal authority" Henry VIII has created the conditions that would mean that "before a century had passed the claim would be made – inconceivable in medieval England – that both could be exercised by Parliament alone" (Ibid. 199).

Henry also involved Parliament in the question of succession. With the First Succession Act of 1533, Henry's first marriage to Catherine of Aragon was declared invalid, his daughter Mary was rendered illegitimate, and Elizabeth, born to his second wife Anne Boleyn, was made heir apparent (Pickering 306, 309). Elizabeth's mother's fall from grace and execution left her, in the Second Succession Act of 1536, declared "illegitimate" (Ibid. 419) too. Henry's third marriage to Jane Seymour produced a male heir, but also late in his reign, in 1543 with the Third Succession Act, Henry once again used Parliament to allow for the succession of Mary and Elizabeth should the succession through Edward fail (Adams 266).

One other point is required to be made about the Tudor period. And that is whilst the power of the section of society represented by the Commons gradually grew, so did the aspirations of this political chamber. Thus it was the case that "[a]ssertations of parliamentary authority were to trouble Elizabeth" (Myers 199). However, her personal prestige and political acumen helped somewhat to keep the Commons in their place. With the succession of the Stuarts though, the Commons would begin to thoroughly assert their newfound sense of significance.

2.1.2 The Stuart Dynasty, the Civil War and the Commonwealth

With the death of Elizabeth I, the throne of England was inherited by her closest relative, James VI of Scotland, who became James I of England. This new king "was a clever and learned man" (Ashley 41), and was also, as shall be seen later in more detail, a theoretical advocate for princely absolutism, known as "the Divine Right of Kings" (Ibid. 40, 42). Indeed, during his reign, he "displayed, as openly as ever, all his exalted notions of monarchy and the authority of princes"[12] (Hume 113).

However, for a ruler for whom "[p]eace was his favourite passion" (Hume 68), his absolutist outlook was not to bring the country into irresolvable political tension with the Commons. Rather, it was the case that, as Ashley puts it, the "intellectually shrewd" (Ashley 37) king "knew enough about men and affairs not to press absurd claims too far" (Ibid. 10). Thus, in David Hume's words, the "the King's despotism was more speculative than practical", and this also enabled "the contrary" to be true as for "the independency of the commons" (Hume 113). Even with his effectively pragmatic approach, he faced a great deal of opposition from Parliament. Thus Hume points out that "during [the] whole reign, we scare find an interval of mutual confidence and friendship between prince and parliament" (Ibid. 109). It is important to note that from this point on, unless otherwise specified, the term "Parliament" refers to the House of Commons, due to the domination it had achieved of the joint body. The reason for this is explained by Ashley, who asserts that from the accession of James I:

> [T]he House of Commons pressed its novel claim to take the leading part in the state . . . [T]he rise or enlargement of the gentry in the later half of the sixteenth century and the early half of the seventeenth century had fortified the Commons who grew conscious of their strength and wealth (Ashley 63).

This fact did not prevent the king from taking it on when he felt it necessary though. For instance, he upheld his right to dissolve Parliament and even had certain MPs arrested in 1612. Yet, by being a pragmatic ruler who did not "press too hard or too far" (Ashley 43), he "had maintained" his rights effectively throughout his reign (Ibid. 53).

It is in the reign of his son Charles I which commenced in 1625 that the tensions in the polity would not remain containable. The Members of Parliament in

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[12] Ashley presents an interesting contextualizing point in the king's favour. He notes that James I "can scarcely be blamed for believing that he governed by 'divine right' . . . [as i]n the seventeenth century every authority claimed that it ruled by divine right" (Ashley 42).

the reign were men "[a]nimated with a warm regard to liberty" and when they "saw, with regret, an unbounded power exercised by the crown" they "were resolved to seize the opportunity, which the King's necessities offered them, to reduce the prerogative within more reasonable compass" (Hume 260). They felt it would be impossible "to maintain any shadow of popular government" should "such unlimited authority in the sovereign" remain unchallenged (Ibid. 260). Consequently, they were left with "a choice" which was "[e]ither to abandon intirely the priveleges of the people, or to secure them by firmer and more precise barriers than the constitution had previously provided for them" (Ibid. 260). Unsurprisingly, they chose the former (Ibid. 260).

This would be a problem for the most able of monarchs, but tragically Charles was no such figure. He was a man with "serious weaknesses of character" and possessed "lack of insight" and "intellectual shortcomings" (Ashley 54). All in all, these foci of government provoked each other in to more immoderate positions (Hume 306). It eventually led to the effective repudiation of the mixed nature of the English constitution when Charles I, his despotic tendencies exacerbated by Parliament's continuing flaunting of his will, especially over his requests for finance, dissolved it in 1629 and did not recall it for eleven years. During this period, he effectively ruled as a Divine Right monarch. And, it was during this period of effective absolutist rule that John Dryden was born in Northamptonshire in 1631. With a birth date such as this, Fowles notes that:

> Dryden's life span encompassed what still must be regarded as the most significant watershed in England's political history – the period of the Civil Wars and the Interregnum. It was an upheaval cataclysmic enough to generate shock waves on through the remainder of the poet's life (Fowles xviii).

It is thus, unsurprising that politics comes to be so central to his literary work.

Back to the greater events in England though, it next needs to be noted that Charles was eventually forced to recall Parliament by the dire need for finance to resolve the failure of his religious policy in Scotland, which had sparked a Scottish

uprising, and subsequent invasion of England. The recalled members constituted what became known as "the Long Parliament" and it "met in a black mood, determined not on reform but on revolution." (Ashley 73). Hence, it attacked many of the traditional privileges of the king (Ibid. 77). Charles was forced, much like the Commons earlier, either to defend his liberties or renounce them. By choosing the former, the Civil War came into being.

There is no need to go into the details of the Civil War here, as it is the build up to it that, by being so similar to the fundamental political debate of the Restoration, is so relevant to Dryden's life and work. It is worthy of note however that in the Civil War, Dryden's family "sided with the parliamentarians" (Fowles 1), and as for the conflict at large, after seven years of warfare, the king was captured, and put on trial for his life. What is significant to Dryden's political approach is that Charles I "refused to plead" as he asserted that "[t]he King cannot be tried by any superior jurisdiction on earth" (qtd. in Ashley 87). Nonetheless, this line of defence did not save him, and he was executed in 1649. For the next eleven years, England was governed as a republic, known as the Commonwealth, but, for the same reason that the Civil War has been touched on so briefly, this period needs no further examination in this work, save to say that Dryden was briefly employed by the Commonwealth "in Cromwell's bureaucracy" (Lewalski 344).

There are a couple of extra points that must be examined from the pre-Restoration period in that they too continue to be relevant after Charles II had been restored to his throne. The first is that religion and politics were intertwined in the seventeenth century. And those who wished to limit the power of the king or eventually to overthrow him were associated with a Puritanical persuasion (Hume 259). Thus when Fowles reveals that the family of the young Dryden "seems to have been away from Laud's Anglicanism and towards the Puritan" (Fowles 1), it is also to be understood that they sided with Parliament against the king, as indeed they did. As for the king, as well as those who defended his prerogatives, the religion adhered to was High Church Anglicanism, alongside a less severe approach to Catholicism (Ashley 55), with, in Hume's words, "[t]he extreme rage

against popery" being "a sure characteristic of puritanism" (Hume 265). Religion produced zealotry which poisoned the dominant political dialogue, and intensified the nature of the conflict between the two sides.

It is also noteworthy that the struggle between the monarch and parliament was, much like those at the end of the Roman Republic as depicted in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, a struggle between two elites. Ashley notes that when Parliament had been discontinued, "[p]robably the mass of people were quite satisfied with the interval of autocracy. There is no evidence that any widespread anxiety existed for the recall of parliament" (Ashley 67-8). And Ashley provides the following example from 1644 to indicate how, when hostilities had actually broken out, the common people of the country "were scarcely involved" in the armed dispute. Ashley relates that "[a]t the time of the battle of Marston Moor a patrol found a farm labourer on the field of battle and told him to clear out as King and Parliament were at war. 'Whaat!' he exclaimed, 'has them two fallen out then?'" (Ibid. 79).

As has already been alluded to, when the English Commonwealth collapsed in 1660, Charles I's son, Charles II, was recalled from exile and crowned king. However, the issues that have just been examined soon became contentious once again, as the political nation once again began to split into supporters of the monarchical prerogative, and those who wished to limit it[13]. One man from the time, who took the side of the king, was a young poet by the name of John Dryden. In order for him to be able to put his pen at the service of the Charles II, he first had to attract his attention. And he began his attempt to do this less than a month after the restored king had set his foot upon English soil in May 1660, as will be examined next.

[13] Actual republicans being of little importance or influence in the period of the Restoration. See Ashley p. 163.

2.2 Dryden as a Propagandist Writer for the Stuarts

2.2.1 Poetry Celebrating the Restored King

The first piece of literature that Dryden wrote as the Restoration was taking place was the poem *Astraea Redux*. It was written to celebrate the return from exile of Charles II in 1660 (Fowles 9), and, as Scott expresses it, "to testify [Dryden's] joyful acquiescence in the restoration of monarchy" (Scott 40)**.** The poem's aim is to flatter (Fowles 10), and as such would be the first of many literary works that Dryden would pen in support of the Stuart monarchy, initially as an obscure supportive subject and later as the poet and playwright most favoured by the king. *Astraea Redux* certainly does flatter. Within it, Charles II is depicted in a Christ-like manner, having been "forced to suffer for himself and us" (Dry. *SPs. AR.* 50). He is also compared to both Jove (Ibid. 38-42) and "God's anointed", King David (Ibid. 79-82), as well as reference being made to his "heav'nly parentage" (Ibid. 257). Additionally, he is effectively equated with Augustus (Ibid. 321) as well as reference being made to Charles' "manly courage", "virtue" and "valour" (Ibid. 56, 58, 73).

Significantly, the poem exhibits three concerns that would mark Dryden's later writings too. The first is Charles' status as the legitimate ruler of the nation. The poem makes reference to this king's "rightful throne" (Dry. *SPs. AR.* 75). The second is the connection between radical Protestantism[14] and political instability. In the poem Dryden claims that "For [Charles'] long absence church and state did groan;/Madness the pulpit, faction seized the throne" (Ibid. 21-2). And thirdly, Dryden also uses the poem to condemn the idea of popular government. Without a strong ruler to hold them in check – the king represented as Jove here – the general populace become destructive:

> The rabble now such freedom did enjoy
> As winds at sea that use it to destroy;

[14] This term will be used throughout this work to cover Protestant religious groupings that do not belong to the traditional Anglican Church and are also known as Puritans, Dissenters and non-Conformists.

Blind as the Cyclops and as wild as he,
They owned a lawless savage liberty. (Dry. *SPs. AR.* 43-6)

Thus are seen "[t]hose real bonds false freedom did impose" (Dry. *SPs. AR.* 152). It is also noteworthy that in a work as early as this one, the idea that the populace are induced into their acts is also present. As "[t]he vulgar" were "gulled into rebellion" (Ibid. 33) in the Civil Wars, Dryden is depicting them as unable to think for themselves, and as inherently manipulable.

As a poem *Astraea Redux* has had a mixed reception[15]. It is noteworthy here, however, that the poem was at a later point in Dryden's life to come in for its greatest criticism for the motivation behind it. It was recognized that Dryden intended to lavish praise upon the returning king through it, and this aroused the ire of his later critics. It appeared to them that by praising Charles II, Dryden made himself a hypocrite because, as a former employee of the Commonwealth, he had written a poem in praise of Cromwell less than a year before *Astraea Redux*. This particular criticism has not really outlived the life of the poet himself. That is mainly because Dryden is not seen as being at all exceptional in having altered his outlook with the alteration in the political settlement in England. As Johnson expresses it, "[i]f he changed, he changed with the nation" (Johnson 62). However, what is particularly relevant for this work is that, from this time on "Dryden became a decided advocate for the royal prerogative, and the hereditary right of the Stuarts" (Scott 31), and was not to alter his political viewpoint again, even in the disaster that befell him in 1688. Thus his impending career as monarchical propagandist seems to have been one for which, whether inspired pragmatically or by conviction at first, was one in which his genuine political temperament found itself a home. As for the charge of hypocrisy itself, that will be evaluated below.

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[15] For instance Johnson dislikes it, Scott seemingly admires it, and Fowles both likes and dislikes certain elements with it. See Johnson 114, Scott 40, and Fowles 9.

Moreover, regardless of whatever Dryden's inner convictions may have been, it is clear that *Astraea Redux* saw Dryden "proceed to exert that poetical talent, which has heretofore been repressed by his own situation, and that of the country" (Scott 40). This "talent" was next put to use in the subsequent year, with Dryden's poem which "hailed the coronation" (Scott 40) of Charles II, and which is entitled *To His Sacred Majesty, A Panegyric on His Coronation*. The same perspective can be found in this work as in the previous one. Once again Charles is flattered, this time being compared to the Sun (Dry. *SPs. SM*. 13-6), with nature itself responding to Charles' presence, his being "[n]ot king of us alone" – that is of the English people – "but of the year" (Ibid. 32). His divine nature is also once again stressed. He is "a god" (Ibid. 126), and he "give[s] us manna" (Ibid. 24), in addition to having a "more sacred head" (Ibid. 46). To express his greatness, Dryden exclaims that "Music herself is lost; in vain she brings/Her choicest notes to praise the best of kings." (Ibid. 53-4). He is also a father-like figure who rules with "parental sway" (Ibid. 96).

Within the hyperbole, Dryden's political outlook can be discerned. The importance of the monarch as a bulwark of stability is once again apparent, for instance. Charles is the person who "brought peace and discord could attone [sic]" (Dry. *SPs. SM*. 57). Charles is explicitly praised for having "already quenched sedition's brand" (Ibid. 79), and for preventing the disorder of "jealous sects" (Ibid. 81). Here for the first time is also seen the question of succession, which would come to be of such importance to Dryden. With the stability of a monarchy being seen as dependent upon its longevity, Dryden writes:

> From you loved Thames a blessing yet is due,
> Second alone to that it brought in you:
> A queen, from whose chaste womb, ordained by fate,
> The souls of kings unborn for bodies wait (Dry. *SPs. SM*. 117-20).

Thus, Charles' "love is destined to your country's peace" and as such the "happiness" of the next generations of Englishmen are tied to Charles' choosing of

a bride (Dry. *SPs*. *SM*. 122,135-6). If the aim of these two earlier works was to exalt the monarchy, there is no reason to believe that they failed. However, if their motivation was either or also to help Dryden's career in letters, they were less successful. As Scott notes, "[w]e may . . . believe that Dryden received some complement from the king . . . and I am afraid . . . that it was but trifling" (Scott 42-3).

2.2.2 The Charge of Hypocrisy against Dryden

Before getting onto the work that did attract the attention of Charles II and lead to a drastic change in Dryden's life, it is worth looking at the charge of inconsistency that was later to be levelled at Dryden for supporting the Restored monarchy in 1660 and 1661. It has been noted that Dryden has generally seen as having acted opportunistically in his welcoming of the restored monarchy, whether this has resulted in him being harshly judged for it or compassionately pardoned. The question of opportunism leads to two points that ought to be dealt with. The first point has been touched upon, and it is that whether he was a genuine monarchist or not does not ultimately matter to his role as an effective public Stuart propagandist, any more than the private opinion of a lawyer towards his or her client is significant when put against the effectiveness of the defence case presented by such an attorney. It is certainly true that, whether acting through pragmatism or genuine conviction, Dryden spent most of his literary life implicitly or explicitly writing in defence of a Stuart monarchy will full prerogatives, and in spite of caveats, it is still fair to assume that Dryden was or became a conscientious supporter of the Stuarts, especially when it is borne in mind that his fall accompanied that of the what he regarded as the legitimate line of this dynasty in 1688, and he made no effort to rehabilitate himself in the new order.

The second point in relation to opportunism is a more significant one, and provides further evidence to suggest Dryden that was a sincere supporter of the Stuarts. This point needs to be dealt with in more depth. Whilst Dryden certainly wrote two poems praising the leading figures on either side of the Civil War within the same twelvemonth period, a comparison of the works seems to reveal Dryden

as a more consistent figure than is generally thought. Although Scott believes that between the first poem and the second, Dryden "had seen a new light in politics" (Scott 31), it may be more correct to say that the focus of his fairly uniform worldview was simply redirected from one powerful figure to another.

There are two strong reasons for supposing this. The first is not to do with the content of the first poem, but rather with what it omits. Zwicker and Bywaters note that one of the "puzzles and paradoxes" connected with this poem – entitled *Heroic Stanzas Consecrated to the Glorious Memory of his Most Serene and Renowned Highness Oliver, Late Protector of this Commonwealth etc. Written after the Celebration of his Funeral* – more manageably referred to simply as *Heroic Stanzas* – is that in the poem Dryden "says nothing of Cromwell's moral authority, his sense of election, the profound scriptualism of Cromwell and his political cause" (Dry. *SPs*. 520). Indeed, in the work, "[s]ilences and exclusions speak . . . urgently" (Ibid. 520). One reason for these emissions can surely be that Dryden simply was not in sympathy with the religious side of Cromwell or with his general political outlook. In the case of religion, there is good reason to feel that Dryden was in no way attracted to Puritanism. Scott suggests that Dryden towards his family and his desired career could possibly account for a coldness towards radical Protestantism, and implies it is not his monarchism, but rather his earlier apparent commitment to the Commonwealth which is questionable. Scott notes that with the Restoration causing the fall of his former Puritan supporters in his family:

> It is possible . . . that Dryden may have felt himself rather relieved from, than deprived of, his fanatical patrons, under whose guidance he could never hope to have indulged in that career of literary pursuit, which the new order of things presented to the ambition of the youthful poet (Scott 40).

It is certainly the case that whilst religion gets no positive mention in the poem, it does, as has been seen, form part of Dryden's poetic praise for Charles' restoration, suggesting that Dryden's true sympathies lay with an established church which

represents order, rather than with the destabilizing tendencies of Puritanism with its more pronounced individualism.

Secondly, in terms of politics, what Dryden does choose to praise about Cromwell in his poem is significant. Aside from the expected flattery of Cromwell as a war leader, and of his virtue, it is Cromwell's role as a strong single ruler and provider of stability that powerfully exhibits itself in this work. There is an implied criticism of government by consensus in stanza 27, where Dryden, speaking of Cromwell, asserts:

> When such heroic virtue heav'n sets out,
> The stars like Commons sullenly obey,
> Because it drains them when it comes about
> And therefore is a tax they seldom pay (Dry. *SPs. HS.* 105-8).

This pejorative representation of the Commons, and especially in their unwillingness to provide metaphorical tax revenue, would bring back to mind the antebellum Royalist outlook. Only the figure of "heroic virtue" would differ from the pre and post regicide periods. Moreover, Cromwell is praised in *Heroic Stanzas* as a figure whose objective has been stability. Dryden credits him with "[p]eace [that] was the prize of all his toils and care,/Which was had banished and did now restore" (Dry. *SPs. HS.* 61-2). And what Scott calls the "passage, which plainly applies to the civil wars in general" (Scott 32) runs as follows:

> Our former chiefs like sticklers of the war
> First sought t'inflame the parties then to poise,
> The quarrel loved but did the cause abhor,
> And did not strike to hurt but make a noise.
>
> War our consumption was their gainful trade;
> We inward bled whilst they prolonged our pain:
> He [i.e. Cromwell] fought to end our fighting and assayed
> To staunch the blood by breathing of the vein (*SPs.HS.* 41-8).

Whilst Scott reveals that this part of the poem "was wrested to signify an explicit approbation of the murder of Charles the First" (Scott 32) during Dryden's later prominence as a royal propagandist, the identification seems tenuous due to the ambiguity of who "[o]ur former chiefs" are, and Scott is dismissive of this slander against Dryden. In fact, line 41 is so ambiguous that it could as easily refer to the Roundhead side as the Cavalier one. It is difficult to see how Charles I at any rate achieved "gainful trade" through the Civil War[16]. Moreover, what is important about these two stanzas is that they once again show Cromwell restoring peace to a divided polity, regardless of who was actually responsible for dividing it.

In fact, Dryden is so admiring of Cromwell's role as unifying force that he claims its effect to have continued posthumously. In the last stanza but one, Dryden writes:

> No civil broils have since his death arose,
> But faction now by habit does obey;
> And wars have that respect for his repose
> As winds for halcyons when they breed at sea (Dry. *SPs*. *HS*. 141-4).

Thus, it is Cromwell's role as a bulwark against civil disorder that earns Dryden's particular admiration. And Dryden's support for the restored monarchy also centres on the same concern, as has been seen above, and will be shown again repeatedly in this work. In this sense, Dryden is somewhat Hobbesian in regarding any strong authority as better than none, regardless of whether it has a legitimate birthright or not. It is also significant that whilst for the poems praising Cromwell and Charles II, "Dryden would be reminded of, and embarrassed by, [their] proximity

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[16] Scott also notes that:

> Neither had Dryden made the errors, or misfortunes, of the royal family, and their followers, the subject of censure or contrast. With respect to them, it was hardly possible that a eulogy on such a theme could have less offence in it (Scott 33).

throughout his career" (Dry. *SPs*. 521), "there is no instance" as Scott approvingly points out, of the later Dryden "recalling[17] his former praise of Cromwell" (Scott 33).

Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that alongside Dryden's Hobbes-like attitude in the time of the Commonwealth, it is the case that within this poem, "politically considered, although a panegyric on an usurper, the topics of praise are selected with attention to truth, and are, generally speaking, such as Cromwell's worst enemies could not have denied to him" (Scott 32-3). Such a statement simply could not be made of Dryden in relation to the next poem he wrote – *Annus Mirabilis* – and thus it could be concluded that Dryden saw in Cromwell a suitable alternative to a monarch – indeed he calls him "our prince" (Dry. *SPs*. *HS*. 125) – but his real sympathy is more easily expressed towards an actual monarchy, where considerations of truth and accuracy in praising the leader of the nation scarcely bother him. All in all, whilst it cannot be said that Dryden was a covert monarchist during the period of the Commonwealth, it is fair to conclude that monarchism fitted most closely to his lifelong political concerns, and that what he found admirable in the Commonwealth was the element it most clearly shared with monarchy.

Lastly, the possible objection that if he were a sincere supporter of monarchy Dryden ought to have adapted to the new monarchy brought about through the Glorious Revolution can be rejected for two reasons. Firstly, the Glorious Revolution allowed for the representatives of the people to determine the succession, something Dryden had spent much of his adult life fighting against. As such, the new monarchy was seen as less divinely sanctioned than the former one. Secondly, the revolution replaced one monarchy for another, which remained effectively unchallenged from a more openly republican position. It is fair to surmise that had the new monarchy faced a real republican challenge, Dryden, as in the time of Cromwell, would have supported it through a sense of necessity.

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[17] Obviously in the archaic sense of "revoking" rather than "remembering".

2.2.3 *Annus Mirabilis*

Returning to the historical conditions surrounding Dryden's early career, the air of euphoria in which Dryden wrote *Astraea Redux* and *To His Sacred Majesty* soon came to an end. In 1667 Dryden published his next major work in support of the monarchy, *Annus Mirabilis: The Year of Wonders 1666*. In order to understand both the content and purpose of this work, a brief examination the events that transpired between 1661 and 1667 is necessary. Firstly, it is important to understand that with the Restoration, the moral tone within the polity had undergone a dramatic change that would continue throughout Charles' reign. Fowles, wary of generalisations, has nevertheless noted that:

> Whilst we must beware of seeing the Restoration as all Pepys and petticoats casually discarded at the drop of a periwig – *Paradise Lost* was published in 1663 and *The Pilgrim's Progress* not until Charles' eighteenth year on the throne – the new king's arrival at Dover did indeed herald a national sea change (Fowles 10).

If the Commonwealth can fairly be represented as having been of a Puritanical tone, the Restoration can be represented as having a sybaritic one, at least for the monarchy and the court circles. This new tone led to a general concern about the moral standards of the king and his inner circle (A. Keay 121). As for Charles himself, Anna Keay draws a comparison with his father, and notes that "in place of a shy family man, a virile and gregarious bachelor now occupied the throne" (Ibid. 121). Charles' taste for "frivolity and the pleasures of the flesh" (Ibid. 121) were not unknown outside the court, but were rather the subject of intense gossip. It was thought that there was a "moral vacuum at the heart of the kingdom" (Ibid. 122) with even Charles' steadfast ally Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon, disparagingly noting that "buffoons and ladies of pleasure"[18] (qtd. in Ashley 127) could be found at the court.

Even Charles II's marriage to Catherine of Braganza, though it was a diplomatic coup (A. Keay 122) and raised the imminent prospect of a royal heir, did nothing to "solve the court's reputation for loose morals, or the king's faltering reputation" (Ibid. 133). It is important to realize that this atmosphere of censoriousness belonged to what was still a highly superstitious age. Thus, when what Keay has called "a wave of almost biblical disasters swept over the kingdom" (Ibid. 133), this had political implications, as it was possible for the prudish to regard them as being divine judgements on the licentious Charles. Lewalski for instance has noted that the "disasters" of 1665-6, were depicted, in the "outpouring of jeremiad-like sermons and tracts . . . as God's punishment for sins general and national" (Lewalski 452). It was certainly a time of "widespread disappointment with the restored Stuarts", many being exasperated by their "court" which was "decried as dissolute and a site of open lewdness" (Ibid. 452) thus possibly being the cause of God's wrath in the first place. These disasters were the Great Plague, the Great Fire of London and the disastrous Second war against the Dutch that began in 1665. The king's actions in the first of these disasters, and also, especially, in the last, brought him into disrepute, even leaving aside the question of divine disapproval.

For example, whilst, for the non-superstitious, Charles can hardly be blamed for the Great Plague, his behaviour during it could be characterized as cowardice. He fled London, where this epidemic disease was killing thousands of people a week, and did not return to the capital until it had subsided and 100,000 people had lost their lives to it (A. Keay 133). The second disaster, which followed the great epidemic by only a few months, was the Great Fire of London, which destroyed 13,000 houses, 93 churches and the original St. Paul's Cathedral. The king's action here is more commendable than for the plague, as he ordered that everything that need to be done must be done to stop the spread of the blaze, and his brother James enhanced the image of the monarchy by actually going out to

[18] Kevin Sharpe raises the point that objections to Charles' philandering also contained fear of "the spectre of influential powerful women" (Marciari & MacLeod 14) being in intimate contact with the king.

fight the fire himself (Ibid. 134). It is with the third of what Keay has called "[t]he trinity of calamities" (Ibid. 134) that the prestige of the monarchy was especially tarnished, and in this case the king's culpability is palpable. This disaster was the performance of the Second Anglo-Dutch War. In 1665, war was declared by the English on the Dutch. The causes for this war were "trade and maritime rivalries and old disputes about colonies outside Europe" (Ashley 126). As such, it was not, what in the seventeenth century could be seen as a glorious conflict. The war dragged on for months. Despite "one or two" early "victories over the Dutch", England's enemies speedily recovered from them (Ibid. 126).

What was especially humiliating for the restored monarchy was the obvious comparison that could be drawn with the conduct of the First Anglo-Dutch War, which had been conducted from 1652-4 during the Commonwealth and Protectorate. In stark contrast to the current indecisive conflict, Cromwell's war with the Dutch had seen a striking "successes" (L. James 29) when the navy had "inflicted big losses on the Dutch and crippled their world-wide commerce" (Ashley 96). The peace terms that ended that war included an agreement by the Dutch "to pay compensation for the Amboyna massacre" (Kennedy 54), which had been the killing of ten employees of the English East Indian Company[19] in 1623 and would later be the subject of one of Dryden's plays[20]. Consequently, with the lack of any real success in the second war, the reputation of the king himself suffered. Not only did the reality of the conflict and the comparison with Cromwell have to be faced, but the king himself was at least partially responsible for the state of the navy. It was under his reign that "corruption and inefficiency" became prevalent in the fleet due to the "the general relaxation of standards of honesty and morality" (Ibid. 58) that occurred with the Restoration. Also, Charles' return had brought with it that of "gentleman captains" who were "much resented by the

[19] In addition to "nine Japanese and one Portuguese" (J. Keay *Hon*. 49).

[20] The play in question is *Amboyna* and it was published in 1672.

professional officers in the fleet" (Ibid. 58). There was certainly a long period of "relative neglect" (Ibid. 59) at the beginning of the 1660s.

All in all, these disasters would seem to be of a kind that supporters of the monarchy would wish to be forgotten about as speedily as possible, rather than an appropriate subject for celebratory panegyric poetry. Nonetheless, Dryden picked upon precisely these topics when writing a work of verse "designed to recoup the king's reputation in the face of all the criticism" (Lewalski 452). Also:

> In composing *Annus Mirabilis* Dryden had in mind not only the character and conduct of the war and the court, but a number of damaging satires, and a flood of Dissenting criticism of Stuart corruption, criticism engaged by the very title of Dryden's poem, by its scripturalism, its providential account of the Great Fire and its buoyant prophetic conclusion (Dry. *SPs*. 526).

Within his motivation to defend the monarch, Dryden was, as Hammond notes, attempting "to establish himself on the literary scene" (Hammond 158) and, as Zwicker and Bywaters point out, make "a bid for court patronage" by presenting "elaborate praise of Charles II" (Dry. *SPs*. 526), for the resulting *Annus Mirabilis* was intended by Dryden to be "a panegyric to his monarch" (Fowles 51). In order to achieve this aim, he took historical events and aimed "to rescue, to refashion and reinterpret" (Zwicker *DPC* 137) them into something which would make the king resound in glory. The issue of reinterpretation is also put forth thus:

> It was written . . . in the wake of disasters that stirred fears and resentments and prompted cries of divine judgment against the court and its quality and conduct, and the poem spends considerable effort at interpreting and reinterpreting these facts of national life (Dry. *SPs*. 526).

Presumably seeing no way of depicting the Great Plague in such a positive manner, Dryden almost completely ignores it[21]. For the naval conflict, in order for it to

function as part of a panegyric, *Annus Mirabilis* overlooks the setbacks faced by the English in that conflict (Patterson 202), such as when in 1666 the "fleet was engaged and worsted by a superior Dutch fleet in the Four Days Fight" (Kennedy 60). It is true that there were limited successes enjoyed by the English in the conflict, before the final humiliation of the attack on Chatham, the capture of the royal flagship the Royal Charles and the month-long blockade of English ports which occurred after Dryden had written his poem. However, the diarist Samuel Pepys, a person more likely to understand the situation his being a "naval administrator" (Ashley 154) still noted how limited they were when he exclaimed, "[t]hat is all; only, we keep the sea; which denotes a victory,/or at least that we are not beaten./But no great matters to brag on. God knows" (qtd. in Fowles 50).

Dryden was certain happy enough to "brag" it about though, by exaggerating the conflict in such a manner as to put it at odds with reality. This is why Fowles has remarked of the poem that "[l]acking any objectivity the poem is a piece of spin-doctored propaganda" (Fowles 53) and that it "makes no claim to be historically impartial – even if that were possible" (Ibid. 53). In its attempt to propagandize on behalf of Charles II it opens with a defence of the war itself, which had been declared by the king. Hence, it makes a virtue of this war ignited by trading concerns. The Dutch are presented as nefarious, because "[t]rade" is "like blood" in that it "should circularly flow" (Dry. *SPs*. *AM*. 5) and the Dutch with their protectionism violate this idea (Ibid. 5-8). Indeed, in his letter to Sir Robert Howard, which functions as an introduction to the poem, he describes the conflict as "a most/just and necessary war" (Dry. *SPs*. *LRH*. 13-4). The England of Charles is depicted as a virtuous nation. To do this, Dryden compares it with Rome fighting against a wealthy Carthage (Dry. *SPs*. *AM*. 16-20, 197-8, 775-6), the latter ancient state being associated in classically-educated minds as place of luxuriance. England is also explicitly described by Dryden as "the braver nation" in this naval struggle (Ibid. 680). All in all, Dryden depicts the English struggle as ending in

[21] There is only a very brief reference to the Great Plague in stanza 291.

victory, which must then be balanced in the divine order through "unseen fate" (Ibid. 839), that is, by the Great Fire of London (Ibid. 837-44).

Throughout the work Charles himself is presented majestically. Mention is made of "his sacred face" (Dry. *SPs. AM.* 956) and it is asserted that "never prince in grace did more excel" (Ibid. 963). He is described as the "mighty lord" of the "British ocean" (Ibid. 124). He is also a serene king, unperturbed by external crisis (Ibid. 163-4), and is a fearless war leader (Ibid. 176). Moreover, Dryden explicitly connects him with the warrior kings of English history. In stanza 81, the poet exclaims:

> The mighty ghosts of our great Harries rose,
> And armed Edwards looked with anxious eyes
> To see this fleet among unequal foes,
> By which fate promised them their Charles should rise
> (Dry. *SPs. AM.* 321-4).

The poem also depicts Charles as especially caring for his fleet. Once it has suffered damage, he ensures that it is repaired, and spares no expense of effort or material in doing so (Dry. *SPs. AM.* 565-92). He is there "in person" (Ibid. 593) to see that the navy is provided with the best of weapons and is at its greatest possible potential (Ibid. 593-600). During the Great Fire, he is depicted as being greatly moved at the suffering of his city (Ibid. 957-61) and then taking firm action to deal with the fire (Ibid. 965-72).

Additionally Charles is presented as a popular monarch. Not only is he London's "best-loved king" (Dry. *SPs. AM.* 614), but:

> Were subjects so but only by their choice
> And not from birth did forced dominion take,
> Our prince alone would have the public voice
> And all his neighbours' realms would deserts make (Dry. *SPs. AM.* 173-6).

This attitude towards Charles comes from what Dryden calls, in his letter to Sir Robert Howard, "the piety and fatherly affection of our monarch to his/suffering subjects" (Dry. *SPs. LRH*. 31-2). Also, rather amazingly, the people of London are depicted as so overwhelmed by Charles' greatness that they forget about their own suffering. When visited by Charles, rather than being devastated by the loss of their homes and livelihoods, "if their ruins sadly they regard,/'Tis but with fear the sight might drive him thence" (Dry. *SPs. AM*. 1147-8). This is because "[t]he wretched in his grief forgot their own/(So much the pity of a king has pow'r)" (Ibid. 959-60).

Moreover, Charles is shown as having a special relationship with God, who responds to his plea for pity upon the city of London (Dry. *SPs. AM*. 1073-8). As Dryden puts it, "Th' Eternal heard" his prayer (Ibid. 1081). Most significantly, he is Christ-like in desiring that if atonement needs to be paid, then he desires that he alone should pay it (Ibid. 1059-60). This helps to create a specific atmosphere, noted by Fowles, that there is "Charles the god-like father figure, a wise bulwark to his people, standing above the heat and smoke and dust as he dispenses calm and initiates farseeing measures that will usher in a new, golden age" (Fowles 51). This is because, "the poem's ultimate objective" is "the advancement to down and centre stage of Charles in the somewhat literal role of *deus ex machina*" (Ibid. 57-8).

Unlike much of Dryden's other poetical output, such as the other poems examined in this work, little direct political thought is put forward within it. The exception is that Charles is clearly depicted as a monarch by Divine Right. In his prayer to God towards the end of the poem, he recalls that he was "unfriended brought'st by wond'rous ways/The kingdom of my fathers to possess" (Dry. *SPs. AM*. 1046-7) showing the work of Divine Providence in restoring him to rule. He is also described by the poet as "God's anointed" (Ibid. 1143).

Like any ideal virtuous monarch, as will be seen, King Charles II responded to Dryden's support for him by providing Dryden with what Seneca would call a "benefit" in return. He made Dryden poet-laureate upon the death of Sir William Davenant in 1668. This was more than simply a position of prestige. As Johnson

notes, "[t]he salary of the laureate had been raised in favor of Jonson, by Charles the First, from a hundred marks to one hundred pounds a year, and a tierce[22] of wine" which was "a revenue in those days not inadequate to the conveniences of life" (Johnson 65).

2.2.4 Overview of Dryden as a Playwright

It is from this point onwards that Dryden embarks on his career as a public propagandist for the Stuart monarchy. He seeks to bolster this line through both poetry and drama, even when the topics are not evidently propagandist. As has already been noted, four of his plays – *Marriage à la Mode*, *Aureng-Zebe*, *Oedipus* and *The Maiden Queen* – will be examined in detail in this work to show Dryden's pro-Stuart political concerns within them. Here a brief overview of certain other works of Dryden will also show how this spirit infused his literary productions.

Mention has already been made of *Amboyna*. This play was written in 1673, during yet another war against the Dutch. It had as its objective, in the words of Johnson, "to inflame the nation against its enemies" (Johnson 76), and create a patriotic aura from which the king would benefit. In addition, two of his plays from the 1680s were particularly political. One is *The Duke of Guise* (1683) which was, as Johnson points out, "written professedly for the party of the Duke of York, whose succession was then opposed. A parallel is intended [in the work] between the Leaguers of France and the Conventers of England" (Ibid. 77). The other is the 1685 play *Albion and Albanius*, which was also "written . . . against the republicans" (Ibid. 77).

To understand Dryden's political preoccupations, the example of his *The State of Innocence and the Fall of Man* of 1674 is especially instructive, as its being a reworking of Milton's *Paradise Lost* enables it to be compared for its content with that great epic poem. In reworking *Paradise Lost*, Dryden, the famous

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[22] This is a measurement of 42 wine gallons, each one of which in turn is identical to the US standard gallon of 128 fluid ounces. This makes Dryden's gift approximately160 litres of wine in modern metric terms. See: http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/tierce and http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/wine+gallon

versifier, sought to "exert his skill successfully, by supplying the supposed deficiency" (Scott 147) – including its use of blank verse and consequent "want of the dignity of rhyme" (Ibid. 145) – to Milton's masterpiece. It is almost universally accepted that in this "task which", as Scott puts it, "may be safely condemned as presumptuous" (Ibid. 141), he failed miserably[23]. It is not highly regarded as a piece of literature, as it is a work in which "[t]he majesty of Milton's verse is strangely degraded" (Ibid. 148), and in which "the angelic and human characters lack psychological depth" (Lewalski 508). What is significant here, with reference to understanding Dryden's political aims is not the qualitative difference between the *State of Innocence* and *Paradise Lost*, but rather the radically different political tone that Dryden takes with his version of the work. In Dryden's version, as Barbara Lewalski notes:

> [He] divides Satan's speeches among the fallen angels, so that the entire community (called a "senate" or the "States-General of Hell") plots the continuing rebellion against heaven and the seduction of Adam and Eve. In Milton, rebellion is the act of a would-be usurping monarch, Satan; in Dryden it is the act of a diabolic Long Parliament rising against a Divine King (Lewalski 508).

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[23] There may be an exception. As Scott puts it:

> [Nathanial] Lee, the dramatic writer, an excellent poet . . . evinced his friendship for Dryden, *rather than his judgement*, by prefixing to the "State of Innocence" a copy of verses, in which he compliments the author of having refined the ore of Milton" (Scott 151 – my italics).

It is also worth noting that Scott himself mentions John Dennis and states "[h]ad he known the full extent of Milton's excellence, Dennis thought [Dryden] would not have ventured on this undertaking" as "twenty years later" Dryden supposedly "confessed to" Dennis that at the time of his writing the State of Innocence, he "knew not half the extent of [the] excellence" of *Paradise Lost* (Scott 143).

Thus, Dryden, in reformulating *Paradise Lost*, turns it into a piece of propaganda that metaphorically defends the legitimacy of the Stuart line against representative government.

2.2.5 The Popish Plot and Dryden's Defence of Traditional Stuart Legitimacy through Satire

It is particularly in his poetry from the early 1680s that Dryden is able to provide effective support for the Stuarts, however. In the late 1670s, a crisis exploded which placed the continuation of the Stuart line at great risk. It was called the Popish Plot. Before examining Dryden's response to it, there are two points of great importance to note in contextualizing it. The first is that, after all, Charles had not been able to produce an heir with Catherine of Braganza. This meant that the crown, by right of succession, would fall upon his brother James in the event of his death. The problem for the political class in England was that James was a Catholic. Whilst his conversion to Catholicism of 1668-9 had initially been relatively secret, since 1672 when James had publically refused to attend important religious ceremonies at the chapel royal (A. Keay 160, 162), it had begun to become public knowledge. As it did so, James' faith helped to cause "anti-Catholic feeling" to become "alarmingly high" (Ibid. 164) within the Parliament, especially when James remarried in 1673 to an Italian Catholic princess (Ibid. 165). In the spirit of the age, James' religious disposition could not be regarded as a private matter. The anti-Catholic feeling dominant amongst the English political elite involved more than simple religious prejudice. Catholicism was regarded as a political threat to the Englishmen who sat in Parliament. The religion was considered to be a support to absolutism, and thus a threat to the security of their property (H-M *HMPT* 70). This helps to explain "the anti-papal fury" (Ashley 133) of Parliament at the time.

In addition to the problem of James' potential succession was the reputation of Charles II himself. He had attempted, like his father, to rule for periods without parliament, and like his father, this had ended in "utter failure" (Ashley 133). The Third Dutch War of 1672-4, mentioned above, had also been unsuccessful. Indeed

his whole foreign policy which had been marked by "constant changes" had "reduced the prestige of his country to its lowest point" (Ibid. 139). Moreover, his attempt to achieve religious tolerance through his Declaration of Indulgence of 1672 had alienated his Anglican support base (Ibid. 133). Thus, through a failure to properly comprehend the political realities of his realm, Charles had antagonized the legislative body and had helped to turn "[t]he exultantly royalist House of Commons of 1661" into a body that "[t]o the minds of some of the King's advisors was indeed almost indistinguishable from the Long Parliament of terrible memories" (Ibid. 133).

It was into this atmosphere of fear of James' eventual succession and disillusionment with the king that the so-called Popish Plot exploded in 1678. Despite the monarch's scepticism towards this fabricated "plot" (A. Keay 183) to kill the king, slaughter Protestants and have James, "put on the throne with a Jesuit Junta" (Ashley 140), everything changed when it was heard of by Charles II's "receptive subjects" (A. Keay 183). The result was a political crisis. There were demands in Parliament for James to be exiled. Moreover, "[a] barrage of proposals for anti-Catholic measures, many of which were aimed specifically at emasculating the Duke of York as a political and dynastic player, were now thrust up before the king" (Ibid. 186). It was a very "close call", and only by the full extent of his influence that Charles II could get them defeated (Ibid. 186). Parliament came to propose an extremely radical measure, as it "began to debate a piece of legislation which struck at the core of the institution of hereditary monarchy: a bill to change the succession and exclude the Duke of York from the throne" (Ibid. 186). The Bill mandated that in the event of the king's death, the succession would pass to the closest "Protestant heir" (Ashley 143), As Iain Hampsher-Monk rhetorically asks:

> [The Exclusion Bill] involved Parliament changing, or putting aside a rule – the rule of hereditary succession – which was fundamental to the concept of monarchy. If Parliament can legislate to determine who should or should not succeed, then had not sovereignty, in effect passed to them? (H-M *HMPT* 70)

James certainly felt that this was the implication of the Bill, asserting that it "destroys the very being of monarchy, which, I thank God, yet has had no dependency on parliaments nor on nothing but God alone, nor ever can, and be a monarchy" (H-M *HMPT* 70).

This was called the Exclusion Crisis. The opponents to the succession of James were led by the Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Earl of Shaftesbury, and Charles' former-friend, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (Ashley 142-3). Although their Bill did not become law they were successful in causing James to go into exile again (Ibid. 143). In fact, the Bill itself passed the Commons, but the King dissolved Parliament (Ibid. 143), as this normally irresolute monarch was particularly incensed by what was happening. Devoid of much integrity, it was still the case that for Charles "[t]he legitimate succession was a principle to which [he] adhered until the end" (Ibid. 144). Shaftesbury's supporters, though, wanted what can be termed an illegitimate succession in that they wanted to throne to pass to Monmouth, the eldest illegitimate son of Charles II. Actually a claim was put forward that he was in fact legitimate – making him the rightful heir by primogeniture – and that "a black box" contained the documentation showing that Charles had indeed married Monmouth's mother (Ibid. 144). The historian Maurice Ashley, who certainly shows no bias towards to the Stuart monarchy in his work, however notes that:

> [T]he one person who seems to have had no doubts whatever about [Monmouth] being a bastard was his father, who was in a position to know. For though King Charles II loved Monmouth, he was inflexibly determined that his brother should succeed to the throne, and that if possible the Stuart monarchy should carry on unimpaired after his death (Ashley 144).

Monmouth's popularity in the capital even led Charles "to declare publically that he was not the lawful heir" (Ashley 145).

It is around this time that Shaftesbury's supporters came to be known as Whigs (Ashley 146), in opposition to the Tories who defended James' hereditary right to the throne. Charles took action to attempt to defuse the Exclusion Crisis and regain the political initiative. He dissolved Parliament, and his "advisors had Shaftesbury arrested for treason" (Ibid. 148). Even with the Lord Chief Justice's intervention on the side of a conviction, Shaftesbury escaped conviction (Ibid. 148). This was seen as a "victory" for the Whigs (Ibid. 147-8).

It was in this climate that Dryden wrote, in defence of the legitimate succession, his satire *Absalom and Achitophel*. Before examining what impact this poem had, it is noteworthy that writers of literature are not generally regarded as having a major impact on the political events of their time. The most notable exception is perhaps the abolitionist author Harriet Beecher Stowe, who, when she was introduced to the US president Abraham Lincoln in 1862 was welcomed by him with the "so this is the little lady who made this big war" (Brogan 341). It is debatable though that Beecher Stowe really had much of an influence in setting off the bloodiest conflict in US history. One literary writer who certainly did help to alter the events of his day through his fictional work is John Dryden, however. Ashley notes in regard to the impact of the acquittal of Shaftesbury that:

> [It] was largely offset when the Poet Laureate, John Dryden, published that November his wonderful satire, *Absalom and Achitophel*, in which Monmouth, the Whig candidate for the succession, and Shaftesbury his sponsor, were held up to ridicule (Ashley 148).

Moreover, with the success of this satire, "[t]he Tories recovered their nerve" and from this point onwards, the cause of exclusion went into rapid decline. "[T]he Duke of York was allowed to return from exile in May, 1682" (Ashley 148). Exclusion was off the table, and in fact it was Shaftesbury himself who wound up in exile by the end of 1682. He was to die on the foreign soil of Dutch Republic, early in the following year. Moreover, Parliament was not to meet again for the remainder of Charles' reign (Ibid. 147).

The tide had most certainly turned. With the Papist Plot now a historical memory, it was the turn of the Whigs to suffer persecution (Ashley 150), and some of them, following Shaftesbury's example, also fled to the Dutch Republic, and numbered among them was a young John Locke (H-M *HMPT* 71). When Charles II finally died in 1685, he had "attained a position of commanding authority never touched by his Stuart predecessors" and "[t]he succession of his bigoted Roman Catholic brother, for which he had risked his throne, was assured" (Ashley 151). Thus, with his death, what had seemed in grave doubt prior to Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* came to pass; "the first Catholic ruler of England since 'Bloody Mary', mounted the throne" (Ibid. 151) of a predominantly Protestant country. Hence, it is not an exaggeration to say that with a well-written piece of satire, Dryden helped to alter the direction of English history[24].

Absalom and Achitophel will not be examined here due to considerations of space, and more particularly that Dryden continued his attack on Shaftesbury the following year with a second satire entitled *The Medal. A Satire against Sedition*. Within this latter shorter work, the political outlook of Dryden is set out more explicitly than in the former, and it is thus more suitable for evaluation here. As Fowles points out, *The Medal* is a work in which Dryden "opts less for subtlety than outright condemnation" (Fowles 105) and "confronts the Earl" – i.e. Shaftesbury – "in fully frontal attack" (Ibid. 104). The ostensible motivation for this work is the medal that was struck by the Whigs on the acquittal of Shaftesbury. In a period in which medals were struck to commemorate important events – such as the Peace of Breda[25] – it was not in itself an unusual act, but by publically commemorating an affront to the monarchy, it was "constitutionally provocative in the extreme" (Ibid. 104) to the king and his supporters. In order to counter this

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[24] The reason he is not better known for this is surely that, firstly the result of his influence was undone within the same decade with the Glorious Revolution, and secondly that a defence of Divine Right soon came to be an unpopular position in the general English political culture and has remained so ever since.

[25] See Marciari & MacLeod 23.

perceived presumption, Dryden once again felt the need to pen a satire against the Whig leader, although the genesis for the work was possibly a suggestion by Charles II himself[26].

Relevant to an understanding of Dryden's work, there is also a preface for this poem entitled *Epistle to the Whigs*. Both the poem and the preface attack what are seen as Whig pretentions against Charles II, and both will be involved in the analysis below. The poem itself opens with what Fowles calls "a disdainful rubbishing of the pinchbeck presumption of the Shaftesbury medal" (Fowles 104). The poem is not simply an attack on Shaftesbury however. As Fowles reveals:

> Apart from the sheer enjoyment to be derived from the bravura of the renewed attack on Shaftesbury, the most significant feature of *The Medall* [sic] is the reminder its latter sections provide of how lucidly Dryden was able to make his poetry urge an argument (Fowles 106).

In fact, *The Medal* is a particularly relevant work to discover Dryden's political perspectives in, as he puts them forward very explicitly in it. One specific and important aim of the poem is obviously to attack Shaftesbury. This it does on repeated occasions. For example, towards the beginning Dryden wittily compares the medal with Shaftesbury himself. He exclaims:

> Never did art so well with nature strive,
> Nor ever idol seemed so much alive:
> So like the man, so golden to the sight,
> So base within, so counterfeit and light (Dry. *SPs. TM*. 6-9).

He also depicts Shaftesbury as "the pander of the people's hearts/(O crooked soul, and serpentine in arts)", and as a "fiend" and a "monster" (Dry. *SPs. TM*. 256-7, 81, 4). In particular, he presents Shaftesbury as a hypocrite whose attachment to

[26] See Scott 214 and Fowles 104.

populism has come about through failed ambition (Ibid. 75-80), and additionally he makes *ad hominem* attacks, calling Shaftesbury a "formidable cripple" and describing him as a man of "open lewdness" (Ibid. 272, 37). Consequently, the satire has the effect of "transforming Shaftesbury into an unlikely rake and hypocrite" (Manley 30). Any positive aspect to Shaftesbury is also deliberately tarnished. Fowles points out that even "[t]he lines recapitulating Shaftsbury's service to the Crown" which were public knowledge "wittily convey, preserved in aspic, the grief that doing the right thing for the wrong reason must bring to an evil man's soul" (Fowles 105).

More significantly for his political outlook as a whole, however, is Dryden's advocacy of the need for absolute power to reside in the monarch. Dryden asserts "[t]hat kings can do no wrong we must believe:/ . . . /Help heav'n! or sadly we shall see an hour/When neither wrong nor right are in their pow'r!" (Dry. *SPs. TM*. 135, 137-8). The monarch is a figure whose "[i]nherent right" (Ibid. 114) comes from his role as a bastion of stability, and this right needs to be inherited by Divine Right, in order "that a lawful power may never cease" and that the "succession to secure our peace" (Ibid. 115-6) can take place.

Dryden views this stabilizing factor of the monarch as being in direct contrast to notions of popular sovereignty, or politics carried by the will of "an arbitrary crowd" (Dry. *SPs. TM*. 142). Dryden affirms that the idea that "[t]he most have right" and that "the wrong is in the few" is amongst the most "impious maxims" (Ibid. 245, 6). He mocks this concept by pointing out that if this idea is accepted as true, both the Athenians who condemned Socrates, and those who repented of his death were right. (Ibid. 96-7). Also referring to the English Civil War and the Restoration, Dryden ironically notes that, "Crowds err not, though to both extremes they run,/To kill the father, and recall the son" (Ibid. 99-100). Hence for Dryden, the populace lack the stability of decision to be enabled to direct political affairs. He also more ominously asserts that popular government must entail civil war, the "various venoms" (Ibid. 297) turning upon one another once the power of the king has been overthrown (Ibid. 295-318). Consequently, Fowles

notes that *The Medal* not only contains "the Tory-Royal manifesto", but it goes much further than this in ending with the aforementioned "vision of the anarchy that must surely ensure if, that manifesto [be] not adopted" (Fowles 105-6). This helps to explain the observation of Novak that it was "within the period of the Exclusion Crisis [that] Dryden's attack upon the mob was most vehement." For Novak, it is the case that "the best description of Shaftesbury the anarchist" can be found in *The Medal* (Novak 94). This is because, in this satire, "Shaftesbury is seen as encouraging the mob to realize its power" (Ibid 95).

Dryden also sees an unsettling fundamental religious dimension to the doctrine of popular sovereignty. Averring that *The Bible* is held hostage to political ends, Dryden remarks that "[t]hey rack ev'n Scripture to confess their cause" and that "[t]he text inspires not them, but they text inspire" (Dry. *SPs. TM.* 156, 166). That anti-monarchical politics and religion are tied together is something that disturbs Dryden throughout his career. Here he avers:

> All hands unite of every jarring sect;
> They cheat the country first and then infect.
> They for God's cause their monarchs dare dethrone,
> And they'll be sure to make his cause their own.
> Whether the plotting Jesuit laid the plan
> Of murdering kings, or the French puritan,
> Our sacrilegious sects their guides outgo,
> And kings and kingly pow'r would murder too (Dry. *SPs. TM*. 197-204).

In claiming that Shaftesbury "sets the people in the papal choir" (Dry. *SPs. TM*. 87) by encouraging them to act against the king in the manner of the medieval pontiffs that on occasion deposed sitting monarchs, Dryden is cleverly and subtly accusing Shaftesbury himself of having his own Popish Plot. Dryden's particular concern though is radical Protestantism, and he claims in his *Epistle to the Whigs* that:

> I am able to prove from the doctrine
> of Calvin and the principles of Buchanan that they set the people
> above the magistrate, which, if I mistake it not, is your own

> fundamental, and which carries your loyalty no further than your liking (Dry. *SPs*. *EW*. 85-9).

He also mockingly claims that "A dissenter in/poetry from sense and English will make as good a Protestant/rhymer, as a dissenter from the Church of England a Prot-/estant parson" (Dry. *SPs*. *EW*. 153-6).

The satire, in its ostensive aim succeeded, as, in the words of Fowles, it managed "to take the gilt off the bread of the Shaftesbury acquittal" (Fowles 106). Zwicker and Bywaters note that it "contributed to the formation of public opinion" as regarded "Shaftesbury" and "the Whig Party" (Dry. *SPs*. 544) to the benefit of the crown and to the detriment of its opponents. It was not long after the publication of *The Medal* that Shaftesbury fled into exile in the Dutch Republic, where he soon after died, his political ambitions in tatters[27]. From this point to the death of Charles II and the relatively smooth succession of James II in 1685, which marks the cut-off point of this study, it appeared that Dryden had indeed achieved his aim of defending the Stuart monarchy with its prerogatives. It would not be apparent then that all his political work would be reduced to nothing in a great political upheaval involving the dethroning of James, known as the Glorious Revolution, just three years later, and that this upheaval would also see Dryden himself lose his prestige and laureateship, and be effectively reduced to nothing more than a private man of letters until his own death in 1700.

2.3 Forms of Monarchic Legitimacy

Now this work will examine the different forms of monarchic legitimacy that Dryden depicts in his dramas. Firstly, however, it is to be noted that at the beginning of the 21st century, from a European perspective, the term "monarchy" comes loaded with certain assumptions. A particularly important assumption is that

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[27] Scott also reveals that whilst "we have no means to ascertain" the "impression" made by the work on Shaftesbury personally, animosity to the poet continued within Shaftesbury's family "long afterwards" with "his grandson" regarding "Dryden and his works with a bitter affection of contempt" (Scott 215).

the legitimate succession to the monarch is determined by primogeniture. That is traditionally that upon a monarch either dying or abdicating his or her throne will pass automatically to his or her son, and only for cases in which the departing monarch has no male heir will the throne pass to an eldest daughter. Should the monarch have no children at all, a brother, or the relative with the closest bloodline inherits instead. It is noteworthy that in certain European states the concept of primogeniture has in recent times been modified in a spirit of gender equality to ensure the eldest child inheritance of the crown, regardless of his or her gender[28]. As this is a fairly new innovation though, it falls outside of any relevance for a study of John Dryden.

The situation in the Tudor dynasty following the ascendency of Henry VII to the English throne illustrates the working of primogeniture well[29]. Upon his death, in 1509, the crown passed to his son, Henry VIII. Following an infamous series of marriage alliances, Henry VIII in turn, upon his own passing in 1547, was left with three children, who in order of age were Mary, Elizabeth and Edward. Primogeniture ensured Edward, as Henry's son though not the eldest child inherited the throne as Edward VI, and upon his dying young and childless in 1553, Mary, as Henry VIII's eldest daughter then acceded to the throne. As she likewise failed to produce an heir, the throne then passed on her death in 1558 onto Henry VIII's sole surviving child Elizabeth, who also died childless in 1603, causing the throne to be settled upon James I as the closest blood relative to the Tudor family. As will be seen below, though, the concept of monarchy does not necessarily include

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[28] For example, for the 2013 change in the UK, see: http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-22300293, and for other European states see: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/28/uk-royal-succession-rules_n_1064062.html

[29] This is despite the fact that Henry VIII "had been empowered by parliament to bestow the succession as he thought fit" (Ashley 9). However, in spite of some alterations in the succession during his lifetime, it had finally been left in a primogenital form by the end of his life.

primogeniture as its method of succession, and succession need not even be by members of the same family or ethnic group.

Another important assumption about monarchy from a 21st-century European perspective is the idea that the monarch is head of state, but has no effective political power[30]. Whilst the limits of kingly power were being argued in the time of Dryden, and are an important backdrop to both him and this work, it was generally expected both in Europe or other parts of the world in which monarchy flourished that the king would rule as well as reign, the main point of contention was over whether the rule should be absolute or not.

Dryden uses five models for the attainment of monarchical power in his plays. Four of them are legitimate, and they are primogeniture, succession by a son who does not need to be the eldest, succession by a form of selection, and the attainment of kingly legitimacy by marriage to a legitimate royal female. The illegitimate model is usurpation. All five of these forms will be looked at in this work through historical examples of their functioning.

2.3.1 Monarchic Legitimacy through Primogeniture

Primogeniture is the first form of legitimate monarchic succession that will be examined. Its importance is twofold, in that it is a component of the Divine Right of Kings theory, which is supported by John Dryden and which will be looked at in detail in the next section. Secondly, it became the accepted form of monarchic succession in England, and thus the one most familiar to both Dryden and his intended upper-class audience who would have regarded it as quite natural as the same traditional method of kingly inheritance was practiced across most of Europe too[31]. For this reason it will be looked at in more detail than the alternate forms.

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[30] The word "European" has to be stressed here, because although no absolute monarchy exists in Europe – with the possibly complicated exception of the Vatican – and many monarchies outside of Europe are also constitutional – such as those of Japan and Thailand – absolute monarchies can still be found within most of the countries of the Arabian Peninsula.

The development of primogeniture as the accepted from of monarchic succession in England will now be examined, and it will be seen that it is a system that evolved over time rather than having been instituted at any specific time in the country's history. First however, it must be noted that, save for the brief period of the Commonwealth in Dryden's time, the English in England[32] had never known any other form of government but monarchy. In fact, the history of the English in England commences with the institution of monarchy as an already established fact (Whitelock 48). The Anglo-Saxons used a system of elective monarchy by the elite, which developed into a *de facto*, but not absolute, primogenital system (Ibid. 54). Nonetheless, with the establishment of the Norman kingdom, the development of primogeniture took a step backwards, as the nomination or election of a successor was used instead. In fact primogeniture was not finally accepted until the thirteenth century, interestingly making Shakespeare's depiction of King John as a usurper of Arthur's primogenital right to the crown an anachronism[33]. Nevertheless, ironically with King John, although unknown at the time, the principle of primogeniture was established properly at last. John was succeeded upon his death in 1216 by his eldest son, Henry III, and he in turn, after a fifty-six year reign, would be by his eldest surviving son Edward I. Primogeniture thus had established itself as the rightful form of succession for the English crown.

That the principle of primogeniture is the deciding factor for the succession of the crown is not even greatly undermined by the notorious cases of usurpation that take place on occasion from Edward II's reign down to that of Henry VII. What is, on the contrary, significant is that the primogenital principle, whilst

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[31] But not all of it, the Ottoman Empire being a notable exception to this general rule.

[32] Meaning the Anglo-Saxons and onwards, and not confusing matters by going into Celtic and Roman history.

[33] See Shak. *KJ*. 2.1.9-10, 95-8, 104-9 and Tillyard *SH*. 227, 232.

temporarily abrogated, is then adhered to by the usurpers themselves, once they have taken power. For instance, Richard II was overthrown in 1399, and the head of the usurpers, Henry of Lancaster, had himself crowned as Henry IV. However, Henry IV, himself an indirect descendent of Edward III, also recognized the principle of primogeniture for his new line – henceforth known as the Lancastrian dynasty – thus his crown was inherited by his eldest son (Myers 102) Henry V in 1413. A similar set up was intended occur when their rivals under Edward of York usurped their control of the kingdom (Ibid. 183). With the final usurpation of Henry Tudor – who was crowned Henry VII – the period of usurpation comes to an end, and primogeniture would become the unchallenged form of succession down to Dryden's own time[34]; that is why Henry VIII's succession was able to be drawn upon as an example of complex primogeniture at the beginning of this section.

Before moving onto the other possible forms of monarchic succession, there are a few points that briefly ought to be made regarding the nature of English monarchy in the Middle Ages. It has been shown that the form of succession came to be that of primogeniture. Primogeniture can be exercised in an absolutist monarchy, as in the intention of the Divine Right of Kings theorists, but in the time in which it evolved, "there were some important limitations on [the king's] power" (Myers 24). The limitations on the monarchy existed due to the power of the nobility and that of the church, and they require examination as what can be regarded as their spiritual heirs would come to challenge Charles II.

From the time of William the Conqueror to the beginning of the Tudor dynasty, the power of the nobility in the period is most evident. True, there are exceptional kings such as the Conqueror himself, Edward I, Henry V and Edward IV who could effectively impose their will on the aristocracy. The general picture though is of the king at the mercy of his nobles, who frequently check his will and

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[34] Even including the question of Henry VIII's ability to order the question of the succession (see p.17 above) and the somewhat complicated question of James I's right to the throne. See:
http://www.britaininprint.net/shakespeare/study_tools/succession.html

even rebel against or overthrow him. The symbolic limiting of the monarch's power in late medieval England is most evident though in the signing of the *Magna Carta* and the creation of parliament. It was under King John that the *Magna Carta* was signed. The *Magna Carta* came about through the assertion of baronial power during the reign of a king who had angered the nobles with his "tyrannical conduct" (Dahmus 297). In order to carry out his war in France, "John had resorted to desperate and cruel measures" of raising finances (Ibid. 297). John's levying of yet another tax due to military defeat in 1204 led to the barons taking action. The year after the barons presented John with their demands. It is a sign of how much the barons were a limitation to John's power that his only two choices were to accept them or face "deposition" (Ibid. 297). He accepted them, and he "affixed his seal to the document which history knows as the Great Charter (*Magna Charta*)" (Ibid. 297).

This document, by legalizing baronial "privileges" (Dahmus 297) fixed the position of the monarch within the kingdom. As Dahmus explains:

> [I]n forcing the king to promise to observe the limitations on his power expressed in the sixty some affirmations, they outlined in effect a definite body of law to which the king was himself subject. Not just the royal subjects, but the king as well, was beneath the law (Dahmus 298).

Dahmus notes that the Great Charter supplied, at least historically, two basic principles of constitutional government, namely, the right of the citizen to justice and parliamentary control of taxation" (Ibid. 298). Nonetheless, whilst the *Magna Carta* certainly proved that the king was limited in his ability to act by the nobles, Dahmus makes the following caveat:

> The Great Charter as the classic expression of English liberty did not evoke in the thirteenth century anything approaching the reverence its champions extended it in the seventeenth. Shakespeare could even write an entire play about John and omit all reference to Runnymede (Dahmus 298).

The *Magna Carta* though, with its limitations on the monarch, did not prove to satisfy the nobility in the longer term. In the reign of John's successor, Henry III, policies that the aristocracy did not approve of "convinced [them] that they must have a direct voice in the government" (Dahmus 298). It was in this climate that the most obvious impediment to free monarchical power, the parliament, was created, a body that represented not only the nobles but also representatives of "the shires and boroughs" (Ibid. 354-5).

In its ability to limit the king's potential power though, the medieval parliament was not the parliament of Dryden's time. Indeed, had certain strong kings "not needed funds regularly to prosecute their wars" (Dahmus 355), and found that making use of parliament for this aim was the efficacious, the institution itself may have disappeared over time. That is why Damus points out that "the Middle Ages only witnessed the birth of parliament. Its real history began in the seventeenth century" (Ibid. 356).

During the troubled fifteenth century, the power of the barons continued to limit the free actions of the monarchy. Indeed, as has already been seen, certain nobles even overthrew the king and had themselves crowned in his place. It was the nobility that achieved "aristocratic domination of the government" through their position in Parliament. As for the other section of Parliament, the Commons, which would cause such great distress to the Stuarts, even though the middle classes in the later Middle Ages were becoming of "increasing consequence", it was still the case that "in the Lancastrian period the magnates were politically and socially dominant" (Myers 122). That the aristocracy could dominate the Commons is unsurprising considering that "the magnates often influenced or controlled parliamentary elections, and many members of Parliament were, if not actually on the staff of some great lord, at any rate of his affinity" (Ibid. 120). As has already been noted at the beginning of this work though, the power of the barons was not to extend into the time of the Tudor dynasty.

As for the church, the Middle Ages was a period in which the papacy itself was advancing its claims across Europe "in regard to the secular power" (Davis

237). It was advancing the idea that it had ultimate power over heads of state, and was free to depose them, should it wish (Ibid. 237). Dryden later references this idea with disgust. In such an atmosphere, it is clear that the Church prevented the monarch from exercising full sovereignty in his realm. A clear example of church power *vis-à-vis* the king can be seen in the reign of John. John incurred the wrath of the church by "his refusal to recognize the Archbishop of Canterbury nominated by the Pope" (Ibid. 330). This led to Pope Innocent II placing "the kingdom under interdict" (Ibid. 296). This was not the entirety of the papal punishment though, as "Innocent inflicted the further penalty of excommunication and even threatened physical force, in this case by encouraging the French to invade his kingdom" (Ibid. 330). Whilst it was the case that "king John held out against the pope's fulminations until 1213" (Barraclough 116), in that year he felt he could no longer continue in opposition to the pope, and then "he found he was only able to receive absolution after he had surrendered his kingdom to the Papacy, to be held in future as a fief for the service of 1,000 marks a year" (Davis 330). In other words, not only had John buckled under papal pressure, but he had in fact technically completely given up the independence of his country and had subjected it to a foreign power.

It is to be noted that as the Middle Ages progressed however, the power of the church in England declined[35]. For instance, even in the reign of Richard II, "it was already clear that papal authority in England could not endure, if eventually it should suit the king's interests better to strike than to collaborate" (Myers 70). Collaboration continued however, up to the point of Henry VIII's great religious revolution. However, to monarchic supporters like Dryden, at least prior to his conversion, the memory of Papal claims against the monarchy remained a potent

[35] See Baraclough pp. 116, 154, 161.

memory, and it was seen as being mirrored in the post-Reformation period as also being made on behalf of the reformed churches[36].

Whilst the reign of Henry VIII has already been discussed, here it is worth noting that both of the forms of limitation of monarchical power – the aristocracy and the church – lose their significance in the reign of Henry VIII. Whereas the power of the king's council in the Middle Ages had effectively depended on the barons, in Henry's case, he was "in complete control of affairs" (Myers 194). As for the church "the breach with Rome brought out the unmedieval idea that the king was supreme in every sphere of life, and that England was a self-sufficient empire, with Henry as its emperor, subject to no other authority on earth" (Ibid. 193). It is such a form of monarchy that would be idealized in the Divine Right of Kings theory, which will be discussed below.

2.3.2 Equal Male Hereditary Monarchic Legitimacy in the Islamic World

A different form of hereditary legitimacy will now be examined. This is hereditary descent without primogeniture and it can be found historically, and still today, in the kingdoms belonging to the Islamic world. In that wide religious and cultural sphere, monarchy became the dominant form of government relatively soon after the birth of the new faith, and remained so down to Dryden's time, and indeed on till the 20th century, when it began to be challenged by republican ideas. The great Islamic empires that existed in Dryden's time – that is the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal empires – all "traced their origins to the nomadic Turkic peoples of the Central Asian steppes" (Spellman 118). They also had the same concept of hereditary legitimacy, which was the traditional one of the Islamic world. W. M. Spellman notes that:

> Turks generally located legitimacy in a single ruling family, but they did not follow the principle of primogeniture where the eldest son succeeded. When combined with the polygynous [sic] marriage practices of Islam, the result was a series of contending claims to the sultanate put forward by male offspring and siblings (Spellman 120).

[36] For instance, the idea of this mirroring is made by Filmer and (Filmer 8) Dryden (Dry. *SPs*. *RL*. *P*. 363-8), and is strongly implied in Burke (Burke 13).

This often erupted into all out civil war, as was the case towards the end of the Mughal Shah Jahan's rule in India. Not only does that particular conflict illustrate the inherent instability in such a system of succession, but it is of particular importance for this work, as this civil war, albeit in a fictionalized form, forms the backdrop of Dryden's play *Aurung-Zebe*, which will be examined below.

Here, a brief overview of the actual history of the event will made. The civil war began while Shah Jahan was still alive, but who, thirty years into his reign was thought to be on "the verge of death" (Gascoigne 200). This caused his three younger sons who were employed in "various regional commands" (Ibid. 200) to fear for the future; Dara Shikoh, his eldest son, was by his side. As he began to recover, Shah Jahan did not attempt to re-exert his authority, but rather "handed over the reigns of government to Dara" which induced the other brothers to act and "contest the throne" (Ibid. 201). A series of battles ensued in which brother fought brother, and which ended in Aurungzeb becoming emperor himself and slaying his siblings. Knowledge of these events was brought to Europe by the eyewitness François Bernier, "a doctor who travelled widely in India in the 1660s and then reported his findings to Louis XIV's chief minister" (J. Keay *Ind.* 321) As will be seen more fully below, Dryden's drawing upon this event, and in certain details being remarkably accurate – due to his having drawn "heavily upon Bernier's account (Ibid. 326) – uses it in part to show the superiority of primogeniture to such a system in terms of internal stability within the state. In the historical sense, he certainly has some justification as it has been claimed that, due to the nature of succession "[d]istrust between father and son, as also between brothers, would be a recurring theme of the Mughal period, generating internal crises more serious and more costly than any external threat" (Ibid. 328).

2.3.3 Elective and Designative Monarchic Legitimacy

Just as the Islamic World provides a good illustration of legitimate hereditary succession without primogeniture, so the Roman Empire provides a relevant illustration of legitimate succession unconnected with paternity by blood. The forms of succession that do not depend upon paternity by blood and that

appear in the plays of Dryden being analyzed in this work are elective and designative. Of the first of these, succession by election, the esteemed historian of Rome, Edward Gibbon explains:

> In the cool shade of retirement, we may easily devise imaginary forms of government, in which the sceptre shall be constantly bestowed on the most worthy, by the free and incorrupt suffrage of the whole community. Experience overturns there airy fabrics, and teaches us, that, in a large society, the election of a monarch can never devolve to the wisest, or the most numerous part of the people.
> (Gibbon 90).

Whilst modern experience has shown that it is indeed possible to elect a head of state – designated as a "president" rather than a "king" – "by the free and incorrupt suffrage of the whole community", it was not deemed to be possible through most of pre-modern history, especially in terms of large polities. Thus, any system of succession in which a sense of selection was to play a role, would fall into the hands of a powerful group, as Gibbon rightly points out. One such body of the populace that had a political influence that far outweighed its proportion of the national population in pre-modern times was the public sentiment of a nation's capital. Not only was that true for the populace of Rome, but also in Dryden's time the people of London, whilst not choosing their king, nevertheless, as a body had sufficient power to thwart his will, for instance, as has been seen, in the failed prosecution against the Earl of Shaftesbury.

As for the Roman model, the succession to the empire was often designated through the designation of the previous ruler[37]. In the early period of the Roman Empire, it is the case that absolute power was sometimes passed from father to adopted son, but the adoptions were not of a kind in which an unrelated child was raised from infancy as if a natural one, but rather a form of designation for a

[37] However, it should also be noted that hereditary succession was not completely absent from the Roman system, it was just uncommon. For instance, Vespasian was succeeded by his son Titus and Domitian (Freeman 412).

successor, and such as system of designation is particularly associated with the "golden age" (Gibbon 84) of the Roman Empire, the period in which rule ran successively through Marcus Coceus Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antonius Pius and Marcus Aurelius.

A classically educated man like Dryden would have been aware of the Roman form of legitimate succession through nomination, and form features in his play *Aureng-Zebe* as will be seen below. Another form of legitimacy, that provided by an election to the monarchy, was also evidenced in Roman times from the example of Julius Caesar, which Dryden certainly draws upon in his *Oedipus*. Caesar's attempt to have himself proclaimed monarch by the people of Rome, and which is dramatised in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, precipitated his assassination. What is relevant here though is that on a day of traditional Roman celebration Caesar was offered "a diadem wreathed with laurel" by his friend and supporter Mark Antony. However, amongst the observing crowd, only those who "were planted there for [the] purpose" (Plutarch 889) of supporting his act cheered, and the crowd showed its clear opposition to the establishment of a monarchy, causing Caesar to throw the crown aside and deny any ambition to be made ruler (Freeman 371). Nonetheless, up to the time of his death "he lay under the odious suspicion of having tried to revive the title of King"[38] (Suetonius 48). What is significant about this event to both the principle of monarchy and the dramatic work of John Dryden is that, regardless of whether Mark Antony was acting at

[38] In Shakespeare's version, the ambiguity over Caesar's intentions is reduced, and the character of Julius Caesar is effectively portrayed as ambitious for a crown. While there is no direct expression of such ambition from Caesar's own mouth, the report in the play that "the senators tomorrow/Mean to establish Caesar as a king" (Shak. *TRP. JC.* 1.3.85-6) can be taken as both probable and instigated by Caesar, and the critic Norman Sanders certainly feels that Caesar's "own ambitions" are to be crowned as king (Shak. *TRP. JC.* 9). Once again though, as in the history on which it is based, it is either through the acclimation of the people or through the senate, as in the above quotation, that the character of Caesar is able to be established as a monarch; that is, through a form of election.

Caesar's request or not, it was believed that public acclimation would have helped him to the throne, if that was really his ambition.

2.3.4 Monarchic Legitimacy through Marriage

The final type of monarchical legitimacy to be looked at in this work is that of legitimacy through marriage. In such a case, there is a legitimate queen on the throne, and through marriage to her, her husband is also crowned king. The principle is also valid, should the marriage take place while the royal woman is still crown princess. A particularly striking historical example of legitimacy being bestowed through marriage occurred with the Byzantine empress Zoe at the beginning of the 11th century, at a time in which primogenital succession had actually succeeded in placing a dynasty lasting over a century and a half on the throne. Through different marriages to her, three different men became emperors in their own right (Herrin 190). Despite this colourful example though, it must be stated that the concept of legitimacy through marriage is far more common in literary works than in actual history, where it is in fact quite rare. This is because usually a male heir could be found to succeed, or, when a daughter succeeded to the throne, her marriage would not grant legitimacy to rule to her husband, as in the case of Mary Tudor's marriage to Philip II of Spain, who was debarred from becoming king of England. In drama though, the idea of legitimacy through marriage is often used. In comedies involving usurpations – such as *the Tempest* – it allows the conflict between the legitimate line and the usurping line to be resolved through the agency of love. And, in tragedy, it enables unbridled ambition to form part of the plot. In *King Lear* for instance, Edmund's hopes for a marriage union with Lear's daughters also enables him to set his sights on the throne (Bradley 277).

2.3.5 Usurpation

One final method of obtaining supreme power which has numerous examples in both history and literature, and is a central theme in many of Dryden's plays is that of usurpation. Usurpation occurs when the legitimate ruler is overthrown through open or clandestine methods, and he is replaced on the throne

by someone with no legitimate claim to it, or a lesser claim that the king who had been occupying it. All of the above forms of legitimacy are vulnerable to usurpation.

Within monarchy based on primogeniture, the example of England also provides instances of usurpation. As has already been seen, there is a specific period of English history in which usurpation became quite commonplace. That was in the late Middle Ages, from the succession of Edward II in 1307 down to the succession of Henry VIII in 1491. These usurpations have a particular relevance to Dryden's work. The reason is threefold. Firstly, it shows the damage that is caused by continual political instability, but in that, it is no different to any other period or place in which usurpation is common. Secondly, and more specifically to Dryden's inheritance, the Tudor monarchy that emerged from that period, in order to prevent such chaos in the future, began a process of theoretic legitimization of its line that carried on into its successor dynasty, the Stuarts, and which Dryden supported and which will be looked at below. Thirdly, it was a period of particular interest to Dryden's playwriting forefathers. For the fifteenth century alone, no less than seven of Shakespeare ten history plays are set. With the inclusion of the fourteenth century, the setting for another history play of Shakespeare's – *Richard II* – in addition to Christopher Marlowe's only English history play, *Edward II* can be found.

Within the Islamic system, the most apposite examples of usurpation do not belong to the great empires of the Mughals or Ottomans, but rather to the more fluid period of the High Middle Ages[39]. As for this history of the Roman Empire, that witnessed numerous cases of usurpation carried out by ambitious generals. Even with the concept of legitimacy through marriage, usurpation is possible. A notorious example of this also occurred in the 10th-century Byzantine Empire, when a senior military commander overthrew and murdered the sitting emperor as a

[39] For examples see Riley-Smith 228, 239.

result of a liaison with his wife the empress, whom he afterwards was forced to repudiate and was thus enthroned as a usurper[40].

There are some specific factors connected with usurpation, and they remain relevant regardless of the system of succession used in the monarchical system. The first factor concerns the nature of the ruler who is usurped. Generally it is the case that it is weak rulers rather than strong ones who suffer usurpation. This weakness can be of different kinds. For instance, rulers who are in their minorities are more likely to be overthrown. Weakness can also be connected with the mental state of the monarch. For example, Henry VI both suffered from insanity and was removed from power. A different kind of weakness can be that of a failure to judge the character of the people closest to them. There are historical examples of this in Byzantium[41], and as will be seen later, the case of usurpation in Dryden's *Marriage à la Mode* is also brought about by the rightful ruler's misplaced trust. The case of kingly weakness that is most productive to usurpation though is simply an inability to rule well. This created the background that led to the overthrow of Edward II, Richard II, Henry VI – his inability obviously tied to his mental state as mentioned above – and Richard III. Defective rule in a state creates instability, and the concomitant desire for stability provides usurpers with a powerful excuse to take the crown into their own hands. The situation is made even worse, if within the instability caused by weak rule, the position of powerful potential usurpers is also threatened, as was in the case of Henry of Lancaster, who usurped the throne as Henry IV (Myers 19).

The second factor concerning usurpation concerns the usurper himself. For a usurpation to have any chance of success, the usurper must have an independent source of power, which he can draw upon to overthrow the head of state. The most obvious and apposite source of power is a military one. As has already been noted

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[40] See Norwich *Byz. Apog.* pp. 210-12.

[41] See Norwich *Byz. Apog.* pp. 86, 210-12.

Roman commanders were able to make themselves emperors as they were in control of forces that no one else could challenge. The usurpers in the English context, such as the future Henry IV, used their positions as nobles to raise troops with which to depose the monarch reigning at the time. The independent source of power could also be prestige. Despite his abuses of power that soon led to his downfall, Richard III's prestige enabled him to manipulate his way to the throne. Before his true nature was revealed on the throne, he had been regarded as "an upright and pious prince", and this helped him not only become Protector, but also ensured "no opposition" to his deligitimization and imprisonment of the rightful heir and his brother (Myers 183). It was only with their subsequent deaths that opposition to Richard really began.

Now that the nature of the people involved in usurpation has been looked at, it will now be shown why usurpation is not simply undesirable for a legitimate ruler, but also why it is detrimental for the body politic as a whole. Most importantly in this context, usurpation is closely connected with violence, in that it almost always comes about because of it, and regardless of its origin, it often leads to tyranny. Machiavelli, the Renaissance expert on the darker side of politics, does not consider it possible for a man who "becomes prince by some criminal and nefarious method" (Machiavelli 62) to not be obliged to use extreme violence to settle his rule (Ibid. 65-6). He would broadly agree with Pandulph's assertion is Shakespeare's *King John* that "[a] sceptre snatched with an unruly hand/Must be as boisterously maintained as gained" (Shak. *KJ*. 3.4.138-9).

In the cases where usurpation does not lead to tyranny, it almost invariably leads to civil strife instead. Those usurpers, such as Henry IV, who prove to be incapable rulers after having assumed the throne, create instability not only through their weakness, as for the rulers above, but this instability is worsened in that the example of the usurper encourages others to try to take the throne by force themselves too.

One last point about usurpation needs to be looked at, and that is the question of its legitimacy. Once the throne has been taken by illegal means, the

question remains as to whether the new occupant now has legitimacy or not. In early Christian theology, the answer is affirmative, as the concept of a successful usurpation of the throne does not exist. The term for usurper – *tyrannos* – referred to "one who attempted to make himself emperor in opposition to God's will" but in doing so, he necessarily "failed" (Mango 219). What in normal terms would be a successful usurper in fact turns out to be a legitimate ruler because for a usurper to be successful meant "God must have been on his side, and he ceased to be a usurper" (Ibid. 219). And should he turn out to be oppressive, this would not delegitimize them as "God in His wisdom might deliberately select [them] so as to punish humanity for its sins" (Ibid. 219).

In Renaissance England though, a less extreme position was taken. It was that, as Tillyard summarizes it, "[i]f the rightful king had been deposed, it was lawful to rise up against his usurper and reinstate him"[42] (Tillyard *SH*. 92). The question of the status of usurpers in terms of legitimacy, and the problems with both alternatives of recognition and denial will be looked at in the next section of this work, which deals with the Divine Right of Kings.

2.4 The Divine Right of Kings

This work asserts that the Divine Right of Kings is a key political idea that John Dryden's plays provide support for, as will be seen. Here an explanation of what the Divine Right of Kings theory actually entails will be made. The Divine Right of Kings is a theory that justifies the provision of unlimited political power to the monarch, as being necessary to "the social, religious and economic well-being of the country" (Spellman 199). Unlike the absolutist theory of Dryden's contemporary Thomas Hobbes, however, it is not ultimately based on a philosophical response to scepticism, but rather on theology and tradition. As such, it incorporates the concept of legitimacy through primogeniture, but it marries it to unlimited monarchical power, which up to the late Renaissance had been foreign to

[42] And as such reflected later Catholic thinking on the question. See *Catholic Encyclopedia* entry on "Tyrannicide". Retrieved from: http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15108a.htm.

conceptions of monarchy in Western Europe (Ibid. 193, 198), though quite common elsewhere.

In this section, the origin of the concept of Divine Right in the Tudor period will be briefly considered, followed by its expatiation in the 17th century through the writings of its most prominent British advocates, the king James VI/I and Sir Robert Filmer. The "doctrine" on the place of monarchy within Tudor society can most readily be found in a "popular source of dissemination, the Book of Homilies of the English Church." These homilies were "intended for a popular audience" (Tillyard *SH*. 71), and as such they provide "good evidence of contemporary opinion" which includes, most importantly, "official opinion" (Ibid. 71). What is stressed in these homilies is that the subject only needs to be aware of his unconditional duty of submission to the monarch, as "evil as well as . . . good rulers" (Ibid. 72) are to be obeyed by him unquestioningly.

Before moving directly onto how such ideas are elaborated upon and added to in the 17th-century justifications for absolute unchecked power for monarchs and their free succession as expressed by James VI/I and Sir Robert Filmer, there is a vital point that needs to be made. Whilst James and Filmer provide theological, historical and natural supports for their viewpoint, by far the strongest justification for monarchical power and its free succession is one of utility. This utility is that it provides the polity with stability, and has been alluded to in the previous section of this work on different types of monarchy. It is this utility that enables the 18th-century historian Edward Gibbon to express great scepticism towards the principle of succession through primogeniture, yet still see it as something worth preserving. He states:

> Of the various forms of government, which have prevailed in the world, a hereditary monarchy seems to present the fairest scope for ridicule. Is it possible to relate, without an indignant smile, that, on the father's decease, the property of a nation, like that of a drove of oxen, descends to his infant son, as yet unknown to mankind and to himself; and that the bravest warriors and wisest statesmen, relinquishing their natural right to empire, approach the royal cradle with bended knees and protestations of inviolable fidelity? Satire and declamation may pain these obvious topics

> in the most dazzling colours, but our more serious thoughts will respect a useful prejudice, that establishes a rule of succession, independent of the passions of mankind; and we shall cheerfully acquiesce in any expedient which deprives the multitude of the dangerous, and indeed the ideal, power of giving themselves a master (Gibbon 90).

The alternative to this utile form of rule is one in which the throne appears open to the taking for those who dare to compete for it. And from this rebellion and civil war are born. The same consideration prevents the placing of any limit upon monarchic power, for example through the holding of a monarch to account for his actions. The explanation for the necessity of a king being immune from judgment is that, the contrary will also lead to civil disturbances. This is why Hobbes also forbids the subjects of his theoretical absolute ruler, who after all is to be established by him for "the Peace and Defence of them all", the right to challenge his acts (Hobbes 232). It is noteworthy in this context that the English Civil War, whilst exhibiting the horrors of conflict was not fought over a disputed succession. It was fought over the question of the rightful behaviour of the monarch, and it caused great bloodshed and enormous disruption in the country.

Consequently, whilst examining the theoretical bases for absolute monarchy put forward by the next two thinkers, it must be born in mind that the enthusiastic reception of these theories by large numbers of serious and profound people, including Dryden, was not done in a spirit of wilful abandonment of what Milton calls in his *A Defence of the People of England*, "honourable liberty" (Milton *PW* 105). Rather, the acceptance of a relinquishment of nominal freedom was largely done from the unidealistic perspective that the alternative to such an approach – that of new ideas about government and society based on popular sovereignty – rather than leading to a new utopia of noble freedom, may, with its inherent levelling tendency, open an endless competition for power, and destroy the polity itself.

The two main proponents of Divine Right in England will now be examined. The first is James VI/I. He was "a scholar as well as a monarch". In fact,

he was so keen to make his mark in the field of letters that he was "prouder of his pen than of his sceptre or his sword" (Durant 123). As he regarded himself "as an *absolute* king" (Hume 80 – original italics), it is unsurprising that he used his scholarship to promote the concept of an absolute monarchy, which he did in his 1598 work *The True Lawe of Free Monarchies*, and which will be looked at in some detail below. It is first to be noted, however, that after James had died, his ideas heavily influenced his son Charles I (Ibid. 261), who, until the death of his elder brother in 1612 had never been expected to become king. With this mindset, and without James' greater practical modesty, disaster in an England in which Parliamentary claims were also being advanced became almost inevitable.

Therefore, the outlook of James VI/I, vociferously taken up by his son, helped to bring about the Civil War, which cost Charles his life. In fact, Hume believes that with such ideas the only reason his father James VI/I himself managed to securely hold the throne of England was because his "despotism was more speculative than practical" (Hume 113) since he did not make "the smallest provision either of force or politics, in order to support it" (Ibid. 83). Following the Civil War, and with the birth of the English Commonwealth, James VI/I's approach would have seemed consigned to the dustbin of history. However, the events of 1660 brought James VI/I's approach back to the fore (H-M *HMPT* 74).

The work in which James IV/I's central idea of untrammelled royal authority was pushed most forcefully and influentially, however, was not in his own work, but rather in the book *Patriarcha: or The Natural Power of Kings*, which despite having been written in the time of Charles I, was not published until the reign of his son. Its author was the "Kentish Knight" Sir Robert Filmer, who lived from 1588 to 1653 (H-M *HMPT* 74). He thus died before the Restoration. Nonetheless, Filmer's theories exerted "considerable influence in the reign of Charles II" (Ashley 162), during which Filmer became "[t]he champion of the Tory faith" (Ibid. 162), and as James Daley, who has studied Filmer in depth, expresses it "The Filmerian position very nearly became the official state ideology" (qtd. in H-M *HMPT* 75). Obviously, therefore, Filmer's work is of especial relevance to

Dryden, whose work, both polemical and dramatic, is aimed at providing a firm basis of support for the position of his patron the king.

The various underpinnings of the Divine Right of Kings abstracted from both JamesVI/I's and Filmer's works will now be discussed insofar as they will be seen to have an impact on, or be reflected in, Dryden's plays. The first significant intellectual support for the Divine Right of Kings is theological. That is because a compelling argument for absolute monarchy in the Christian era comes from an analogy with the understood divine system of the universe. James VI/I uses this analogy in his claim that "*Monarchie* (which forme of government, as resembling the Divinitie, approacheth nearest to perfection, as all the learned and wise men from the beginning have agreed upon; Unitie being the perfection of all things)" (James 193 – original italics).

The second support for the absolutist theory is that of natural law. This draws upon the Aristotelian concept of the father as being both natural head of the family and the template of political society[43]. In this case, the analogy of the king in his country is that of the father who has authority over his family (James 204), the children of which would, to James VI/I, be "monstrous and unnaturall" to rebel against him on any pretence whatsoever (Ibid. 204-5). For Filmer too obedience to the king is "natural" due his status as *Pater Patriæ* (Filmer 15). Filmer also uses this concept of natural law, and ties it to a historical approach based on Biblical exegesis. Hence for Filmer, the natural, historical and theological justifications for the absolutist rights of kings are intertwined. For Filmer, not only is the father the natural head of the family, but it was God's intention that this should be so (Ibid. 11). By then fusing this idea with the Christian belief that Adam was the first man, Filmer is able to draw the conclusion that both religiously and naturally, the concept of a single absolute ruler is right, and that the authority of Adam, who

[43] See Aristotle's *The Politics*. Pp. 30, 49-50. It is also noteworthy that Dryden makes a similar claim when he asserts that in his poem *To His Sacred Majesty* that, "[w]hen empire first from families did spring,/Then every father governed as a king" (Dry. *SPs*. *SM*. 93-4).

"was Lord of his Children" upon his death, passes to his eldest child, and then this is repeated from then on (Ibid. 11). It thus initially descends through other figures of Biblical history (Ibid. 11-13), and is adapted over time into kingship (Ibid. 14). Another important point to note is that it is not only, for Filmer, the case that Adam is the ultimate source of monarchical government, but also that his example proves that such government is in no way limited. Through his "Lordship" given by divine "Command", Adam had absolute authority "over the whole World" (Ibid. 11).

Now that the theoretical justifications for the Divine Right of Kings have been examined, it is also necessary to show that in its defence, Filmer attacks what he sees as the basis for the alternative political viewpoints of limited monarchical government – and by implication also republicanism – which is the idea of natural liberty, a concept that, as shall be seen, Dryden himself takes great issue with. The implication of this concept, as Filmer is aware, is "*That the People or Multitude have Power to punish, or deprive the Prince, if he transgress the Laws of the Kingdom*" (Filmer 8 – original italics). Filmer feels that what needs to be done, in order to defend the prerogative of the crown, is to "Confute this first erroneous Principle", which if done, "the whole Fabrick of this vast Engine of *Popular Sedition* would drop down of it self" (Filmer 8 – original italics). It is partly to this task that Filmer sets himself in his work. Thus Filmer seeks to undermine the attractiveness of the idea of popular sovereignty. He attacks its by noting its being erroneous in not only in that it "prodigally distributes a Portion of Liberty to the meanest of the Multitude" but more significantly in that it makes the supposition that "the height of Human Felicity were only to be found in" (Ibid. 7) liberty. There is a theological problem in that perspective, as it ignores that "the desire of Liberty was the first Cause of the Fall of *Adam*" (Ibid. 7). For Filmer, the idea of natural liberty is irreligious, it goes against "the constant Practice of all Ancient Monarchies", and it even opposes "the very Principles of the Law of Nature" (Ibid. 7).

Two of the implications of Divine Right are of particular importance to Dryden's political outlook. The first is that under the theory of Divine Right,

rebellion is completely impermissible. James VI/I puts forward a number of reasons for why this is so, even in the case where a king has through "wickednesse" (James 206) become a tyrant. He defends his outlook through a legal point. It is that the nature of a state means that no citizen is able to take the law into his own hands, as it is "not lawfull to a private man to revenge his private injury upon his private adversary" (Ibid. 206). The only legitimate authority for the righting of wrongs is "the Magistrate" to whom "God hath onely given the sword" (Ibid. 206). Thus it is impossible that the populace "take upon them the use of the sword, to whom it belongs not, against the publicke Magistrate, whom to only it belongeth" (Ibid. 206). Additionally, James makes a utilitarian[44] point against rebellion. It is that rebellion causes more harm to the people involved in it than relief from their ills in that it creates disorder (Ibid. 206). And he finishes off with a religious point. As it must be the case that "a wicked king is sent by God for a curse to his people, and a plague for his sinnes", it can only be impiety for the punished people "to shake off that curse at their owne hand, which God hath laid on them" (Ibid. 206).

The second implication of Divine Right directly concerns the political situation in 17th century England as to the relative positions of parliament and the king. James VI/I asserts that all Parliament's power originates in the monarch and depends upon him, and thus it has no independent authority of its own (James 202). Filmer, unsurprisingly, shows himself to be in agreement with the Stuart monarch (Filmer 51-2), noting that the laws passed in Parliament are in fact "made properly by the King alone" and simply "at the Rogation of the People" (Ibid. 53).

Having set out their justifications for their theory of Divine Right, possible objections to the theory are dealt with by the theorists in order to further fortify what they see as the validity of their thesis. One objection is that the theory, by granting absolute power to the monarch, grants him a licence for licentiousness.

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[44] This term is used here and elsewhere in this thesis to denote something that has a practical value unrelated to any intrinsic moral worth, and is not to be confused with the philosophical concept of Utilitarianism advocated by the philosopher Jeremy Bentham, amongst others.

James VI/I argues strongly though that his work does not imply "the world were only ordained for kings, & they without controlment [can] turne it upside down at their pleasure" (James 209). In his analogy of the father, James shows how he connects monarchy with great responsibility. He notes that "[a]s the kindly father ought to foresee all inconvenients and dangers that may arise towards his children, and though with hazard of his owne person presse to prevent the same, so ought the King towards his people" (Ibid. 195).

In case it is thought that kings, like their subjects, require fear of punishment in order to abide by their duty, such punishment exists in the Divine Right theory. Only it is God, who is over and above the king, and not his subjects, who are beneath him, who can hold the king to account, and who will do so more strictly than for other people due to his more exalted rank (James 209). It is therefore the case that the king should act in the interest of his subjects, and be the defender of their rights and privileges. However, what is of central importance in Divine Right theory is that whilst the aforementioned roles should be the central concerns of the king, he cannot be compelled to act in accordance with them, because any form of compulsion on him would immediately invalidate the theory.

The other possible objection and the greatest problem for the Divine Right theory is the question of usurpation. This is not dealt with theoretically by James VI/I at all, and perhaps wisely so. After all, the central concern of the Divine Right theory is to make any challenge to the sitting monarch an immoral, impious and illegal act. Moreover, a successful challenge to a legitimate monarch can only end in two equally unpleasant possibilities. The first is to legitimize the usurper, but if this is done, then the whole concept of the Divine Right of Kings is seriously weakened, because this can act as an encouragement for the boldest kind of usurpation attempts, and the Divine Right theory can offer nothing substantial to oppose them. The second is that loyalty is not owed to the usurper. If the legitimate line still exists then loyalty to it remains and this must almost inevitably lead to civil war, which the Divine Right theory is seen as a guarantee against. If the

legitimate line does not still exist, then the even worse alternative of anarchy ensues.

Filmer, on the other hand, does deal with the question of usurpation. Similarly to the early Christian position, and thus with its implicit sense of encouragement, he makes the assertion that the act of usurpation is sinful, but the result comes about due to divine will, and thus a successful usurper in turn becomes king with absolute authority (Filmer 15). However, Filmer is silent on whether this is only the case if the overthrown king or line is extinguished in the usurpation attempt. But in his use of the device of divine will to explain the need of submission to the ruler, howsoever he reaches the throne, the validity of the latter looks likely.

It should be noted here though that, as will be seen, Dryden's work, whilst implicitly endorsing the Divine Right of Kings theory in terms of unlimited power and even the obligation of the subject to the usurper on the supposed or real extinction of the legitimate line, does not accept the transfer of sovereignty to the usurper when an heir to the legitimate line remains alive. In this, he reflects the dominant Tudor view on monarchy, which, as has been seen above, is as absolutist in its pretentions as James VI/I and Filmer are, but which on the question of usurpation felt that "[i]f the rightful king had been deposed, it was lawful to rise against his usurper and reinstate him" (Tillyard *SH*. 92) or his heir.

To close this section it must be pointed out once again that Dryden implicitly accepted the notion of the Divine Right of Kings in his dramatic works. He does not accept any externally imposed limitations of power on his monarchs, and holds that the legitimate heir to the throne remains legitimate even after a case of usurpation. Furthermore, whilst he deals with other kinds of monarchical descent than primogeniture, he does this, as has already been stated, to highlight the contrast between such systems and primogeniture, with the intention of exhibiting what he sees as the inherent superiority of the latter.

Now that the concept of the Divine Right of Kings, which underlies the plays of John Dryden, has been investigated, this work will move onto the concept

of the virtuous prince, which is also one of their central themes. One final point to note here is that, as has already been shown, James VI/I does not believe that his Divine Right theory gives a licence to immorality to the monarch. In fact, he feels that a monarch ought to always conduct himself virtuously and he expounds on what this means at some length. Consequently he, along with other more renowned thinkers, will also feature as a source as to what the princely virtues are in the next part of this work.

2.5 Princely Virtues

In order to understand what the expected portrait of an idealised prince would be in the time of Dryden, it is necessary to go back to the earlier Renaissance, when writers on politics dealt profusely with this theme. And the world they inhabited was much the same as Dryden's. As Richard Tuck points out:

> The life of an intellectual in seventeenth-century Europe, in both its material conditions and theoretical concerns, would have been immediately recognizable to a humanist of the early sixteenth century, but would have seemed very strange to a scholastic philosopher of the late Middle Ages (Tuck 115).

In turn, the Renaissance ideal of the ruler itself draws upon conceptual work in this field carried out in the ancient world. Such Renaissance political thought thus employs Greek and Roman ideas, since in early-modern Europe thinkers "eagerly welcomed the moral insights of the ancients" (Frame 144). The political scientist Quentin Skinner has looked at the Renaissance concept of the ideal ruler. He notes that it is based on moral virtue, as it was understood at the time, and which is drawn from the ancient world. The ruler is expected to exhibit this kind of moral virtue. Hence Skinner points out that, "[t]o the classical moralists and their innumerable followers, moral virtue had been the defining characteristic of the *vir*, the man of true manliness" (Skinner 48). The *vir* is the man who embodies *virtus*, and such a man is the ideal for the ruler of the state.

Nonetheless, the ancient concept of moral virtue was made up of specific individual virtues, which were interrelated. That is why Skinner also goes on to relate that "[t]he Roman moralists had bequeathed a complex analysis of the concept of *virtus*, generally picturing the true *vir* as the possessor of three distinct yet affiliated sets of qualities." For the first of these qualities, "[t]hey took him to be endowed" with what were regarded as "the four 'cardinal' virtues of wisdom, justice, courage and temperance". However, "they also credited him with an additional range of qualities that later came to be regarded as peculiarly 'princely' in nature." For the Roman moralist, "[t]he chief of these . . . was what Cicero called 'honesty', meaning a willingness to keep faith and deal honourably with all men at all times." Additionally though, "this was felt to need supplementing by two further attributes" which were "princely magnanimity" and "the other was liberality" (Skinner 44).

That this outlook was relevant to the Renaissance is made clear by Skinner when he goes on to reveal that "[t]his analysis was adopted in its entirety by the writers of advice-books for Renaissance princes" (Skinner 44). The guidelines laid out within these books form what an ideal prince would be for the Renaissance period, and as noted above, would still be relevant to a 17th century thinker. With the Renaissance, in terms of the ruler, Christian values are thus replaced with classical ones; although they do not always conflict of course, as ancient moral value is not at complete variance with Christian ethics. Still, Skinner notes that the only real additional relevance of Christianity to the forming of the ideal prince is the introduction of divine retribution following death (Ibid. 45).

The ancient concept of moral virtue, which is drawn upon in both classical times and the Renaissance as being most relevant to princes, originates in the Stoic school, founded by Zeno in the fourth century BC. This outlook was validated by the princes themselves, who, whilst often failing to live up to the Stoic standards nonetheless wanted to be associated with their aura. This is why it is claimed that Stoicism "[i]n particular . . . appealed to rulers" (Russell 241) and that Gilbert Murray has been able to profess that "nearly all the successors of Alexander—we

may say all the principal kings in existence following Zeno—professed themselves Stoics" (qtd. in Russell 241). Moreover, in relevance for the Renaissance, when princes were also expected to be in harmony with the dictates of the church, it should be noted that Stoicism then was not seen as an alternative to Christianity, but rather had become "more or less reconciled with" it (Frame 144).

2.5.1 The Literary Sources for Understanding Princely Virtue

Before going into detail on each of the specific virtues that were expected in a Renaissance prince, and which have been enumerated above, the sources from which this information on the virtues will be expounded will be looked at. The main sources that are drawn upon from the ancient world are those named by Dryden himself in his poem *Religio Laici* as "giant wits" (Dry. *SPs. RL*. 80) – that is Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, Seneca and Cicero (Ibid. 74, 79).

The most ancient of the sources are Plato and Aristotle. The influence of these two great philosophers on the Renaissance, as of other periods of history subsequent to ancient Greece, was profound. For Renaissance thinkers, they were both "models from whom to learn about statecraft" (Hale 276). From the later Roman period, an important source for an understanding of classical virtue is Plutarch. Due to his being best known for biographical masterpiece, *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* – which Dryden himself was involved in the translation of in the 17th century[45] – Plutarch may be thought of as more of a biographer than an ethicist. However, it is the case that his biographical work was written with a didactic moral aim (Freeman 560). Hence he is a useful source for determining what classical morality is. The two ancient thinkers whose ideas will be drawn most heavily upon in this study of ancient virtue in connection with the

[45] The resulting work is subtitled "Dryden Translation", yet it seems that the translation was done under Dryden's name, rather than by him. In the introduction to it by Arthur Hugh Clough, it is stated that Dryden's "name, it was presumed, would throw some reflected lustre on the humbler workmen who performed, better or worse, the more serious labour." (Plutarch xix) It is reasonable to assume Dryden did not spend too much personal effort on it himself, however he presumably read and endorsed it before it was published under his name.

ruler, however, are Cicero and Seneca. There are several reasons for this. The first is that both these thinkers belong to the philosophical tradition established by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, and are highly respectful of their great intellectual forefathers[46]. They are, however, in general a more suitable source than the great Greek philosophers themselves because they are able to express the latter's often complex ideas with a particular clarity, and it is this fact that helped to make them such popular writers in the Renaissance. Moreover, Cicero and Seneca interpret the writings of the great Greek philosophers through a Stoic lens[47], and the relevance of Stoicism to princely morality has already been mentioned. Indeed, both of these Romans are closely associated with Stoicism, even if Cicero unlike Seneca was not technically an adherent of the school[48]. Indeed, it was through these two thinkers that the Romans were "profoundly affected" (Tacitus 407) by Stoicism's doctrines.

A further reason to draw upon Cicero and Seneca as sources for the concept of princely morality is that they both had practical political experience, and they did not therefore enter into the question of political morality from a purely idealistic perspective. Cicero spent most of his adult life playing a prominent role in the senate helping to direct the affairs of the Roman Republic, for which at one point he was named "Father of his Country" (Plutarch 1054). Seneca, in conjunction with the army officer Burrus, during the early reign of Nero, was in *de facto* control of the empire, and helped rule over what has been described by Trajan

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[46] See for instance Sen. *Ls*. 192, Cic. *Tus*. 5 and Plutarch 1054.

[47] It should not be thought though that they undertake a great manipulation to represent the Greek ideas in this way, as it is the case that, for instance, "Stoicism can be seen as a systemized version of views which can be drawn from the argumentative positions Socrates adopts in the various dialogues of Plato" (Sen. *Ds*. xi).

[48] Cicero "rather affected and adhered to the doctrines of the New Academy" (Plutarch 1042), but even in his own great work on ethics, *De Officiis*, he reveals that his moral approach "follow[s] chiefly the Stoics" (Cic. *Of*. 9).

as "the finest period in the history of imperial Rome"[49] (qtd. in Sen. *Ls*. 9). The most significant reason to use Cicero and Seneca as sources for the concept of princely morality though is their esteemed status during the Renaissance for those dealing with ethical and political questions. During that period, for instance, it was especially thought that "the works . . . of Cicero could give ethical . . . guidance" (Hale 289). The importance of Cicero in Renaissance England can be appreciated from the fact that he appears in Shakespeare's play, *Julius Caesar*, whilst being "of no real importance to the play" (Boyce 107). Charles Boyce explains Cicero's presence in the work:

> Probably his inclusion [in the play] simply reflects [Cicero's] immense stature as a writer. Cicero was perhaps the most influential of all classical authors . . . In the Renaissance his works were well known to all educated people, and they influenced humanistic writers on a broad range of subjects. In Shakespeare's time Cicero was certainly one of the best-known ancient Romans, and it was therefore natural for the playwright to present him on stage (Boyce 107).

As for Seneca, in the Renaissance, he too was one of the main "heroes and guides" to contemporary thinkers (Frame 144).

The final point to be made on Cicero and Seneca as sources is to do with their focus on ethics. It is true that, of the two main peoples of the ancient Western world, the Greeks are generally seen as the more profound thinkers, even by the Romans themselves (Mossman IX). However, it has been thought that in spite of or due to this inferiority in abstract thought, the ethical standards of the Romans were higher, as they focus on the elements of philosophy that are not speculative but deal with how to live in a righteous way. For instance, Thomas De Quincy, who lived in a time when it was still acceptable to make moral distinctions between peoples, describes the Romans as "a people naturally more highly principled than the Greeks" (De Quincy 24). It explains why "[w]hen Stoicism . . . was introduced to

[49] That is before Nero took control of the government for himself and then gave his tyrannical predilections free reign (Sen. *Ls*.10).

the Roman world, . . . it was the moral elements in Zeno's teaching that attracted the chief notice" due to their "practical value" (*Meditations* 10). Cicero and Seneca certainly offer a more practical approach to philosophy, through their emphasis on ethics, than either Plato or Aristotle.

The Renaissance writers who will be used as major sources for this section are Baldassare Castiglione, James VI/I, Michel de Montaigne and Francis Bacon. The first of these, Castiglione, has been described as the "perfect gentleman" of the Renaissance (Hale 268). His masterpiece is *The Book of the Courtier*, which was first published in 1528. This book will be drawn upon to show how the morality thought necessary in a ruler was regarded in the Renaissance. As for James VI/I, he has already been introduced earlier in this work. It is important to restate, though, that whilst James asserts in his political theory that kings are beyond the judgement of their subjects, he nevertheless maintains that they ought to live up to a strict moral code, which makes his comments on what such a code consists of also relevant here. Pertinent to this, whilst his exposition on the Divine Right of Kings, *The True Lawe of Free Monarchies*, was drawn upon in the previous section, here it is his 1599 work *Basilikon Doron* which will be looked at. This work is "a manual written for his son's instruction" (Thompson 31), offering advice to his young son Prince Henry, who as we have seen did not live long enough to ever inherit the throne, on how to be a virtuous ruler.

The outlook on ethical rule of both Castiglione and James VI/I owes itself to the ancients. This is also true of Michel de Montaigne and Francis Bacon, whose statuses are more significant in the time of Dryden. Montaigne became an influential Renaissance figure because of his *Essays*. They were available in English from as early as 1603, and the fact that they had an influence on English thought is evidenced through the fact that "even Shakespeare" was influenced by him (Frame 312). Bacon, himself influenced by Montaigne, was also a towering figure in his time, and especially significant in England due to his nationality and historical prominence. As early as 1657, he was being described by Dr. William

Rawley as "the glory of his age and nation" (qtd. in Bacon xv), and his influential work by then had already found its "firm place in English literature"[50] (Bacon xx).

Of course, it can be objected that Montaigne and Bacon, far from being typical Renaissance thinkers, are actually the opposite, and it is with their ideas that the Renaissance outlook in fact comes to an end. However, whilst radical viewpoints of Montaigne and Bacon certainly exist, in their writings on ethical topics, they still belong in the company of Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, Cicero and Seneca. For Montaigne both Seneca and Plutarch were uniquely important[51] (Mont. 49, 50). As for Bacon, it can be seen from his writings that he regarded the classical world as a model for ethical behaviour (Bacon 73, 105). Additionally it is noteworthy that they, like their ancient forebears, had administrative experience of their own. Finally, it is of great importance that both Montaigne and Bacon have a direct influence upon Dryden himself. It has been said of Dryden that, as a writer, "without precisely innovating he knew how to make the best of current modes, and his critical essays . . . have a ranging personal manner, encouraged by Montaigne . . . and a racy sense of phrase typical of his century from Bacon" (Humphreys 67).

There is a final point to be made in reference to the sources used for an understanding of the concept of princely morality. It is to do with their relevance to princely government rather than to other types of government. It is the case that the use of these sources to define the virtues of an ideal monarch may be objected to on the grounds that the form of government with which they deal varies from writer to writer. However, despite their foci on different types of government, the underlying

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[50] He is also a figure with a political outlook that is similar to Dryden's in that, during the famous "Bacon-Coke struggle" at the beginning of the 17th century, Bacon exhibited his belief that "good government consisted in maintaining the royal prerogatives intact" against Sir Edward Coke who wished to enhance the status of the Common Law (Ashley 49).

[51] Indeed, for Montaigne, there could be no greater form of praise for him than to be known as the "French Seneca", which was how his contemporaries termed him (Frame 310).

morality needed for rule, whether alone or in cooperation with others, is for these thinkers approximately the same. For instance, it has already been noted that the outlook of the ancient world was "adopted in its entirety by the writers of advice-books for Renaissance princes"[52] and thus these writers, dealing mainly with monarchy, felt no apprehension in drawing upon works – particularly Cicero's – that were aimed at a republican audience.

2.5.2 Overview of Princely Virtue

This work will now look at what the requisite virtues for a Renaissance ruler are, but before examining them on an individual basis, it will look at the classical and Renaissance approach to virtue in general. To understand what virtue is, Cicero is apposite. For Cicero "the right affections of the soul come under the name of virtues" (Cic. *Tus.* 101). To discover these virtues, one must practice moral philosophy (Bacon 265). That will teach that to attain virtue "reason should restrain our rashness" (Cic. *Tus.* 105), therefore it involves the active suppression of the desires that are innate in human nature. It is in this way that virtue is to be distinguished from a mere inclination to goodness. Montaigne is explicit on this point, as he feels that "the word virtue . . . presupposes difficulty and struggle, and [is] something that cannot be practiced without an adversary (Mont. 174). This, as will be seen, is of especial relevance to the dramatic work of Dryden, as his most virtuous characters have to strive to master their passions in order to be good.

Making the virtuous life even harder is the fact that, to the Stoics, nothing external is to be expected from it. Russell has noted that "[t]o the Stoic, his virtue is an end in itself" (Russell 244). Seneca goes to some length to make this point very clear. He asserts that:

> [V]ertue is neither invited with gain, nor terrified with loss, and is so far from corrupting any with hope or promise, that contrariwise she commandeth men to spend all their substance on her, and for her sake . . . What reward shall I then have sayest thou, if I do this thing valiantly, or

[52] See above p.72.

> that thing gratefully? Only this, that thou hast done it; vertue promises thee nothing beside herself (Sen. *Ben*. 126).

Another important point about virtue is that although it is an end in itself, it is not without its benefits for its practitioners. It provides the zenith of all earthly hopes, which is happiness (Cic. *Tus*. 93). This is because the virtuous man is free from all concerns. By being indifferent towards the outside world, he finds a secure type of peace in being free from desire, and "content[ing] him self with his own" (Sen. *Ben*. 277). This leaves him with "a spirit great, exhaulted, and superior to the vicissitudes of earthy life" (Cic. *Of*. 63).

The happiness of virtue is also brought about through be a feeling of self-worth. Montaigne expresses his view that "[t]here is indeed a certain sense of gratification when we do a good deed that gives us inward satisfaction, and a generous pride that accompanies a good conscience" (Mont. 238). Additionally a virtuous man may become the focus of honourable fame, as virtue is worthy of great respect (Sen. *Ben*. 190-1). This point should not be overemphasized though. Honourable fame can be a by-product of virtue, but must never be an inspiration for virtue. The reason is pointed out by Montaigne who notes that "[t]o base the reward for virtuous actions on other men's approval is to rely on too uncertain and shaky a foundation" (Mont. 238), and Cicero notes that even when virtue is unrecognized by others its worthiness remains unaltered (Cic. *Of*. 17).

Having looked at the concept of virtue in general, this work will now examine the connection of virtue to the ideal ruler in particular. In Castiglione's work, his Lord Ottaviano[53] describes the perfect prince as one who is "very just, continent, temperate, strong and wise, full of liberality, magnificence, religion and clemency" (Cast. 262). The benefits of a virtuous ruler are felt by the members of

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[53] Lord Ottaviano dominates the discussion and is never gainsaid in Book 4 of *The Courtier*, from which all the quotations from that book is drawn in this work. As such, it appears that Castiglione respects Ottaviano's views here above those of the other disputants, and as such, it is only Ottaviano's speeches that have been used for this work.

the body politic, because the state itself, by being moulded by one becomes, as the Platonic Socrates[54] notes, "perfect" and "is therefore [itself] wise and valiant and temperate and just" (Plato 280). Traditionally, the great ruler has been seen as one with high prowess in war. The ideal ruler may indeed sometimes have recourse to warfare, in which he will require the virtue of courage, yet the task of the prince is to create a state that is at peace (Cast. 265).

If the state is ruled by one without virtue though, this involves the whole body politic in affliction. Aristotle has noted in relation to all men that "as man is the best of all animals when he has reached his full development, so he is the worst of all when divorced from law and morals. Wickedness armed is hardest to deal with . . . [and] man without goodness is the most savage [and] the most unrighteous" (Arist. *Pol*. 29). With such a figure at the helm of state rather than in ordinary life, the consequences are exponentially worse. That is why Castiglione's Lord Ottaviano makes a stark contrast between a virtuous and an evil prince. He asserts that "there is no good thing that is of such universal advantage as a good prince, nor any evil so universally noxious as a bad prince" (Cast. 251), the term a "bad prince" being of course synonymous with that of a "tyrant".

As has already been stated, in the Renaissance, the virtues that were given the most importance were, in the words of James VI/I "the foure Cardinall vertues" (James 174), which as noted above are wisdom, justice, courage and temperance. This work will now move on to examining each of these cardinal virtues in turn. In his *De Officiis*, Cicero defines each of these virtues, and below, each of them will be introduced with Cicero's definition before being analysed. As part of this examination, their opposites will also be looked at, as belonging to the moral province of tyrants. For now though, the centrality to Renaissance ethical thought

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[54] This work does not seem to be a suitable place in which to get into the discussion of how much the Socrates of the Platonic dialogues is the real historic Socrates and how much he is a character of Plato's imbued with Plato's own ideas. The formulation of the "Platonic Socrates" enables this discussion to be sidestepped without being deleterious to the truth, whatever it may be.

of their being four cardinal virtues is perhaps well illustrated, not only by James VI/I's mention of them made above, but by the fact that such a concept was lampooned as well as lauded. Whilst admittedly the mock "four cardinal virtues in demand at the court of [Queen Elizabeth I]" (Durant 136) are for courtiers rather than for the ruler herself, Roger Ascham caustically writes in verse that:

> Cog, lie, flatter and face,
> Four ways in Court to win men grace.
> If thou be thrall to none of these,
> Away, good Piers! Home John Cheese! (qtd. in Durant 136).

As for the real cardinal virtues though, the first of them is wisdom, and that will be looked at now.

2.5.3 Wisdom

Wisdom, to the Roman ethicists, is not simple knowledge. It is a virtue because it establishes the nature of righteousness. Thus for Cicero, wisdom is concerned "with the full perception and intelligent development of the true" (Cic. *Of*. 17). Wisdom enables those who have it to see above their limitations as individuals, and allow them to have a true understanding of all things (Sen. *Ben*. 289). For the ruler, wisdom is essential. This is because it enables him to rule correctly through reason without being misled through passion. Additionally, it acts as a constant check on any wayward tendencies that may be present in the ruler. This is why Castiglione's Lord Ottaviano claims that:

> [I]f a prince would perform [his] duties rightly, he must devote every study and diligence to wisdom; then he must set before himself and follow steadfastly in everything the law of reason (unwritten on paper or metal, but graven upon his own mind), to the end that it may be not only familiar to him, but ingrained in him, and abide with him as part of himself; so that day and night, in every place and time, it may admonish him and speak inwardly to his heart (Cast. 263).

Wisdom also enables the prince to see that since he rules for the people's real interest. It is the case to James VI/I that "wisedome" enables the ruler "as a good Physician" to "know what peccant humours his Patient naturallie is most subject unto, before he can begin his cure" (James 159). Just like a patient being seen by a doctor, the people are often unaware of what is best for them, so the ruler must rule for the people and not at their behest. Those who rule in the latter way are unwise because it enables disorder and chaos. As Plutarch puts it:

> [Those] men in public life, who, to gain the vain title of being the people's leaders and governors, are content to make themselves slaves and followers of all the people's humours and caprices . . . these men, steered, as I may say, by popular applause, though they bear the name of governors, are in reality the mere underlings of the multitude (Plutarch 960).

Another positive aspect to wisdom, that is important in both ancient and Renaissance thinking, is that it makes the ruler aware of the unreliability of what is called in Shakespeare's *King John* "[t]hat strumpet Fortune" (Shak. *KJ*. 3.1.62). Wisdom provides the ruler with an awareness that he is to rely on his virtue, and not "be not too confident in his fortune", he should not have a "foolish confidence" but instead be aware "that his power shall be always perduable" (Sen. *Ben*. 262). Another aspect of "trew Wisdom", as maintained by James VI/I, is that it also enables the ruler to understand the motivations behind those presenting the prince with information, and in this way the wise prince will not be misled (James 178).

The opposite of wisdom is ignorance, and it is a vice (Cic. *Of*. 19) which Seneca describes as "a sickness of the mind" (Sen. *Ben*. 296). Moreover, it is also the case that wisdom should not be confused with over-confidence. The virtuous ruler is aware that whilst wisdom is a seeking and finding of the truth, it is an error to be overly self-assured with what one knows (Cic. *Of*. 21).

2.5.4 Justice

The second cardinal virtue is justice. For Cicero, justice is concerned "with the conservation of organized society; with the rendering to every man his due, and

with the faithful discharge of obligations assumed" (Cic. *Of*. 17). It is a necessarily active virtue in that it also does not allow for passivity in the face of vice (Ibid. 25). Justice is requisite to a healthy body politic in order to avoid the horrors of tyranny, or what Aristotle calls"[w]ickedness armed" (Arist. *Pol*. 29). As such, it is, as James VI/I asserts "the greatest vertue that properly belongs to a King's office" (James 174). From Aristotle, it is clear that the concept of justice in the political realm is that which benefits the whole polity (Arist. *Pol*. 127-8), and Cicero concurs with this (Cic. *Of*. 45). Conversely though, Aristotle notes that a ruler "who rules over subjects . . . to suit his own interest and not theirs can only be described as a tyrant and his rule a tyranny" (Arist. *Pol*. 170).

Cicero also contends that justice must be fully inculcated in those who are to rule because those who are ambitious for power generally get "carried away by it so completely that they quite lose sight of the claims of justice" (Cic. *Of*. 27). This explains why, for James VI/I, when "making warres", it is essential to "[l]et first the justnesse of your cause be your greatest strength" (James 165), and not a desire for self-aggrandizement. Additionally, "when one begins to aspire to pre-eminence, it is difficult to preserve that spirit of fairness which is absolutely essential to justice" (Cic. *Of*. 67). This must not be allowed to occur, else tyranny will result.

Justice of course, also has a rigid side. Strict justice demands that the giver of justice be impartial and fulfil his role of fair judge to the full (Sen. *Ds*. 203), and for James VI/I this indeed is the essential task of a ruler under God (James 176). This remains so even, and indeed especially, when the ruler has been personally affronted by what is suspected of the accused (Sen. *Ds* 207). A related point is that justice requires the ruler take the time and effort to ensure that all his subjects have full access to a fair hearing. Thus James VI/I asserts "let every party tell his owne tale himselfe: and wearie not to heare the complaints of the oppressed" (James 176). Moreover, justice also entails fidelity to those to whom one is pledged (Cic. *Of*. 25) as well as requital for what one has been given (Sen. *Ben*. 81).

Justice is something that does not originate in a desire for vengeance. As Castiglione's Lord Ottaviano asserts, it is with the aim of "governing [the people]

well and giving them ease and rest and peace" that "all the laws and all the ordinances of justice ought to be directed" and thus "punishing the wicked" comes "not from hatred, but" from a desire "that they may not be wicked and to the end that they may not disturb the tranquillity of the good" (Cast. 266). That is why strict justice must be, as James VI/I asserts tempered with "such moderation, as it turne not in Tyrannie" (James 174) by being too severe and overly employed.

It is especially important that strict justice only allows for the punishment of a wrongdoer on that wrongdoer himself, and certainly not, as James VI/I points out "punishing [or] blaming the father for the sonne, [or] the brother for the brother; much lesse generally to hate a whole race for the fault of one" (James 189). The just ruler knows the correct limitations of his power. He is to be neither too exacting nor too weak. He knows the exact limits of his authority, and will not overstep them either way (Bacon 376-7). Indeed, James VI/I explicitly asserts that the ruler should aim at being "betwixt extreme tyrannie, delighting to destroy all mankind; and extreme slacknesse of punishment, permitting every man to tyrannize over his companion" (James 174). Once again, "the best rule is the golden mean" (Cic. *Of*. 133).

The opposite of justice is injustice, which, as Cicero notes, is found in the action "of those who inflict wrong" (Cic. *Of*. 25). The iniquitous of injustice depends upon its intention though. That is why Cicero remarks that:

> [I]n any case of injustice it makes a vast deal of difference whether the wrong is done as a result of some impulse of passion, which is usually brief and transient, or whether it is committed wilfully and with premeditation; for offences that come through some sudden impulse are less culpable than those committed designedly and with malice aforethought (Cic. *Of*. 27-9).

Another form of injustice is ingratitude and it is a vice (Sen. *Ben*. 79,147) in that it "breaketh the society of men, that divideth and destroyeth the concord whereby our weakness is supported" (Ibid. 308). In stark contrast to all claims of justice, there is even a type of ingrate who will even become the enemy of him by whom he is

helped (Ibid. 79). Nonetheless, however an ingrate happens to justify himself, the demands of justice still remain. Thus, those who "requite not" still remain "indebted" (Ibid. 80) to the one who showed them a favour.

2.5.5 Courage

The third of the cardinal virtues to be analysed is courage. For Cicero, courage is concerned "with the greatness and strength of a noble invincible spirit" (Cic. *Of*. 17), and reveals that a fundamental element of courage is "a contempt of death, and of pain" (Cic. *Tus*. 102). Similarly, the Platonic Socrates describes the effects of courage, as the response of "a brave man . . . in the hour of danger and stern resolve, or when his course is failing, and he is going to wounds or death or is overtaken by some evil", which will be that "at every such crisis [he] meets the blows of fortune with firm step and a determination to endure" (Plato 253). Cicero reveals there is also such a concept of "civic courage" (Cic. *Of*. 79) required by the ruler in times of peace, and this type of courage is even superior to that of the soldier (Ibid. 81) in that it gives no real scope to the attainment of glory. Instead, this civil courage reveals itself in the art of "diplomacy" by which "sometimes wars are either averted or terminated" but only justly and never simply "for the sake of public expediency" (Ibid. 81).

Courage has to be allied to the other virtues though. When it is not, it ceases to be a virtue in itself. For instance, Cicero affirms that "if the exaltation of spirit seen in times of danger and toil is devoid of justice and fights for selfish ends instead of for the common good, it is a vice" (Cic. *Of*. 65). That is why courage should not be confused with a "warlike ferocity", which Castiglione's Lord Ottaviano, also recognizes as a false virtue (Cast. 266). Whilst courage is vital in warfare, the only permissible end of warfare is to bring peace (Cic. *Of*. 37), and there are no other "righteous grounds for going to war" (Ibid. 41). Of course, in a just war, courage is the virtue that is most likely to bring its possessor a glorious reputation, but war must still remain undesirable to the courageous figure as can be seen from Seneca's analogy that "[i]t is the greatest disgrace for a physician that may be, to wish for business" (Sen. *Ben*. 266).

2.5.6 Temperance

The last of the four cardinal virtues is temperance. Cicero describes it as dealing "with the orderliness and moderation of everything that is said and done" and also views "self-control" (Cic. *Of*. 17) as a synonym for temperance. James VI/I describes temperance as "Queene" of all the virtues. He defines it as "that wise moderation, that first command all the affections and passions of your minde" (James 174). A disordered mind prevents the ruler from being able to act in accordance with truth. It is therefore especially important for the ruler to be temperate (Plato 242), especially if it is borne in mind that "stronger emotions" may be "aroused in those who engage in public life" thus their need to be temperate is also higher (Cic. *Of*. 75). Cicero distinguishes the temperate as those who "account moral rectitude as the only good", are "free from all passion" (Ibid. 69), and possess "indifference to outward circumstances" (Ibid. 75).

To get an idea of the importance of temperance as a virtue for the ruler, when Castiglione's Lord Ottaviano is thinking of the "goodness" that needs to be instilled "into [a] prince's mind", he lists "continence, fortitude, justice, [and] temperance" (Cast. 257), three of which are really the same virtue, which can also be classed as self-control. Indeed, as the foundation on which other virtues are based (Ibid. 257), James VI/I feels that a ruler without temperance is not "worthy to rule" (James 148).

The appetites are to be controlled by temperance (Sen.*Ben*. 277), with those who are unable to control them being unfit to rule (Plato 253). The effect of intemperate incontinence is poetically depicted by John Milton in his masque, known as *Comus*. In this work, there is the character of Comus who within an "ominous Wood", specifically "in thick shelter of black shade embow'red" (Milton *CEP*. *C*. 61-2) waylays "every weary traveller" and offers them an "orient liquor, in a crystal glass" (Ibid. 63-4). Those who accept it, through their "fond *intemperate* thirst" (Ibid. 66), undergo a metamorphosis with their "human count'nance", which is the "express resemblance of the gods" (Ibid. 68-9) being altered to "some brutish form of wolf or bear/Or ounce, or tiger, hog, or bearded goat/All other parts

remaining as they were" (Ibid. 70-2). They are not aware of "their foul disfigurement/But boast themselves more comely than before" and they remain where they are "[t]o roll with pleasure in a sensual sty" (Ibid. 74-5, 77). Milton can therefore be read as asserting that temperance is a necessity in a virtuous individual, and that the intemperate lose their humanity, which has a divine element, and become nothing more than beasts through their appetites. He appears to further illustrate this with the contrast of the Lady who does not succumb to his temptations and who admires "sober laws/And holy dictate of spare temperance (Ibid. 766-7).

Similarly, humility is also a part of temperance in that it prevents overweening pride (Plato 241). Moreover, just as humility enables the ruler to be open to constructive criticism from others, a lack of humility breeds flattery in its place, and debases the ruler's relationships with others. Justified praise and flattery are not to be confused. Flattery is praise that is given mendaciously (Bacon 253), and is held by James VI/I to be "the pest of all Princes" (James 169). A lack of temperance is also exhibited by behaviour dictated by other emotions. Plutarch describes Amulius as a "tyrant", and as such he showed a lack of temperance being "troubled in mind" by "either fear or passion" (Plutarch 29). For a specific form of intemperance, the passion of anger is examined by Seneca to show how dangerous it is in the ruler. After noting "how insignificant is the harm a private citizen can inflict" he then points out that, in contrast, "[w]hen emperors are moved to fury, war ensues" (Sen. *Ds*. 193). Thus rulers are under greater obligation to control this passion, and when they do not, they demean themselves (Ibid. 193). This does not mean that a virtuous king may never be angry, but that their anger will emerge in their concern for the state and not their own personal welfare (Ibid. 200).

With particular relevance to Dryden's plays there is the intemperance caused by passionate love, as his otherwise virtuous characters generally succumb to it. Unlike friendship, as will be evident below, passionate love is not held in high regard by the advocates of the traditional virtues. Aristotle treats with scorn "sexual cravings" (Arist. *Eth*. 232), and defines it in terms that appear to resonate in *Comus*

in that this particular excess of emotion, to Aristotle, "attaches to us not as men but as animals" and as such is "justly liable to reproach" (Ibid. 137). Montaigne is equally suspicious of "frantic desire" (Mont. 94) or "furious and reckless passion" (Ibid. 258), but the most apposite comments for this work on passionate love are made by Bacon. He avers that "[t]he stage is more beholding to Love, than the life of man. For as to the stage, love is ever matter of comedies, and now and then of tragedies; but in life it doth much mischief; sometimes like a siren, sometimes like a fury" (Bacon 357-8). Indeed, it is a "weakness" that "men ought to beware of" as it is "the child of folly" (Ibid. 358). Moreover, it "maketh men that they can no ways be true to their own ends" (Ibid. 359).

It must be pointed out here though that to Castiglione's Lord Ottaviano, the emotions do not need to be extinguished in a ruler, rather they must be brought into its proper subordinate relationship with virtue. That is why:

> [W]hen moderated by the temperance, the passions are helpful to virtue, like the wrath that aids strength, hatred of evil-doers aids justice, and likewise the other virtues are aided by the passions; which, if they were wholly removed, would leave the reason very weak and languid, so that it could effect little, like the master of a vessel abandoned by the winds in a great calm (Cast. 258).

The four cardinal virtues have now been examined. However, for the Renaissance prince, there were other virtues that were expected to be adhered to as well.

2.5.7 Piety

A highly significant one is that which can be entitled as piety (Sen. *Ds*. 213). This too has its roots in classical Greek ethical philosophy. It is the case that the Platonic Socrates makes clear that for his rulers, "we mean them to honor the gods and their parents, and to value friendship with one another" (Plato 238). In this way, it is seen that the concept of "piety" embraces not simply respect for divinity, but it also includes filial piety, and loyalty towards one's companions. As with other virtues, they are of course, not mutually exclusive. A link between

religious piety and humility is made in the play *Ajax* by Sophocles. In that play, Athena tells Odysseus:

> [S]ee that your lips never speak a haughty word against the gods, and assure no proud posture if you prevail above another in prowess or by store of ample wealth. For a day can humble all human things and a day can lift them up, but the wise of heart are loved of the gods and the evil are abhorred (Soph. *CPS*. 7).

The link between piety and modesty is reaffirmed with a Christian tone in the time of the Renaissance. Castiglione's Lord Ottaviano asserts that:

> God delights in and protects, not those princes who wish to imitate Him by displaying great power and making themselves adored of men, but those who, besides the power that makes them mighty, strive to make themselves like Him in goodness and wisdom, whereby they wish and are able to do good and to be His ministers, distributing for men's weal the benefits and gifts which they receive from Him (Cast. 262).

Indeed, for James VI/I the prince has a special responsibility towards God due to his unparalleled position in the polity (James 148). It is to be noted that the nature of religious piety that is virtuous is to be determined by the attitude of mind, not outward show (Sen. *Ben*. 15).

Filial piety entails "trew Humilitie, in bannishing pride . . . towards your Parents" (James 177), and showing "honour" to them (Ibid. 177). Another point to be made about filial piety is that it is not simply limited to the two people responsible for the prince's birth. Those who also play a parental role are also to be honoured by him (Ibid. 178). Following filial piety, there is paternal piety. Hence Cicero points out that it is also the case that those with children are obliged to support them next in importance to respecting their parents (Cic. *Of*. 61). The duties owed next to "the whole family" (Ibid. 61) are easily discernible from the above two points. However, marriage as a form of familial relationship to which a sense of piety is to be brought deserves a little more treatment. Thus, it will be

briefly looked at here. The role of the spouse is a significant one. After all, as James VI/I points out, the prince's wife "must bee nearer unto you, than any other companie" (James 170). The way in which she is treated therefore must reflect this. The spouse also deserves to be held in high regard, as it is through marriage that a family line is able to continue, and this is something "morally right" (Cic. *Of*. 131). This is even more so the case in monarchies whose head is determined by primogeniture, and James VI/I asserts that a failure to produce heirs is "a double fault, as well against his own weale, as against the weale of his people" (James 171). Indeed, James VI/I portrays the ruler's piety towards his spouse as being one of respect that does not however impinge upon his superiority. It should ensure "sweet harmonie" between the couple (Ibid. 173).

Finally the relationship of friendship needs to be looked at. For Aristotle, "friendship . . . is a kind of virtue, or implies virtue" (Arist. *Eth*. 51), and the basis of the relationship with friends is trust (Ibid. 264). The duty to friends includes "regarding them as being no less important and frequently more important than [one's] own self" (Sen. *Ls*. 52). This means being willing to face great difficulties, including death, for them (Ibid. 50). Friendship involves a complete rejection of flattery though. Thus Montaigne asserts that "admonitions and reproofs" are "one of the first duties of friendship" (Mont. 93).

2.5.8 Magnanimity

A further virtue for princes stressed in the Renaissance is that of princely magnanimity. This is best expressed through the office of what Seneca calls "mercy" and which he describes as a "virtue" (Sen. *Ds*. 214) in his essay *On Mercy*. This essay was not an idle piece of philosophic abstraction but was written for his master and his charge, the emperor Nero, to encourage him to be a magnanimous ruler. Most of what will be said of mercy in this work has been taken from that work of Seneca's. However, to introduce the virtue, the words of James VI/I seem most apposite, "[e]mbrace trew magnanimitie . . . in thinking your offendour not worthy of your wrath, empryring over your owne passion, and triumphing in the commaunding your selfe to forgive" (James 177).

For Seneca mercy is a virtue that operates when the question of punishment for wrongdoing arises. Seneca's definition of mercy shows its magnanimity it that it "consists in controlling the mind when one has the power to take revenge, or in the forbearance of a superior towards an inferior in determining punishment" (Sen. *Ds*. 214). Similarly, he also describes it as being an "inclination of the mind towards mildness in exacting punishment" (Ibid. 214) or of "consist[ing] in stopping short the penalty that might have been deservedly fixed" (Ibid. 214). Seneca avers that it is the greatest virtue that a ruler can have (Ibid. 206). Mercy is of especial relevance to rulers. Seneca expresses his view that while "[c]ruel punishment brings no renown to a king" (Ibid. 205), it is the case that "the quality of mercy . . . lends grace to an emperor" as "wherever he comes, he should make everything more tranquil" (Ibid. 204). In fact, the power of the sovereign makes mercy for him a particularly significant virtue and "lends a particular grace to" him because for a ruler, mercy "has greater scope and more generous opportunities for revealing itself" (Ibid. 193). It is also particularly suited to his station as the head of the state. This is because the granting of life is the "doing what only a sovereign may; for although one can take life even from a superior, it can never be granted to any but an inferior" (Ibid. 193).

The monarch has the greatest scope for showing himself magnanimously merciful when the wrong to be punished is one that has been committed against himself. In fact, if he is unable to show mercy in such a case, then he has no claim to the virtue of mercy whatsoever (Sen. *Ds*. 208). On the other hand, for Seneca, "nothing is more splendid that an emperor who has been wronged yet has taken no vengeance" (Ibid. 208). Indeed, he should even "show far more willingness to be forgiving of wrongs done to him than of those done to others" (Ibid. 208) as they are those for which only his own consideration matters. Of course, there are cases in which this puts his own safety and thus the safety of the state at threat. But he should only act with strict justice rather than mercy in such cases, and even then he must judge with dispassionate wisdom before coming to the conclusion that punishment is required. Even then he is to "reduce" the punishment if he can,

however (Ibid. 207). Obviously, just as magnanimous mercy is a virtue, it has its counterpoint in cruelty which is a vice (Ibid. 214). This vice is one to which a readiness to use methods of torture "beyond what is human or credible" (Ibid. 215) is linked.

2.5.9 Further Princely Virtues

Cicero sees "kindness and generosity" as virtues. In fact, for him, there is not anything that "appeals more to the best in human nature" (Cic. *Of*. 47) than these virtues. Liberality is the virtue that is connected with giving. It is also the subject of Seneca's work *On Benefits*, in which Seneca refers to liberal giving as a "benefit" (Sen. *Ben*. 127). As a virtue, the act of liberality is tied to its intention and not to its substance (Ibid. 13, 15). A benefit is also given as an end in itself (Ibid. 138), and not therefore in the hope of worldly advantage (Ibid. 128, 143). In fact, all that it to be considered "is the profit of the receiver" (Ibid. 135). A benefit is also to be given willingly (Sen. *Ben*. 34), and preferably without being asked for it first (Ibid. 32). Moreover, "most pleasing are those courtesies which are given with a kind, smiling, and pleasing countenance" and which involve not the exulting over the receiver, but rather with a display of "benignity and favour" (Ibid. 47). In helping others, their real interests must be considered, and it is the case that "many benefits have a harsh and distasteful appearance" despite their goodness (Ibid. 212). Honesty too is generally regarded as a virtue, as dishonesty is "best to be eschewed" in a prince, in the view of James VI/I. For Montaigne too, "[l]ying is indeed an accursed vice" (Mont. 31); Seneca would agree with both through his assertion that "neither there is any vice, which is not villainous, nor any good which is not honest" (Sen. *Ben*. 276).

2.5.10 Virtue and the Ruler

Two further points need to briefly be examined in connection to the virtuous ruler. The first is the question of his bloodline. It may be a benefit to virtue, but it is certainly not a requirement. Castiglione's Lord Ottaviano avers that "to be good and wise ought to be deemed possible for a king of noble race, inclined to worthiness by his natural instinct and by the illustrious memory of his

predecessors" (Cast. 261). However, there is no necessary natural tendency to virtue, which is something that "can be learned" (Ibid. 264). Thus a ruler who is not a Porphyrogenitus, but rather is elected to the crown, can still be virtuous. Also, the failure of virtue in the ruling house is a distinct possibility.

The second is the question of the standard of virtue in the ruler. Aristotle ponders the question, in connection with "the relations of ruler and ruled" as to "whether or not the virtue of the one is the same as the virtue of the other". On the supposition that they are "the same", and that thus "the highest quality of excellence is required of both", Aristotle recognizes that this leads to the problem of "why [one should] completely rule and the other completely obey" (Arist. *Pol*. 51). The completely contrary supposition is also unacceptable to him. Aristotle therefore concludes that in a polity, "both ruler and ruled must have a share in virtue but there are differences in virtue in each case" (Arist. *Pol*. 51). What this means is that the preponderance of virtue is not to be balanced, but rather that "[t]he ruler must have ethical virtue in its entirety; for his task is the chief maker and reason is the chief maker." The others only need "what amount is appropriate to each" (Arist. *Pol*. 52). Consequently, the ruler is expected to be the most moral being in the polity.

2.5.11 Masculine Prowess and Physical Attractiveness

Some final values will be looked at in connection to the concept of the virtuous ruler in the Renaissance that are seen as positives, but yet are not actual virtues. One is masculine prowess. In the ancient world, and the Renaissance, this trait was looked upon with great respect. Thus in Sophocles play, Ajax, the character of Ajax laments, following his madness, the loss of his former condition, in which he had been "the bold, the strong of heart, the dauntless in battle with the foe" (Soph. *CPS* 12). However as noted above, whilst courage is a virtue, recklessness and love of battle is not, so masculine prowess is only wanted in the ideal ruler, should it be tempered in the right manner.

Another trait is physical attractiveness. It was expected that a virtuous ruler would also be a handsome one in perfect physical form. Consequently, to give a

historical example, it is unsurprising that Eusebius who was "Constantine [I]'s first biographer" and to whom the emperor was a "hero" (Norwich *Byz. EC*. 34) describes in his *Life of Constantine*, the impression Constantine made even before he was emperor, when Eusebius himself first met him in 296. He writes that at that time:

> [Constantine] commanded the admiration of all who beheld him by the indications he gave, even then, of imperial greatness. For no one could be compared with him in grace and beauty of form, nor in stature; while in physical strength he so far surpassed his contemporaries as to fill them with terror (qtd. in Norwich *Byz. EC*. 34).

The implication of this idea, and one still widely held to in the late Renaissance, was that disability or ugliness and moral weakness were interconnected. For instance, Francis Bacon asserts that "[d]eformed persons are commonly even with nature; for as nature hath done ill by them, so do they by nature; being for the most part (as the Scripture saith) 'void of natural affection'; and so they have their revenge of nature" (Bacon 426). He goes on to claim that "[c]ertainly there is a consent between the body and the mind" (Ibid. 426). It must be pointed out that Bacon does accept that this "natural inclination" can be overcome by "discipline and virtue" – and gives as examples of "deformed" people who have become "excellent persons" (Ibid. 427) Aesop and Socrates among others – but to Bacon, on the whole, disability almost always produces amoral and untrustworthy characters (Ibid. 426), and Montaigne would have agreed with him (Mont. 356).

With these viewpoints, Bacon and Montaigne are echoing a view of the disabled that has a long history in Western culture and literature. As early as the *Iliad*, a pejorative portrayal of a character with a disability can be found in the physically ugly and morally deficient Thersites[55]. One particularly striking example

[55] See the *Iliad* 2.247-8, 250-5, 311, 314.

of the concept of a connection between physical and moral perfection, and the concomitant right to rule is made in Shakespeare's play *King John* by Constance, the mother of Arthur of Brittany, whose physical attractiveness is attested to by numerous characters[56], and whose goodness is clearly evident in the progression of the drama. On being told by her son to "be content" (Shak. *KJ*. 3.1.44) following her learning of the marriage pact made between John and King Philip II of France, she retorts:

> If thou that bidd'st me be content wert grim,
> Ugly, and sland'rous to thy mother's womb,
> Full of unpleasing blots and sightless stains,
> Lame, foolish, crooked, swart, prodigious,
> Patched with foul moles and eye-offending marks,
> I would not care; I then would be content,
> For then I should not love thee; no, nor thou
> Become thy great birth, nor deserve a crown.
> But thou art fair, and at thy birth, dear boy,
> Nature and Fortune joined to make thee great (Shak. *KJ*. 3.1.45-54).

It is also necessary to consider the question of tyranny in the light of the above virtues. It has already been noted that tyranny is an almost inevitable outcome of usurpation. However, tyranny is just as able to appear in polities in which the succession to the throne has been legitimate, through one of the forms – hereditary, election or designation or marriage – which have already been looked at. What marks the tyrant from the virtuous prince is, as has been alluded to above, the nature of his rule. Whilst a prince who follows the virtues enumerated above is by doing so a good prince, a prince who behaves in the opposite way is a tyrant. The idea that tyranny is necessarily connected with vice is clear from its being a

[56] For instance Constance herself speaking of his "native beauty" at (Shak. *KJ*. 3.4.85), and calling him "pretty" at (Ibid. 3.4.91) amongst other references of hers. Also Pembroke's lament for Arthur's "princely beauty" at (Ibid. 4.3.36), Bigot concurring on his "beauty" at (Ibid. 4,3,40), and Hebert referring to his "beauteous clay" at (Ibid. 4.3.145).

derogatory term. Maurice Latey, who authored a book on tyranny, makes the following observation on it:

> The word 'tyrant' when it first made its appearance among the Greeks of Asia Minor in the seventh century B.C. was probably a neutral term interchangeable with 'basileus' or 'king'. But it very soon took on a derogatory colour, particularly in the hands of the aristocratic and oligarchic authors of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. It has since been used largely as a term of abuse. Any ruler one does not like is described as a tyrant (Latey 17).

For particular relevance to an understanding of Dryden, Latey, as an example notes that "[t]o some Englishmen, King Charles I will seem a tyrant and to others Cromwell" (Latey 18). In attempting to define tyranny, Latey avers that tyranny "is only a meaningful concept when it stands in contrast to some accepted standard of constitutional government." However, "this standard is not fixed and absolute, but subject to development" (Ibid. 21). To illustrate his second point, he notes that "in societies where oppressive laws and customs are traditional we cannot properly call the ruler a tyrant unless he abuses even those strict laws or makes them more severe" (Ibid. 21).

For this work on Dryden, though, there is an "accepted standard of constitutional government" by which tyrants can be judged, and that is the standard of the virtues listed above. Any gross deviation from them is the mark of a tyrant, especially as regards the virtues of justice and temperance. As for the opposite case, in the real world, the concept of the purely virtuous prince remains just a concept, as no ruler has ever been able to live up to the exceeding high standards demanded of him. Nonetheless, those rulers who make something of an approach to the standards, such as the legitimate ones in Dryden's work, can still be viewed as virtuous ones.

CHAPTER 3

3. THE ANALYSIS OF THE PLAYS

3.1 *Marriage à la Mode* (1671)

The first play to be examined in this section in order to investigate Dryden's political project is *Marriage à la Mode*. This play came out in 1671. The important point to note about this drama, before commencing on its analysis, is that, as P. A. W. Collins has noted, it "is a 'mixed' play" in which "scenes from a half-length love-and-honour verse play are interspersed with scenes from a half-length comedy" (Collins 162). Derek Hughes elaborates on this point, noting that it "juxtaposes a comic plot of frustrated adultery with a heroic plot featuring a more direct version of the restoration theme, in that it portrays the deposition of a usurper (the Sicilian tyrant Polydamas) and the return to power of the rightful king, Leonidas" (Hughes 132). It is almost solely the "heroic plot" of the play that will be investigated below, as it is within this plot that Dryden's political project and outlook are particularly evident. As has already been mentioned, the play deals with usurpation and legitimacy. It is the first of the plays to be studied in this work, as the legitimacy of "the rightful king" is based on the traditional European primogenital form of succession.

3.1.1 The Characters and Legitimacy

There are two characters in the play that make a claim for the throne. They are Leonidas and Polydamas. Leonidas is the "rightful king" mentioned above, and his legitimate right to the throne comes simply from his having been left a "royal orphan" (Dry. *TPs*. 192) upon the death in battle of his father Theagenes, the former king of Sicily. However, he does not automatically inherit the throne due to the usurpation of Polydamas. Nonetheless, this usurpation does not void his legitimacy, and thus, when he takes power for himself at the end of the play, he can validly speak of his "right restored" (Ibid. 261). As for his rival Polydamas, he is the king when the action of the play commences. The character of Amalthea

however reveals in the first act of the drama how Polydamas came to power when she tells her friend Artemis about it. In opening the subject she tells Artemis, who is "ignorant" of these affairs, "[t]hat this Polydamas, who reigns, unjustly/Gained the crown" (Ibid. 192). She relates that under the previous legitimate king, Theagenes, "a rebellion in the heart of Sicily/Called out the king to arms" (Ibid. 192). Polydamas accompanied Theagenes into a battle, which he won at the cost of his life. As he was dying though, he left "[h]is widow queen, and orphan son" in the "care" of Polydamas (Ibid. 192). It was at this point that "false Polydamas" betrayed the trust of his late king, and "with [Amalthea's] father's help/ . . . so gained the soldiers' hearts,/That in a few days, he was saluted king". After this "[h]e marched his army back to Syracuse" (Ibid. 192). Just before he "was to enter" the capital, the "royal orphan" was smuggled away to safety (Ibid. 193), and the usurper has been in control of the state ever since. Polydamas himself is of course aware of the iniquitous way in which he came to power, so he later uses the euphemism that he "assume[d]/This crown" (Ibid. 206) to disguise it.

Polydamas does have one potential source of legitimacy though, and it is that whilst he assumed the throne as a usurper, he can regard his success in doing so as proof of the support of the gods, and thus regard it as his by divine right. As has already been seen, there were theoretical arguments prior to Dryden's time that would have allowed for such an outlook. It is certainly the case that when Polydamas asks Hermogenes of the origin of Leonidas and Palmyra, he dishonestly answers "From whence you had/Your sceptre, sir; I had them from the gods" (Dry. *TPs*. 195). Hermogenes does not believe that Polydamas is the legitimate king, but in his use of this form of flattery, which is accepted by Polydamas, it can be understood that others would regard Polydamas as legitimate in this way.

It should also be noted that the character of Palmyra may also have a technical claim to the throne through her being the daughter of Polydamas. It is the case that Leonidas, even after he has learned the truth of his birth, still appears to regard Palmyra as a princess. He tells her, in reference to their youth and their present, that "Fortune, once more, has set the balance right;/First, equalled us in

lowness; then, in height" (Dry. *TPs*. 244). However, from the tone of the play, it is extremely unlikely that Dryden intended Palmyra to be regarded as a candidate for the throne as he does not explore this question within the play at all, and as such Palmyra will not be regarded as a candidate for the throne in this work either.

As this work argues that there is a connection between virtue and legitimacy in Dryden's plays, the characters of Leonidas and Polydamas will be evaluated in terms of virtue to show that Leonidas, as the rightful king, is also a more virtuous figure than Polydamas, the illegitimate usurper.

3.1.2 Analysis of the Virtues of the Character of Leonidas

Overall, it appears that Leonidas is regarded by other characters in the play as a figure of great virtue. Eubulus makes explicit reference to Leonidas' virtue. Eubulus tells Palmyra that he has watched as Leonidas has grown up, and has reported to "[t]he queen his mother" who lives secretly in a convent Leonidas' "increasing virtues" (Dry. *TPs*. 244) that have manifested themselves with his increasing maturity. Whilst two other significant characters do not make explicit reference to Leonidas' moral worth, the impact Leonidas has upon them strongly suggests that Leonidas is a figure of manifest virtue to them as well. The first of these two figures is Amalthea, a person described by Rhodophil as being "all goodness and generosity" (Ibid. 191). She falls in love with Leonidas at first sight, but does not lose her feeling for him when he apparently turns out to be an ordinary individual (Ibid. 229). That Leonidas should be the object of adoration by as virtuous a character as Amalthea without any ulterior motive exhibits the profound impression that the Leonidas can make on others, and surely this is for his moral aura. In fact, Amalthea is so affected by Leonidas that she becomes the figure who both saves his life and ensures him the throne, by revealing his true identity to Palamede and Rhodophil (Ibid. 260).

Polydamas is also initially struck by Leonidas when he first beholds him, as will be examined later. However, his regard does not end after he has ceased to consider him as his son, though this regard is changed into one combined with something approximating fear. For Polydamas Leonidas has "greatness in his looks

. . . /That almost awes me" (Ibid. 235). This "greatness" presumably refers to Leonidas' great moral aura. It should also be noted that Leonidas himself would seem to concur with Polydamas' regard of him, though in doing so he can perhaps be accused of intemperate arrogance. Nonetheless, when Leonidas is told by Polydamas that he is his son, he is able without difficulty to accept it. He reveals to Polydamas his thought that:

> I wonnot, sir, believe
> That I am made your sport;
> For I find nothing in myself, but what
> Is much above a scorn (Dry. *TPs*. 196).

It is a virtuous nature that would prevent him from being in any way contemptible. However, in order to understand clearly why Leonidas is to be regarded as a highly virtuous character it is necessary to evaluate him through the classical virtues expected of a ruler that have already been enumerated in this work. As the first of these virtues is wisdom, and as it is also a "cardinal" virtue, Leonidas will be evaluated by it first.

Leonidas manifests the virtue of wisdom. For instance, he is perceptive in that at the end of the play, he understands that it is love towards him which cannot be requited that prompts Amalthea's slightly cryptic message of congratulations and her own future intent to Leonidas (Dry. *TPs*. 263). He is also wise enough to keep this observation to himself. He also exhibits wisdom in his concern for the welfare of the state. For example, towards the end of the fifth act, he realizes that the change in leadership in the state may not pass completely smoothly, and this explains why he makes the prudent decision that Amalthea should have charge over her brother, "[t]ill our new power be settled" (Ibid. 262). In fact, it is a wise concern for the state that motivates Leonidas into challenging Polydamas. Once he has learned that he has a right to the kingdom, he wishes to remove Polydamas from power. However, it is not just for his own sake, but also for the people of Sicily that he wishes to act. He tells Palmyra, who opposes his intention, that "[i]f

now the execution I delay,/My honour, and my subjects, I betray" as he believes that his ascension of the throne will benefit them too (Ibid. 246). That such a remark is not simply hyperbolical hypocrisy is made clear when Leonidas is faced with a choice between protecting others and protecting himself. In the fifth act, as the elderly Eubulus and Hermogenes are about to be led off and tortured to reveal the name of the king they claim to be acting for, Leonidas himself enters. He appeals to Polydamas to torture him in their stead as he reveals that he is in fact the person for whom "they suffer" (Ibid. 259). As such, he is clearly willing to sacrifice himself for the good of his followers; strongly implying that he has the virtuous wisdom required in a ruler that causes him to place the interests of his subjects above his own.

Furthermore, Leonidas exhibits a virtuous sense of justice with the extraordinary immediacy with which he takes action against Polydamas, when he has learned of the respective truths of their positions. Rather than being willing to negotiate with Polydamas for a settlement, he shows that his sense of the justice of his cause will only allow for precipitate action. Leonidas also evinces justice in his behaviour towards Palmyra. He has pledged himself to her, so even when his supposed father orders him to break his tie to her, he will not, as will be seen below. In secret, he reaffirms to her that "[t]hink not that time or fate shall e'er divide/Those hearts, which love and mutual vows have tied" (Dry. *TPs*. 211). When Palmyra is threatened with death for not breaking her attachment to Leonidas, Leonidas himself resolves to "die with her" rather than be blackmailed into unjustly giving her up.

Nevertheless, it has to be noted here that Leonidas is not a flawlessly virtuous character, and, much as Dryden's other legitimate heroic rulers that will be studied in this work, he is capable of unjust actions when under particular emotional strain, although as has been noted earlier, injustice committed through passion is far less blameworthy in terms of classical virtue. Leonidas' injustice is evidenced at various points in the play, and all but one of them are initiated by his passionate love for Palmyra. The first occurs after his dispute with Polydamas,

when Leonidas sees Palmyra with Argaleon in attendance on her. That arouses both his sense of chivalry, when Palmyra begs him to "[f]ree me from this bad man" (Dry. *TPs*. 208) and his jealousy when he learns through hints that Argaleon has been attempting to woo her (Ibid. 209). This causes Leonidas to unjustly and intemperately use his newfound rank against Argaleon by resorting to tyrannous behaviour to get him to leave Palmyra alone. After Argaleon has attempted to get Palmyra to leave with him, the following dialogue takes place:

> *Leonidas*. Go yourself,
> And leave her here.
> *Argaleon*. Alas, she's ignorant,
> And is not fit to entertain a prince.
> *Leonidas*. First learn what's fit for you; that's to obey.
> *Argaleon*. I know my duty is to wait on you.
> A great king's son, like you, ought to forget
> Such mean converse.
> *Leonidas*. What? A disputing subject?
> Hence, on my sword shall do me justice on thee (Dry. *TPs*. 209).

Additionally, when he has been exiled from the court, Leonidas unjustly begins to suspect Palmyra's feelings for him (Ibid. 229) and upon seeing her for the first time after he has been exiled, he accusatorily remarks to her that, for their love, "you, I fear, are changed" (Ibid. 236). He is also unjust in refusing to understand Palmyra's predicament in being torn between her love for Leonidas and her duty towards her father. Thus when she tells Leonidas that "My love is mine, and that I can impart;/But cannot give my person, with my heart" (Ibid. 245), Leonidas with a lack of compassion replies that, "[y]our love is then no gift:/For when the person it does not convey,/'Tis to give gold, and not to give the key" (Ibid. 245). Leonidas also fails to see that Palmyra will be placed in an awful predicament if he goes ahead with his plan to overthrow Polydamas by violence. Her understandable opposition to this plan leads Leonidas to accuse her of not loving him at all (Ibid. 245). Also, when Palmyra vows to die rather than marry the man Polydamas chooses for her, and by doing so enable her and Leonidas to be united "hereafter"

(Ibid. 245), Leonidas remains unmoved and unfairly condemns her again by exclaiming "I much fear,/That soul, which could deny the body here/To taste of love, would be a niggard there" (Ibid. 245). When it is clear that Leonidas intends to pursue his plot, and Palmyra persists in her opposition to what she sees as his "black intent" (Ibid. 246), Leonidas also undeservedly accuses her with "Your father's life is more your care, than mine", and which Palmyra refutes by exclaiming that "'[t]is not, though it ought to be" (Ibid. 246). In fact, he is so unnerved by her loyalty to her father that he unjustly has her physically restrained to prevent her from telling Polydamas of his intention (Ibid. 245-6).

There is another case of Leonidas' acting tyrannically and with far less emotional justification. Towards the beginning of the play, soon after having been accepted as Polydamas' heir, Leonidas begins to act tyrannically towards Argaleon with only the provocation of Argaleon having cast doubt – and ironically correctly – on Hermogenes claim that Leonidas is Polydamas' son. The following short exchange takes place between them:

> *Leonidas*. You ask too many questions, and are
> [*To* ARGALEON
> Too saucy for a subject.
> *Argaleon*. You rather over-act your part, and are
> Too soon a prince.
> *Leonidas*. Too soon you'll find me one (Dry. *TPs*. 197).

Escalation is only prevented by Polydamas' intervention. From his behaviour, it appears that Leonidas does have a tyrannical streak within him which could mar him as a virtuous king. Of course, it may well be the case that such behaviour would not be seen as inappropriate in a manly prince by Dryden's audiences, yet by the strict demands of Renaissance virtue, he is still blameworthy in these instances.

Leonidas does, however, certainly exhibit the cardinal virtue of courage. Even Polydamas regards him as courageous, as after he has been made aware that Leonidas is not his son, he retains respect for him and especially considers him to be "brave" (Dry. *TPs*. 224). When Leonidas has been exiled from the court, his

love for Palmyra gives him particular courage to face the consequences of return. As he puts it himself in intending to go to see her, "were a god her guardian,/And bore in each hand thunder, I would venture" (Ibid. 232). Moreover, at the time of his capture by Polydamas' soldiers, he is as Palamede notes just "[o]ne, and unarmed, against a multitude", but he still attacks one of the guards before he is seized (Ibid. 247). When he is being led away for execution off-stage, it is learned from Amalthea that rather than meekly accepting his fate:

> Leonidas,
> Broke on the sudden from his guards, and snatching
> A sword from one, his back against the scaffold,
> Bravely defends himself
> . . .
> Against a host of foes (Dry. *TPs*. 260).

In addition to courage in such engagement, Leonidas is also virtuously unafraid of death. Indeed, once he has been captured by Polydamas, rather than beg for his life, Leonidas wishes for nothing but "a speedy" (Ibid. 247) execution.

Additionally, as for the cardinal virtue of temperance, save for the exceptions mentioned above, Leonidas shows himself to be in possession of it. For example, his humility is revealed when he asserts that Hermogenes deserved "a worthier son" (Dry. *TPs*. 223) than himself. He also humbly does not wish to be raised to the nobility of Sicily without having earned the right to such a rank himself (Ibid. 224). Moreover, Leonidas is a man of piety. This can be seen when Polydamas first interviews the rural-bred Leonidas, and cautions him not to be "dazzled with the splendour,/And greatness of a court" (Ibid. 196). In his reply to this warning, Leonidas reveals his piousness by exclaiming "I need not this encouragement;/I can fear nothing but the gods" (Ibid. 196). Leonidas also later reveals his belief that "the gods design[ed] my humble birth" (Ibid. 224) and he feels that he should be contentedly accepting of their will in this. And when it turns out that he is actually royally born, once he regains his throne, he first piously offers sincere gratitude "to the gods" (Ibid. 261).

Leonidas' piety is also of the filial kind. Even though his actual father dies when he was still an infant, Leonidas exhibits his sense of filial piety twice in the play towards two men whom he believes at different times are his father. They are Polydamas and Hermogenes. When Leonidas regards the former as his father, his disposition towards filial piety is revealed by the internal conflict he faces in blocking Polydamas' will solely over the question of Palmyra, against whom were he to break his tie he would cease to act virtuously. When Polydamas makes clear he wishes Leonidas to marry Amalthea, Leonidas refuses although he claims there is not "duty wanting in me/To obey a father's will" (Dry. *TPs*. 206). He also reveals his sense of disturbance in "[a]ppear[ing] more guilty to myself, than you" in that he is in a state of "disobedience" (Ibid. 208) to Polydamas. Leonidas' tendency to filial piety is reaffirmed by him though, when he pathetically claims:

> I mourn
> To death, that the first thing, you e'er enjoined in me,
> Should be that only one command in nature,
> Which I could not obey (Dry. *TPs*. 208).

When Polydamas threatens Palmyra, Leonidas is unhappily aware that in his defence of her, his "piety" is in question and he does not want to do that "which misbecomes a son" (Ibid. 220). Moreover, when he is finally pushed to the point where he draws his sword in her defence, he is aware that filial piety must prevent him from acting. Thus, instead of attacking Polydamas, he hands the sword to him, exhorting him to kill him and piously remarking that "[y]ou are my father; therefore I submit" (Ibid. 221).

When it has been revealed that Palmyra is really the lost child of Polydamas, Leonidas reassumes, though incorrectly that Hermogenes, the man who has brought him up, is his father. Then Leonidas virtuously exclaims that he wishes "[t]o pay that reverence to which nature binds me" (Dry. *TPs*. 223) – that is filial piety to Hermogenes – and he then kneels to him. Being then told by Argaleon that

a person "should kneel/To nothing but to heaven, and to a king" (Ibid. 223), Leonidas piously replies:

> I shall never forget what nature owes,
> Nor be ashamed to pay it; though my father
> Be not a king, I know him brave and honest,
> And well deserving of a worthier son (Dry. *TPs*. 223).

Leonidas also directs his feeling of filial piety to Eubulus, whilst aware that Eubulus is not his father. He has learned from Hermogenes though that it was "Eubulus,/Who bred you with the princess" in infancy before he "[b]equeathed you to my care" (Dry. *TPs*. 232) Thus, Leonidas kneels to Eubulus and exclaims "My foster-father! let my knees express/My joys for your return!" (Ibid. 232).

Leonidas is, in addition, magnanimous. Upon being victorious in his palace coup, Leonidas announces in respect of Polydamas and Argaleon:

> And as I would be just in my rewards,
> So, should I in my punishments; these two,
> This, the usurper of my crown, the other,
> Of my Palmyra's love, deserve that death,
> Which both designed for me (Dry. *TPs*. 261).

However, he does not go ahead and have them executed. Rather, he tells Polydamas that:

> You are Palmyra's father; and as such,
> Though not a king, shall have obedience paid
> From him who is one. Father, in that name
> All injuries forgot, and duty owned (Dry. *TPs*. 261).

In this way, he wins Polydamas' loyalty, acquisition in his assumption of the monarchy (Dry. *TPs*. 261), and permission to marry Palmyra (Ibid. 262). As such, he also shows filial piety towards the man who will become his father-in-law.

Moreover, rather than have Argaleon put to death, he instead makes Amalthea guard of her "brother's life" (Ibid. 262). He even promises that Argaleon may win "more grace" from himself depending upon what Argaleon's "future carriage" is (Ibid. 262). He only condemns him to "be a prisoner always" when Argaleon shows no sign of repentance or acceptance of the new regime. Leonidas is merciful enough not to have him executed even then though (Ibid. 262).

At this point in the play, Leonidas also virtuously gratefully offers liberal "recompense" to those whose loyal support has enabled him to defeat Polydamas' guards and become the new monarch (Dry. *TPs*. 261). Furthermore, Leonidas is clearly an honest person in that, once Leonidas has learned of his right to the throne, he still does not hide his plan against Polydamas from the latter's daughter (Ibid. 244-5), even though this turns out to be to his disadvantage.

Finally for Leonidas, it is to be noted that he has a striking physical appearance, as would be expected in an ideal Renaissance prince. Not only is it the case that towards the end of the play, it is learned from Eubulus of Leonidas' "great resemblance to the king his father" (Dry. *TPs*. 243), but it is also the case that it is due to his striking appearance as the legitimate prince that Leonidas cannot remain concealed, even when he does not know of his own true identity. When Polydamas is looking for his heir, he reveals that:

> Those, I employed, have in the neighbouring hamlet,
> Amongst the fishers' cabins, made discovery
> Of some young persons, whose uncommon beauty,
> And graceful carriage, made it seems suspicious
> They are not what they seem (Dry. *TPs*. 193).

3.1.3 Analysis of the Virtues of the Character of Polydamas

As ruler, Polydamas naturally feels that although he has usurped the crown, his heir is legitimate, and will have the hereditary trappings of legitimacy. Thus, ironically, it is Leonidas' appearance and manner that finally helps to convince him that Leonidas is his son. However, it is instructive that when he first sees Leonidas

and Palmyra, he is not able to tell which of them his heir is as both Leonidas and Palmyra have the physical appearance connected with a legitimate ruler (Dry. *TPs*. 194). The reason Palmyra also has the beauty expected in a virtuous Renaissance ruler is presumably due either to her being indeed the daughter of a king, albeit a usurping one, or it is because she is going to become queen through her expected marriage to Leonidas.

Although Polydamas is a usurper, and has numerous negative qualities, it is noteworthy that he has many virtues too. Before examining them, it is to be observed that he possesses them presumably because Polydamas is, before the revelation of Leonidas' identity, the only possible king and he is therefore deserving of obedience. Indeed, Polydamas seems to be a ruler accepted by the people. There is no civil disturbance mentioned from recent times, and it is only the revelation of Leonidas as the legitimate king that causes an uprising towards the end of the play. In fact, at the beginning of the drama, Palamede praises Polydamas' "royal prudence" and also notes the "people's love" (Dry. *TPs*. 194) that he commands. It is true though that Palamede is unlikely to be an expert on the situation as he has only just returned from abroad, and it is possible that the people's "love" actually comes from the dread of living in a terror state. The issue of Polydamas and the terror state will be looked at as part of the evaluation of his virtue, which will begin now.

Polydamas does not exhibit the cardinal virtue of wisdom, and this is evident from his poor judgement of the character of others. Argaleon is the figure in whom Polydamas most places his trust and love (Dry. *TPs*. 197). However, he loves and places his trust in a figure who does not give paramount importance to his interests. This is clear from the beginning of the play when Palamede asks Rhodophil about Argaleon, to which Rodophil replies:

> *Rhodophil*. Yes, and as proud as ever, as ambitious and as revengeful.
> *Palamede*. How keeps he the king's favour with these qualities?
> *Rhodophil*. Argaleon's father helped him to the crown: besides, he gilds over all his vices to the king, and, standing in the dark to him, sees all his

> inclinations, interests, and humours, which he so times and soothes, that, in effect, he reigns.
> (Dry. *TPs*. 191).

As for when Polydamas considers Leonidas to be his son, Polydamas unwisely does not try to understand the depth of the feeling Leonidas has for Palmyra, and rather resorts to vicious blackmail to try and separate him from her. He then, after learning Palmyra is his daughter, does the same in reverse by "enjoin[ing] his daughter/To accept" (Dry. *TPs*. 231) the love of Argaleon.

Polydamas is also generally an unjust figure. He is especially so for having usurped the crown to which he had no right, which Amalthea describes as a "wicked" act (Dry. *TPs*. 192). His injustice in this act is compounded by the fact that in his usurpation he also ungratefully "betrayed" the "trust" of Theagenes, who had placed his wife and son under his protection almost certainly with the expectation that his son would succeed him (Ibid. 192). However, in a lesser case, Polydamas does show he can be just by gratefully recompensing a good that has been done to him. When he believes Leonidas is his son, Polydamas intends that he should marry Amalthea, and does so in recognition of the support her father had given him in his seizure of power. Polydamas explains that such recompense is "to what gratitude obliges me" (Ibid. 206). Nonetheless, Polydamas is on the whole capable of great injustice. When he has learned who Leonidas really is, he orders the legitimate king to be put to death as speedily as possible (Ibid. 260).

Polydamas does manifest the cardinal virtue of courage in that he does not fear death. When Leonidas appears to threaten to have Polydamas executed as a "usurper", Polydamas does not beg for his life, and instead seems willing to accept his punishment (Dry. *TPs*. 261). Polydamas though is intemperate, and he himself is aware of it. When he has attempted to force Leonidas to marry Amalthea, Polydamas admits to Leonidas that "I know/I lie as open to the gusts of passion,/As the bare shore to every beating surge" (Ibid. 207). He is presumably arrogant, as this would explain the presence of flattering "fawning followers" (Ibid. 224) in his court, this work already having shown connection between arrogance and flattery

in Renaissance ethical thought. However, Polydamas is sufficiently humble to be able to recognize Leonidas' superior virtue. When the latter has achieved success in his palace coup, he then pardons Polydamas and promises him "obedience" as father to Palmyra. In response, Polydamas rather incredibly exclaims, "O, had I known you could have been this king,/Thus god-like, great and good, I should have wished/To have been dethroned before" (Ibid. 261).

Polydamas also evinces piety. When he is struggling with Leonidas over the question of Amalthea, Polydamas, in an aside, reveals his view that his difficulty with his supposed son stems from divine displeasure over his usurpation of the kingdom, and he believes that the gods "are just/In punishing" him this way (Dry. *TPs*. 207). Moreover, towards the end of the play, Polydamas' troubled conscience is revealed. Once the kingship has been assumed by Leonidas, Polydamas feels free to admit that "'[t]is now I live,/And more than reign; now all my joys flow pure,/Unmixed with cares, and undisturbed by conscience" (Ibid. 261). Additionally, Polydamas exhibits a certain degree of paternal piety in that he loves both Leonidas and Palmyra when he believes each one to be his child (Ibid. 198, 223). However, his rough usage of them over his choice of marriage partner for them severely limits his potential as a pious parent.

In terms of the virtue of magnanimity, Polydamas is similarly mixed. He does not punish Hermogenes for having misled him into thinking Leonidas is his son (Dry. *TPs*. 222). Moreover, towards Leonidas himself, when he no longer regards him as his son, he restores his liberty despite Leonidas having stood up to him and even having drawn his sword on him (Ibid. 223). Polydamas magnanimously makes clear that Leonidas has his "pardon for" (Ibid. 224) his indiscretions, and in fact even offers to ennoble him, and provide him with "a large pension" (Ibid. 224). However, Polydamas can also be uncompassionate too. With the person he believes to be his son, he proves unable to benevolently give way when his will is challenged. He refuses to accept Leonidas' rejection of Amalthea, whom he intends for him, and instead asserts "I am a king,/And I will be obeyed" (Ibid. 207). A dispute between the two men follows which is only finally ended

with Polydamas' merciless and tyrannical declaration that "my resolves are firm/As fate, that cannot change" (Ibid. 208). Even the submission of his sword and his pathetic wish to die with Palmyra does not make Leonidas an object of compassion to Polydamas, who, once he has secured Leonidas, still orders his men to cast Palmyra adrift to die at sea (Ibid. 221). Polydamas also later proves to be uncompassionate when his daughter pathetically pleads for mercy for Eubulus and Hermogenes after they have been caught with Leonidas (Ibid. 258). This is of course in marked contrast to the legitimate Leonides, when Polydamas in turn falls into his hands.

Most especially, Polydamas also manifests cruelty, which is the opposing vice to magnanimity. For instance, he has no reservations about torturing his subjects when he deems it necessary, as in the case of the thief who had in possession some items belonging to his wife. This man was "thrice racked" (Dry. *TPs*. 193) to makes sure he revealed all the knowledge that he had. In addition, Polydamas later orders the disguised Hermogenes to be tortured and this cruelty is only prevented through Polydamas' distraction in noticing Leonidas (Ibid. 195-6). In the fifth act, after the discovery of the plotters, the arrested Eubulus and Hermogenes, in spite of their age are commanded by Polydamas to be given over "to the torture" (Ibid. 258) in order to find out the name of their pretender. Moreover, their "torture" is sadistically to "be doubled" when Polydamas is reminded of Hermogenes' "imposture" (Ibid. 259) with Leonidas, despite having earlier already having forgiven Hermogenes for this.

Aside from direct torture, Polydamas also appears willing to use other cruel punishments. For example, when Polydamas finds that Leonidas and Palmyra will not renounce their love for one another, he passes the following pitiless spectacle of a "sentence" (Dry. *TPs*. 220) on Palmyra:

> First, in her hand
> There shall be placed a player's painted sceptre,
> And, on her head, a gilded pageant crown:
> Thus shall she go,
> With all the boys attending on her triumph;

That done, be put alone into a boat,
With bread and water only for three days;
So on the sea she shall be set adrift,
And who relieves her dies (Dry. *TPs*. 220).

In fact, Polydamas through his cruelty has created something of a terror state. That is why Eubulus, when he comes to the capital, does not feel he can speak openly in the street to Leonidas of his true parentage. He feels that the street "[t]hough almost hid in darkness is not safe" (Ibid. 232) and takes Leonidas to Hermogenes' nearby house instead. A terror state also involves the use of spies, and these are active in Polydamas' Sicily (Ibid. 219), the use of spies being for Castiglione's Lord Ottaviano a symbol of a tyrant (Cast. 263).

Polydamas can be virtuously liberal, however. When Palamede is introduced to Polydamas by Rhodophil, the king says, "You are welcome./I knew your father well, he was both brave/And honest; we two once were fellow-soldiers/In the last civil wars" (Dry. *TPs*. 194). He then goes on to promise "[a]ttend the court and it shall be my care/To find out some employment, worthy you" (Ibid. 194). Moreover, while Polydamas believes that Hermogenes had deliberately tried to hide his son from him and thus in Polydamas' own words "intended not to make me happy", he still announces that Hermogenes is "to be rewarded for the event" (Ibid. 198) of the supposed discovery of his son.

Polydamas certainly seems to possess manly prowess not only through his love of "hunting" (Dry. *TPs*. 191), but more so in that he is a man who despite the opportunity of usurpation that he could have made had he remained in the capital when his king Theagenes went off to the battle in which he was slain, "was too warlike" to remain there. And this was the case even though he had "the just excuse to stay behind" of being newly married. Instead, he put aside ambition and "his bride, and the new joys of marriage,/And followed [his king] to the field" (Ibid. 192). Lastly, whilst no direct reference is made to Polydamas' appearance, Amalthea's remark upon seeing Leonidas for the first time that he is of "goodly

shape and feature" and that "he much resembles you" (Ibid. 196) implies that Polydamas is also of striking appearance.

Having examined the two contenders for the crown, Leonidas and Polydamas, it is clear that Leonidas is the more virtuous of the two, this fact even, as has been noted, being evident to Polydamas himself. Hence, the legitimate claimant and the most virtuous claimant are the same figure, and as such the play is able to function as part of Dryden's political project in connecting legitimacy to virtue.

3.1.4 Further Political Points in *Marriage à la Mode*

There are several other political points made in the play which also fit with Dryden's legitimist outlook and these will be discussed now. The first of these points is that, within the play, legitimacy inspires loyalty. Hermogenes for having "been loyal" to the legitimate house has had to live in obscurity in the countryside. Upon his discovery, he also "stand[s] prepared to suffer" (Dry. *TPs*. 195) at the hands of Polydamas rather than switch his loyalty to the usurper. Later in the play, his loyalty, along with that of Eubulus, to Leonidas makes them willing to face torture rather than reveal who the the pretender actually is (Ibid. 259). Leonidas' legitimacy also makes Rhodophil and Palamede, who have previously been loyal to Polydamas, change sides. Once they have learned from Amalthea that Leonidas, who has been led away for execution and is now fighting "[a]gainst a host of foes" for his life is the "long-lost king" (Ibid. 260), their response is instantaneous:

> "*Rhodophil*. Madam, no more
> We lose time; my command, or my example,
> May move the soldiers to the better cause.
> You'll second me? [*to* PALAMEDE]
> *Palamede*. Or die with you: No subject e'er can meet
> A nobler fate, than at his sovereign's feet" (Dry. *TPs*. 260-1).

The play also makes the point that legitimacy cannot be alienated. Hence, on assuming power, Leonidas speaks of his "right restored", and tells Polydamas that he is "not a king" (Dry. *TPs*. 261). The legitimate ruler also seems to have a

hereditary predisposition to rule, which bolsters the concept of legitimacy. Leonidas, when he has learned he is not Polydamas' son, and thus assumes he is an ordinary person, still dreams of what he would do were he ruler (Ibid. 225):

> And yet I have a soul
> Above this humble fate. I could command,
> Love to do good, give largely to true merit,
> All that a king should do: But though these are not
> My province, I have scene enough within,
> To exercise my virtue (Dry. *TPs*. 225).

These just thoughts imply that the ability to rule is naturally inculcated within him without his being aware of it. He later gives added weight to this by expressing that "Though meanly born, I have a kingly soul" (Ibid. 230).

The play also shows that usurpers desire legitimate succession, thus exhibiting the importance of legitimacy once again. Whilst Polydamas has gained the crown through a *coup d'etat*, he wants to pass it on through his own bloodline, and that is why he is so motivated in his search for his lost child. He wants "to find an heir" (Dry. *TPs*. 192) and is not interested in passing the crown on to his apparently loyal follower Argaleon. In other words, whilst Polydamas is happy to seize power for himself, he wishes to pass it on in the traditional form of succession through birth.

Other points about usurpation are made in this play, and these points reinforce the importance of legitimacy. The first two points show that usurpation creates instability, thus they implicitly promote the more stable system of legitimate primogeniture, which even in the Sicily of this play may well not have been overthrown were Leonidas not still an infant at the time of his father's death. The play depicts one problem of usurpation as that it encourages ambition in others. Usurpation, by destroying the natural line of legitimacy, allows others not born in the purple to be able to dream of the crown themselves, and thus substantially undermines the stability of the usurped state. This can be seen in the example of Argaleon, whose loyalty to Polydamas is compromised by his ambition

to succeed him. The chance of a male heir to Polydamas being found is thus a disturbing threat to Argaleon (Dry. *TPs*. 192), and he does all in his power to disrupt the search and cast doubt on the newly discovered Leonidas (Ibid. 196-7). Although he is ironically correct, Argaleon is unaware of this and acts in his own interest and not in that of Polydamas. He is thus made disloyal by the nature of the usurped state, and this will even lead him to act towards an effective regicide when Leonidas' true identity has been revealed (Ibid. 259-60).

The play also shows that usurpation leads to civil war. When Palamede meets Polydamas he promises him "unquestion'd honesty/And zeal to serve" him, but he also indirectly reveals the damage that usurpation does to a state. Palamede expresses a wish not to have to serve in "civil wars" like his father who supported Polydamas, but rather in "foreign" ones (Dry. *TPs*. 194). Usurpation leads to civil war in that the nation will be divided between supporters of the usurper and those of the legitimate house. Additionally, it can be seen from the drama that owing to the more insecure hold that a usurper has on the crown, he or she has to act in a more tyrannical way than a legitimate monarch to ensure control[57]. This helps to explain Polydamas' numerous examples of tyrannical behaviour in the play. Also Polydamas himself links his ruling with toughness and absolutism. He says to the man he believes to be his son, "Leonidas, there is no jesting with/My will: I ne'er had done so much to gain/A crown, but to be absolute in all things" (Ibid. 207).

Additionally, usurpers are shown as not deserving the same regard as legitimate kings. Although in her youth, Palmyra, as has been noted, "was ever taught 'twas base to lie" (Dry. *TPs*. 219) by her supposed father Hermogenes, Hermogenes feels no such imperative in speaking to Polydamas as king. Firstly, he claims to him that "Eudoxia is dead, so is the queen,/The infant king, her son, and Eubulus" (Ibid. 195), while the truth is that all of them live but Eudoxia. He then dishonestly assures Polydamas that Leonidas "is yours" and sacrilegiously swears

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[57] In ancient Greek drama, there is the example of Creon in Sophocles' *Antigone* who also feels a need to act tyrannically through insecurity despite, in his case, his being the legitimate ruler of Thebes.

that this is the truth "[b]y all that's holy!" (Ibid. 196). Then, once he has been believed, he mendaciously protests to him that Palmyra is his own, in spite of Argaleon's assertion that Leonidas and Palmyra could be "twins" (Ibid. 197).

A great problem for the Divine Right theory is the question of usurpation. Whilst it is certainly the case that any attempt to overthrow a monarch is both illegal and sacrilegious, if it is attempted and is successful, the status of the new ruler is unclear. It can be argued that he or she has come to the throne with divine approval and thus is the new divinely protected ruler, as in the early Christian case. Also, the succession of a usurper's children opens the question of whether they have a divine right to the throne as they are the legitimate offspring of a ruler. This play ignores this question by presenting Palmyra as the future queen through her intended marriage to Leonidas rather than in her own right.

The play also makes brief references to the questionable loyalty of people of faith within the comedy parts of the plot. When Doralice is rejecting the advances of Palamede, whom she has learned is soon to be married, she repels him with the following analogy that reveals the way in which religious figures were seen by Dryden in relation to the monarchy. She tells him:

> I declare I will have no gallant; but if I
> would, he should never be a married man; a married man
> is but a mistress's half servant, as a clergyman is but the
> king's half-subject (Dry. *TPs*. 254).

Moreover, later when Palamede goes off to fight in the interest of the king, it is not monarchical power he is solely thinking of, but also Doralice, with whom he is in love. Thus he fights much like a medieval knight. As he himself expresses it, "I'm sure we fight in a good quarrel:/Rogues may pretend religion and the laws;/But a kind mistress is the Good Old Cause"[58] (Dry. *TPs*. 243). In expressing himself this

[58] This, in the definition of Zwicker and Bywaters was "a phrase widely applied in Restoration pamphlet literature to the radicalism and republicanism of the 1640s and 50s" (Dry. *SPs*. 549).

way he elevates his kind of chivalrous fighting over what he sees as the dishonest conflicts entered into by religious fanatics and those concerned with constitutional questions, such as those who faced Charles I in the field during the English Civil War.

3.2 *Aureng-Zebe* (1675)

The next play to be examined is *Aureng-Zebe* (1675). This play will be examined as it deals with two new kinds of princely legitimacy, that of designation and the Islamic form of hereditary right to all of a ruler's male children. The drama itself, as has been mentioned before, is based on actual events. As can be seen from the setting of the play, they took place in the Mughal Empire's capital of Agra in the year 1660[59], (Dry. *TPs*. 276). Whilst *Aureng-Zebe* appeared on the English stage while the actual emperor Aurangzeb was still alive, it is highly unlikely that the Great Mughal ever heard that he was being represented in a play in a far-off European capital. Even less likely is it that he ever obtained a copy of the drama. Had he done so, it is quite improbable that he would have recognized himself in the hero of it, as the Aureng-Zebe of the play has been drawn within the framework of an idea of a prince that its intended European audiences would recognize. That is, he is presented as a classical heroic figure. Thus, whilst it would not necessarily be just to evaluate the historical Aurangzeb, or his Indian contemporaries, by the moral standards of European Renaissance, it is certainly permissible to evaluate Dryden's fictional characters – which happens to be based on these people – through this light. This helps to explain the view that, in the words of George Saintsbury, "the historical part of the scenario is of no great importance" (Ibid. 266) in *Aureng-Zebe*.

The play begins in India where a civil war is raging between princely brothers who fight to replace their father on the throne. Their combat results from one of the legitimate forms of deciding on succession that, as has been seen, was used in Islamic lands. They launched into this precipitate action in the belief that

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[59] Historically, they took place in 1658-9. See Gascoigne pp. 209-220.

their father was about to die, and on finding he has recovered his health have not desisted from their uprisings. There are four brothers, three of which are fighting to replace the Emperor (Dry. *TPs*. 279), and one, Aureng-Zebe who loyally fights in defence of his father (Ibid. 279).

3.2.1 The Characters and Legitimacy

As a result of this conflict, there are in the play six potential candidates for ruler of the empire. One is the existing Emperor whose right to rule comes from his occupation of the throne. His four sons all have a claim to become absolute ruler due to the possession of an equal hereditary right to the throne, as in the Islamic tradition. In the case of this play, as will be seen, this is somewhat complicated by questions of primogeniture. Two of the Emperor's sons – Aureng-Zebe and Morat – have the further claim of being designated successors – at different times of course – by the existing Emperor. The other figure who angles for power, which is temporarily successful, is the wife of the Emperor, Nourmahal, who acts on behalf of her son Morat, and perhaps for herself. The various potential routes to the throne that materialize in this play will all be examined in detail later on.

As with the other plays, an evaluation of the princely virtues of the characters who have any right or claim on the throne will be made, and this will show that at the end of the play Dryden has ensured that the most virtuous character is also the legitimate one. The analysis will entail the Emperor, Nourmahal, and the sons Aureng-Zebe and Morat[60]. There is no need for an analysis of the other two sons Darah and Sujah, who are both older, as they do not directly appear in the drama, and have almost no role within it, and as they are reported to have been defeated by Aureng-Zebe at the beginning of the first act. This enables the drama to focus more manageably on the remaining rivalry between Morat and Aureng-Zebe. Nonetheless, it is learned later on that the other brothers do indeed remain alive. Aureng-Zebe tells Morat that "[o]ur two rebellious

[60] Aureng-Zebe's and Morat's mother are not the same though, the former's being Zelyma (Dry. *TPs*. 298) – who does not appear in the play – and the latter's being Nourmahal.

brothers are not dead:/Though vanquished, yet again they gather head" (Dry. *TPs*. 310). After that, strangely, no further mention is made of them.

Now the characters that have a right to or claim on the throne will be examined. As it has been noted, Darah and Sujah are not significant in the play, and thus only Aureng-Zebe, the Emperor, Morat and Nourmahal will be examined in depth here. Aureng-Zebe will be examined first as he is presented clearly as closest to the idea of the model Renaissance prince.

3.2.2 Analysis of the Virtues of the Character of Aureng-Zebe

Overall, Aureng-Zebe is a highly virtuous figure. The first description of Aureng-Zebe in the play is offered by Arimant, and it is clear that he is a virtuous prince. Arimant declares:

> Aureng-Zebe [is] by no strong passion swayed,
> Except his love, more temperate is, and weighed:
> . . .
> In council cool, but in performance bold:
> He adds the virtues in himself alone,
> And adds the greatest, of a loyal son (Dry. *TPs*. 279).

As the play progresses, the justness of this description becomes evident, although the exception in the case of "his love" also becomes evident, and causes the major straying of Aureng-Zebe from the path of strict virtue. Aureng-Zebe also unwisely seems to expect virtue to be rewarded and not to be an end in itself (Dry. *TPs*. 286). However, it is significant to an evaluation of Aureng-Zebe's virtue that even when he has come to believe that virtue remains unrewarded, he does not stray from its path. This is even more impressive when it is realized that behaving virtuously does not come too easily to him, and involves a degree of effort. At the end of the first act, having renounced his intention to fight his father's will, Aureng-Zebe exclaims that "[s]trong virtue, like strong nature, struggles still;/Exerts itself, and then throws off the ill" (Ibid. 289).

Aureng-Zebe is, on the whole, a just figure. His conflict with his brothers is a just war in that he fights for the stability of the state and not for himself. His

sense of justice also allows him to be humbly aware of owing his throne to Arimant. He makes no attempt to downplay Arimant's sacrifice for him (Dry. *TPs*. 349). With Nourmahal, even when Aureng-Zebe calls on divine retribution for Nourmahal's incestuous desire, he also feels the need to add, in justice, in his plea to the "Heavens" that "I, too, deserve to die, because I please" (Ibid. 322).

Aureng-Zebe displays one major failing in terms of virtue which is that he makes unjust accusations. For instance, he unjustly assumes that Nourmahal, through "the witchcraft of a second bed" is responsible for his cold reception at court (Dry. *TPs*. 286). Considering the actual truth though, which is that it has resulted from his father's passion for Aureng-Zebe's beloved Indamora, this supposition is more understandable. More significantly, at various points throughout the play, Aureng-Zebe unfairly treats loyal Indamora with suspicion. In doing so, he commits the same lapse in virtue as Leonidas in *Marriage à la Mode*. Aureng-Zebe is spurred to his injustice through his jealousy (Ibid. 331), and it is only really in this way that he fails to act by the dictates of virtue. Moreover, it should be restated that within the Renaissance moral code, a lapse in virtue through passion is less culpable than a premeditated lapse. The instance of Aureng-Zebe's jealousy towards Indamora concerns her distance towards him upon his return to Agra. As Aureng-Zebe has not the slightest idea of its actual cause – that is his father's attempted wooing of her – he, once again understandably, suspects her of having lost her feelings for him (Ibid. 287). He would have persisted in this course, had the distraught Indamora not told him about his father, in order to clear her name (Ibid. 288).

Later, after his fall from grace, Aureng-Zebe learns from Morat that it is "for Indamora's sake" (Dry. *TPs*. 325) that his life is to be spared. This causes him to regard Indamora as having abandoned him to focus her love on Morat instead (Ibid. 330). Aureng-Zebe once again has some justification for his suspiciousness as he cannot conceive that his self-centred brother Morat can be prevailed upon without the promise of something in exchange (Ibid. 331). Aureng-Zebe is temporarily reconciled with Indamora, but jealousy returns to him in the next act.

He comes to believe that Indamora and Morat were lovers by the time of Morat's death. This supposition is once again comprehensible considering that Morat dies in her arms, and her words to him at that time, which Aureng-Zebe overhears, are "Oh, stay; or take me with you when you go;/There's nothing now worth living for below" (Ibid. 347). She, of course, is unaware of Aureng-Zebe's proximity or the fact that he is alive at the time. When she learns of his presence though, the two converse, and his supposition causes Aureng-Zebe to unjustly accuse her:

> You thought me dead, and prudently did weigh;
> Tears were in vain, and brought but youth's decay.
> Then, in Morat, your hopes a crown designed;
> And all the woman worked within your mind (Dry. *TPs*. 348).

He feels she became his "lover" (Dry. *TPs*. 349), and in his distraught state, he does not listen to Indamora's defence – that her actions were motivated by fear of death (Ibid. 349). Aureng-Zebe virtuously comes to realize how erroneously he has acted, however, and he virtuously begs her forgiveness, revealing to her that "I grant my suspicions were unjust" (Ibid. 351). Of course, she forgives him, and this allows them to be betrothed.

One last understandable instance of unjust suspicion on the part of Aureng-Zebe concerns the motives of Morat, once he has secured all of Agra. He fears that Morat "will by parricide secure a throne" (Dry. *TPs*. 334). Nevertheless, there is nothing in Morat's actions that suggest he intends to put his father to death. After all, he manages to secure absolute power – albeit temporarily – whilst his father remains alive.

Aureng-Zebe certainly exhibits the cardinal virtue of courage. He is a brave fighter and is thus lauded by the Emperor for his "valour" which "[n]one can enough admire, or praise too much" (Dry. *TPs*. 299). Moreover, Arimant reveals that "Morat was thrice repulsed" and "thrice by you [i.e. Aureng-Zebe]" (Ibid. 289) when he attempted to storm Agra at the beginning of Act II. Aureng-Zebe reveals his courage most evidently in his final battle with Morat, in which he is initially

thought to have been slain. In this battle he exhibited a willingness to be in the thick of the fighting as well as a fearlessness of death (Ibid. 339). He manifests his lack of a fear of death also within Agra when it has been opened to Morat. Aureng-Zebe refuses any "attempt to fly", his resolution to stay in the city being described by Dianet as "walk[ing] with eyes broad open to your grave" (Ibid. 303). Later, he hardens himself to face his "inevitable death" (Ibid. 320) at the hands of Morat. Furthermore, Aureng-Zebe's courage is manifested in his acting for his men rather than for himself in battle (Ibid. 289), and in his willingness to face the potentially fatal consequences of standing up to his father in word but not in armed rebellion (Ibid. 302).

The other cardinal virtue of temperance is also generally displayed by Aureng-Zebe. Arimant says of him at the beginning of the play that "[a]ll grant him prudent" (Dry. *TPs*. 282). Nonetheless, Aureng-Zebe, as with all the other major characters in the play, is subject to violent passion. In his case though, he virtuously struggles against it (Ibid. 347). Aureng-Zebe also exhibits temperate humility. He is willing to give up his claim to the inheritance of power, should Morat "set [their] father absolutely free" (Ibid. 310).

Aureng-Zebe is certainly a pious individual. As far as filial piety is concerned, Erskine-Hill rightfully describes Aureng-Zebe as "the loyal heir" (Erskine-Hill 55). Indeed, right from the beginning of the play, it is made clear that Aureng-Zebe, as Arimant notes, is "loyal" (Dry. *TPs*. 281, 282) to his father the Emperor, and it is the Emperor's army that Aureng-Zebe heads (Ibid. 281), inspired in his battles by "duteous care" (Ibid. 282). Aureng-Zebe's first address to his father evidences his filial piety. Having knelt to him and kissed his hand, he announces:

> My vows have been successful as my sword;
> My prayers are heard, you have your health restored.
> Once more 'tis given me to behold your face;
> The best of kings and fathers to embrace.
> . . .
> That, which my conquest gave, I could not prize;

Or ’twas imperfect till I saw your eyes (Dry. *TPs*. 284).

It is filial piety rather than the piety of a subject towards his sovereign that truly motivates Aureng-Zebe. When the Emperor refers to himself as the king, Aureng-Zebe tells him that “[y]ou have a dearer name,—a father too” (Dry. *TPs*. 285). He also tells him that “’tis in” the “name” of “son” that “Heaven knows, I glory more,/Than that of prince, or that of conqueror” (Ibid. 285).

Aureng-Zebe has such great filial piety that when Indamora tells him that a “great” man “whom both of us did trust” violated that trust and attempted to seduce Indamora, Aureng-Zebe does not want to accept the only possible identity of such a figure. He tells her “I’ll not believe my father meant:/Speak quickly and my impious thoughts prevent” (Dry. *TPs*. 288).

Aureng-Zebe’s filial virtue seems to be weak when, he is seen to be, initially, willing to fight against his father’s order to have Indamora seized for him under “the laws of war” (Dry. *TPs*. 289), but this would entail fighting his officials and not the Emperor himself. Indeed, it is the case that his father’s action throws him into inactivity. He reveals that “I to a son’s and lover’s praise aspire” (Ibid. 289) and this will prevent him from acting disloyally towards his father. This resolve holds even when Aureng-Zebe is twice offered promised potential support should he attempt to right his wrongs (Ibid. 290, 303). Indeed, filial piety remains intact even following the disgrace of his being dispossessed (Ibid. 310, 311). Even when his father orders his death, Aureng-Zebe’s only response is to express the wish “I might have died in fight for you” (Ibid. 312). Towards the end of the play, his father denounces himself for what he has done. Aureng-Zebe piously responds:

Accuse yourself no more; you could not be
Ungrateful; could commit no crime to me.
I only mourn my yet uncancelled score:
You put me past the power of paying more.
. . .
For had I ten thousand lives to pay,
The mighty sum should go no other way (Dry. *TPs*. 334).

This earns him the Emperor's rhetorical question of "[w]hy will you be so excellently good?" (Dry. *TPs*. 334). Aureng-Zebe then expresses his willingness to die in his father's cause once again (Ibid. 334).

It is not only filial but also fraternal piety which is exhibited by Aureng-Zebe. For instance, when Agra is at last under his control near the end of the play, immediately after announcing a general amnesty to all who lay down their arms, Aureng-Zebe then announces that Morat's welfare is to be of "most peculiar care" and that "[o]ur impious use no longer shall obtain;/Brother no more by brothers shall be slain" (Dry. *TPs*. 346). Aureng-Zebe especially exhibits the virtue of fraternal piety, when, just after Morat has died, he orders a honourable burial for him even though he is still under the misapprehension that Morat had died as the lover of Indamora (Ibid. 347).

Aureng-Zebe also manifests the virtue of magnanimity. This is evidenced when despite recognizing Nourmahal's "aversion" towards him, he pleads with his father for "royal clemency" (Dry. *TPs*. 298) for the empress who has offended the emperor. Aureng-Zebe also has the chance to denounce Nourmahal to Morat for her incestuous intentions in Act IV, but Aureng-Zebe chooses not to (Ibid. 324). Moreover, once Aureng-Zebe has finally secured Agra towards the end of the fifth act, his first announcement is a magnanimous one. He declares to all "[t]he lives of all, who cease from combat, spare" (Ibid. 346), and as has already been mentioned, he is most particular about ensuring Morat's survival.

Aureng-Zebe is also a kind prince. For instance, even in his emotional distress at the thought that Indamora and Morat had become lovers, Aureng-Zebe is considerate enough to order "[w]ith speed to Melesinda bring relief:/Recall her spirits, and moderate her grief" (Dry. *TPs*. 347). Additionally, Aureng-Zebe is an honest figure. He rejects Nourmahal's advances in Act IV (Ibid. 322), even though by accepting them or seeming to accept them he could perhaps have found a way to escape his execution. Also when his father makes him the offer of the succession in return for his relinquishing his claim to Indamora, Aureng-Zebe virtuously remains honest to himself and rejects it (Ibid. 301).

3.2.3 Analysis of the Virtues of the Character of the Emperor

The next character to be analysed in terms of virtue is the Emperor. Whilst Solyman at the beginning of the play, asserts that the Emperor's "throne" is one "which none but he can fill" (Dry. *TPs*. 279), it is in fact the case, that in terms of the requisite virtues in a ruler, the Emperor is inferior to his son Aureng-Zebe, and it is passion that undermines him. He is aware of the demands of virtue, but he is overwhelmed by instinct, which makes him less blameworthy. It is the "tyrant beauty" of Indamora that unbalances the Emperor. He has struggled with himself but has failed to achieve mastery over himself (Ibid. 284). Indeed, in the second act he reveals this fact to Aureng-Zebe in the following confession:

> Witness, ye powers,
> How much I suffered, and how long I strove
> Against the assaults of this imperious love!
> I represented to myself the shame
> Of perjured faith, and violated fame;
> Your great deserts, how ill they were repaid;
> All arguments, in vain, I urged and weighed:
> For mighty love, who prudence does despise,
> For reason showed me Indamora's eyes.
> What would you more? my crime I sadly view,
> Acknowledge, am ashamed, and yet pursue (Dry. *TPs*. 301).

Consequently, for the first cardinal virtue of wisdom, the Emperor's passion makes him unwisely abdicate his duty as a ruler (Dry. *TPs*. 309). It also makes him undermine his own rule and forego his responsibility to his subjects by proclaiming the stern Morat as his "successor" (Ibid. 307). Later, when the Emperor learns that Morat intents Indamora to be his own, he realizes the weakness of his position, and he begins to recover his wisdom by understanding fully what his emotionally-prompted actions have brought about (Ibid. 329). As such, he is similar to Shakespeare's Lear, and the parallel with this character is made with allusive imagery. The Emperor exclaims:

> Too late my folly I repent; I know
> My Aureng-Zebe would ne'er have used me so.
> But, by his ruin, I prepared my own;
> And, like a naked tree, my shelter gone,
> To winds and winter-storms must stand exposed alone (Dry. *TPs*. 329).

He even comes to realize that "[w]hat had my age to do with love's delight,/Shut out from all enjoyments but the sight?" (Dry. *TPs*. 334). His recovery of wisdom, of course, allows for his reconciliation with Aureng-Zebe at the end of the play.

A similar process occurs in relation to the Emperor's sense of justice. For most of the play the Emperor is unjust. For instance, he places Morat on the throne in order to further his own passion (Dry. *TPs*. 302). He is also unjust – and aware of the fact – when he questions Aureng-Zebe's offer to Morat to defeat their other two brothers and then retire from public life, and by doing so causes Morat to reject the offer (Ibid. 310-11). In his claim to Indamora, Aureng-Zebe has justice on his side. At the beginning of the play, it is learned that Aureng-Zebe's "recompense" for fighting loyally for his father is understood to "be the captive queen of Cassimere" (Ibid. 279). So the Emperor's intention to "resume" the "gift" of Indamora is a flagrant act of injustice (Ibid. 301). Particularly unfairly though, through the use of a severe threat, the Emperor – like Nero in Jean Racine's play *Britannicus*[61] – attempts to get the object of his affection to distance herself from his rival without revealing to him why (Ibid. 284), so as to leave him feeling he has lost the devotion of his beloved.

Failing to achieve his aim in this way, the Emperor unjustly expands the notion of filial piety to require Aureng-Zebe's compliance with his dishonourable intention to take Indamora from him (Dry. *TPs*. 302). Finding that Aureng-Zebe will not relinquish Indamora though, the Emperor tyrannically dispossesses Aureng-Zebe, and then compounds his wrongdoing by having him imprisoned (Ibid. 312). He is aware of what he is doing however, revealing in an aside that

[61] This play had come out six years earlier in 1669.

"I've just enough [virtue left] to know how I offend,/And, to my shame, have not enough to mend" (Ibid. 312).

The Emperor also exhibits his lack of justice by his treatment towards Indamora. Having found her indifferent to his advances, he claims Indamora as his "prisoner" under "the laws of war" and has her "seize[d]" (Dry. *TPs*. 288) for him. Additionally, the Emperor, overwhelmed by passion, rules tyrannically when he perceives any threat to his self-made claim on Indamora. He does so towards Arimant (Ibid. 292-3), and when Morat reveals that he intends Indamora for himself, the incensed Emperor responds:

> [D]o not wantonly my passion move;
> I pardon nothing that relates to love.
> My fury does, like jealous forts, pursue
> With death, even strangers who but come in view (Dry. *TPs*. 328).

Whilst the injustice of the Emperor is enormous, it is not absolute, though. When questions of Indamora are not involved, the Emperor can be fair. He upbraids Morat for his treatment of Melesinda (Dry. *TPs*. 327), and at the end of the play, he recovers his full sense of justice with his self-control. Realizing that he owes everything to Aureng-Zebe, he wishes to act justly towards him (Ibid. 351). Hence, he resigns his claim to Indamora – which he still calls "a victor's right" – and transfers it, and, a little later, the crown itself, to his loyal son (Ibid. 351, 354).

As for the cardinal virtue of courage, as an old man, the Emperor cannot be expected to exhibit great bravery in conflict. However, a reminiscence concerning his "boiling youth" implies he was a brave fighter when he was young (Dry. *TPs*. 299-300). Earlier, Solyman revealed that the Emperor once had "vigour" (Ibid. 278) and now was "[r]epining that he must preserve his crown/By any help or courage but his own" (Ibid. 279). And, concerning the cardinal virtue of temperance, the Emperor so far loses any sense of it that he starts to redefine life's purpose in a sybaritic manner (Ibid. 308). This leads him to regard kingly rule as "that drudgery of power" (Ibid. 308). Nonetheless, temperance is also a virtue that

is recovered by him. The Emperor's decision to resign his claim to Indamora is a just one, and it is especially virtuous as it entails a conscious struggle to act temperately. As the Emperor tells Indamora "I love you still; and if I struggle hard/To give, it shows the worth of the reward" (Ibid. 351).

As can be understood from the points already made, the Emperor fails to manifest parental piety. This is not simply in the case of Aureng-Zebe who is his rival in love, but it is also evident in his general philosophy regarding his sons. When dispossessing Aureng-Zebe, he makes the following announcement, showing that he gives no regard to his children save as tools for his own benefit. He claims:

> Children, the blind effect of love and chance,
> Formed by their sportive parent's ignorance,
> Bear from their birth the impressions of a slave;
> Whom Heaven for play-games first, and then for service gave.
> One then may be displaced, and one may reign,
> And want of merit render birthright vain (Dry. *TPs*. 310).

This mirrors an earlier remark made for Morat, that "[s]ubject and son, he's doubly born my slave" (Dry. *TPs*. 281). As for Aureng-Zebe himself, his filial piety would seem to deserve parental piety in return, but it is something he is not granted for most of the play. As Erskine-Hill notes, "[t]he amazing victories of Aureng-Zebe, the loyal heir, are rewarded only by the humiliating indecisions of a sexually jealous father and sovereign" (Erskine-Hill 55).

As is the case with certain other virtues however, the Emperor does begin to exhibit parental piety towards Aureng-Zebe as the play begins to draw to a close. Having, through Morat's rebuff, been brought back to his senses, he recongizes Aureng-Zebe as one "from whom I did receive/All that a son could to a parent give" (Dry. *TPs*. 334). The Emperor later masterfully exhibits his renewed concern for his son, when he actually blesses Aureng-Zebe's and Indamora's love.

The Emperor also exhibits a failure of spousal piety towards Nourmahal (Dry. *TPs*. 295, 302). Once again, this is brought about by his passion for

Indamora. When she upbraids him for this, he first attempts to flatter her (Ibid. 295), and then later acts tyrannically in having her arrested, and condemned to be held ““[i]n bands of iron fettered” (Ibid. 298), exclaiming to her that his actions show “a husband’s and a monarch’s power” (Ibid. 298). It is only Aureng-Zebe’s intervention that saves her from the humiliation (Ibid. 299).

Passion also makes the Emperor dishonest. For instance, when he does not exhibit great joy at the successes of Aureng-Zebe, he attempts to explain his reason for this by pointing out that all that has been restored is the *status quo ante*. However, the real reason for his lack of joy is that he has come to view Aureng-Zebe as a rival (Dry. *TPs*. 282). Consequently, the Emperor is a character who has serious failings *vis-à-vis* the virtue expected of the idealised Renaissance prince. However, it is the case that as the play draws to an end, he has become a fairly righteous figure, worthy of respect.

3.2.4 Analysis of the Virtues of the Character of Morat

The next potential ruler to be examined is Morat. Overall, he fails to live up to the standards of a virtuous prince. In the opinion of Aureng-Zebe, Morat has a “brutal mind” and is incapable of being “just, or kind” (Dry. *TPs*. 331). In the middle of the play, he tells Morat that “[w]hen thou wert formed, Heaven did a man begin;/But the brute soul, by chance, was shuffled in” (Ibid. 312). He is certainly someone who does not allow concepts of ethics to determine his courses of action, being driven by his own nature. Hence, Scott says of Morat that:

> It is true, the character of Morat borders upon extravagance; but a certain license has always been given to theatrical tyrants . . . [and t]here is perhaps some reason for this indulgence. The possession of unlimited power, vested in active and mercurial characters, naturally drives them to extravagant indulgence of passion, bordering upon insanity; and it follows, that their language must outstrip the modesty of nature (Scott 179).

Morat lacks the virtue of wisdom in showing weakness in his judgement of the characters of others. Significantly, he does not understand that in offending his mother, he can turn her into his enemy (Dry. *TPs*. 324). Also, in his trusting Abbas,

Morat "pitched his head into the ready snare" as Abbas was actually not on his side, but was acting with Nourmahal against him (Ibid. 341). Morat does show wisdom as he is dying however. He becomes aware of his own hubris, mortality, and of the real duty of a ruler. He states:

> Ah, what are we,
> Who dare maintain with Heaven this wretched strife,
> Puffed with the pride of Heaven's own gift, frail life?
> That blast which my ambitious spirit swelled,
> See by how weak a tenure it was held!
> I only stay to save the innocent;
> O, envy not my soul its last content! (Dry. *TPs*. 345).

The "innocent" he wishes to save is Indamora, who is endangered by the fury of his mother.

Morat does not feel constrained by the cardinal virtue of justice. Instead, he clearly intends to be a harsh ruler. He tells his father that "[s]ubjects are stiff-necked animals; they soon/Feel slackened reins, and pitch their rider down" (Dry. *TPs*. 308). When Morat believes that he has just won the empire by force of arms, he makes clear to Indamora that he does not intend to let his conscience guide his actions, as a just ruler would, rhetorically asking in a Machiavellian or Nietzschean manner "[w]hat business has my conscience with a crown?" (Ibid. 336). Morat's attitude to his father reveals him to be unfair. The Emperor raises Morat to power in order that he can further his designs on Indamora. Morat takes authority, but then later unjustly abrogates the bargain (Ibid. 328). Morat is also unjust towards his wife Melesinda, not only by spurning her, as will be examined below, but also by demanding from his jealous and devoted spouse that she assist him in his courting of Indamora (Ibid. 326).

The cardinal virtue that Morat would seem to embody is that of courage. For instance, whilst Morat has failed to capture the fortress of Agra by the beginning of Act II, Aureng-Zebe regards his attempt as that of a courageous and manly fighter (Dry. *TPs*. 289). Following his final battle with Aureng-Zebe, the

victorious Morat, in an echo of the famous Latin phrase *Audentes fortuna iuvat*[62], announces to Indamora that he has achieved "[w]hat fate decreed; for when great souls are given;/They bear the marks of sovereignty from Heaven" (Ibid. 336). However, Morat is not a courageous figure by the strict tenets of virtue, because he is someone who enjoys battle as an end in itself rather than as a means to the establishment of peace (Ibid. 308). Indeed, his intention once he has assumed supreme power is that his "arms from pole to pole the world shall shake" (Ibid. 309). His courage can also be questioned by his intention, at the beginning of the play, to take the Emperor by surprise. This action appears ignoble (Ibid. 280).

Morat does not care to be restricted by the cardinal virtue of temperance. Rather, he wants his "power" to be "as uncontrolled as is [his] will" (Dry. *TPs*. 337). This, in concrete terms, initially means his being motivated by a desire for "glory" (Ibid. 308). Indamora even tells him that "lust of power lets loose the unbridled mind" (Ibid. 337). Morat is in fact temperamentally unable to accept stoically the position allotted to him by fate, and rather must challenge it in the quest of glory. As the critic Christopher J. Wheatly notes "Morat's restless energy cannot be bound by the conventions of patrilineage and he is destroyed because of it" (Wheatley 76). When he is in a position of power in Agra, he is also intemperately overcome by hubris. He confidently tells his mother "I'm in Fate's place, and dictate her decrees" (Dry. *TPs*. 324). And even when, persuaded by Indamora, Morat gives up on the idea of being emperor, and declares that with "virtue for my guide;/ . . . /Unjust dominion I no more pursue" (Ibid. 338), he is motivated to make this decision by his passion for Indamora which has overwhelmed him (Ibid. 317), and thus it cannot be seen as a true intention to be a virtuous man, as that decision would be made temperately.

Morat is not a pious figure. He does not intend to pay regard to the gods in the way in which he rules. He avers that "[w]hat power makes mine, by power I

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[62] "fortune favours the brave". Given in the archaic form of "*audentis Fortuna iuvat*" in the *Aeneid* (Vergilius X. 284), and translated by Dryden in his own English version of the epic poem as "Fortune befriends the bold" (Virgil 10. 398).

mean to seize./Since 'tis to that they their own greatness owe/Above, why should they question mine below?" (Dry. *TPs*. 329). Towards his father, there is also a marked lack of filial piety. It has already noted shown above how Morat, once power has been invested in him, spurns the bargain with his father (Ibid. 327). He also exhibits a failure of filial piety towards his mother. Morat loses interest in Nourmahal when he becomes passionate for Indamora (Ibid. 340). Indeed, his passion causes Morat to slight Nourmahal. Despite her having offered him nothing but support, he comes to tell her, brusquely, that affairs of state are none of her business, and that "[w]omen emasculate a monarch's reign" (Ibid. 324).

Unsurprisingly, Morat also fails to show fraternal piety. He regards his brothers as "[r]ough-draughts of nature, ill designed, and lame" (Dry. *TPs*. 336) and has no compunction about fighting with them for the crown. Additionally, he is willing to put Aureng-Zebe to death (Ibid. 312). However, it is to be noted that in his passion for Indamora which "softens" him, when the pair learn of Aureng-Zebe's supposed death, an altered Morat, finds "sympathy" for his brother, and he "mourn[s]" his loss (Ibid. 339). Finally, his behaviour towards his spouse is not a continuously pious one either. At first, he does show his wife matters for him. Once he has dealt with his brother in his return to Agra, he shows a strong willingness to see her (Ibid. 313, 314), and appears to genuinely love her (Ibid. 315). However, once he has taken in the beauty of Indamora's "eyes" his behaviour towards Melesinda becomes brusque and rude (Ibid. 317, 318). He goes on to lose all interest in her (Ibid. 325), and finally completely repudiates her (Ibid. 326). He comes to realize that he has not been a "deserving husband" for her (Ibid. 345). However, he does show virtue in asking her forgiveness for his treatment of her as he is dying (Ibid. 346).

Morat also lacks the virtue of honesty as we see when, at the beginning of the play, Morat sends an ambassador to the Emperor to claim that his troops threatening Agra were formed only "when he thought you gone" and "to defend the present you had made" (Dry. *TPs*. 280) and thus not to fight an offensive conflict for rule of the Empire. However, the Emperor's responding that when "[p]roof on

my life my royal signet made;/Yet still he armed, came on, and disobeyed" (Ibid. 281) shows that Morat is being untruthful. All further attempts to get Morat to disarm and leave Agra are met by similarly disingenuous reasons to remain at combat readiness (Ibid. 281). His excuses do not mask the fact that Morat, along with his mother who encourages him, is motivated by ambition.

In general therefore, Morat cannot be regarded as a virtuous prince of the Renaissance model due mainly to his wilfulness. Nonetheless, as he dies, he does exhibit certain redeeming features. Throughout the play, however, he remains unmistakably inferior in virtue to Aureng-Zebe, his elder brother.

3.2.5 Analysis of the Virtues of the Character of Nourmahal

Lastly, as one of the potential rulers in this play, Nourmahal is now to be examined. She can be considered the least attractive of them, for whilst her motivations are comprehensible, she reveals few of any of the Renaissance virtues required in an ideal ruler. Instead, she exhibits the opposite to a number of them, and unlike the Emperor or Morat does not experience much self-enlightenment towards the end of the play. Whilst it is true that Nourmahal justly announces "[v]irtue's no slave of man; no sex confines the soul" (Dry. *TPs*. 341), she later shows that, in her case, virtue is desperately lacking. She even admits of herself that "Heaven did, by me, the outward model build;/It's inward work, the soul, with rubbish filled" and that she is an "imperfect piece" (Ibid. 342). Thus, although it is the case that Nourmahal shows enough of the virtue of wisdom for occasional insights of self awareness – as in her comment on her "rubbish filled" soul, it is unsurprising that in general, she is self-deceived. She even remarkably feels an equality of virtue between herself and Aureng-Zebe, and claims this is what has brought her feelings about for him (Ibid. 321). Nonetheless, in her last moments, she regains self-awareness once again. Being painfully consumed by her poison, she fails to receive a kiss from Aureng-Zebe, and this makes her cry out "[u]ngrateful! have I lost Morat for this?" (Ibid. 353).

Nourmahal also does not act in accordance with the cardinal virtue of justice. She wishes Indamora to kill herself simply for being the object of Aureng-

Zebe's love (Dry. *TPs*. 343), and is willing to attack Indamora when she refuses to take her own life (Ibid. 344). There is one aspect to Nourmahal in which the cardinal virtue of courage does seem to be present. Whilst she is unquestionably motivated by her pride, Nourmahal does exhibit a courageous disdain for death, and in the collapse of her hopes, much like the great Stoic Cato the Younger, or more similarly Cleopatra, resolves to take her own life. She announces:

> 'Tis vain to fight, and I disdain to fly.
> I'll mock the triumphs which our foes intend,
> And, spite of fortune, make a glorious end.
> In poisonous draughts my liberty I'll find,
> And from the nauseous world set free my mind (Dry. *TPs*. 364).

She carries out her intent, and the poison makes her rave in pain (Dry. *TPs*. 353), much like Heracles in the poisoned shirt of Nessus.

There is no evidence of any shred of the cardinal virtue of temperance in Nourmahal's outlook or behaviour. At the first mention of her in the play, it is learned that she is both "jealous" and "haughty" (Dry. *TPs*. 284). She is also ambitious (Ibid. 280, 297). Nourmahal is motivated by "revenge" (Ibid. 341), and she, as has been noted, intends revenge of Morat for his having spoken down to her and blocked her wish to kill Aureng-Zebe (Ibid. 324), making her similar to Racine's Agrippina[63]. Additionally, she reveals herself to be bloodthirsty enough to want to poison Aureng-Zebe (Ibid. 312). Moreover, she intends to "kill [Indamora] with such eagerness and haste,/As fiends, let loose, would lay all nature waste" (Ibid. 344). Erskine-Hill rightly notes that "Nourmahal flames through jealousy into a burning madness" (Erskine-Hill 56). Nowhere is this more clear than when at the end of the play, when she is burning up internally due to her poison, she expresses the dying wish to "pour" the seeming fire that is consuming her "upon my foes" (Dry. *TPs*. 353) who are now happily once again ensconced in positions of power. Perhaps her most significant lack of temperance is in the passion she

[63] In the play *Britannicus*. For the date of this play, see note 61.

develops for Aureng-Zebe. By seeing him as a "god-like man, so brave, so great" she is "carried by a tide of love away" (Ibid. 313). Despite an attempt at self-control, she finds "love has won" and that her "crime" of "lawless ill" is something she is unable to stop (Ibid. 314). She attempts to seduce Aureng-Zebe through persuasion (Ibid. 321-3), much like Phaedra[64].

Nourmahal cares deeply for her son Morat, but does not remain constant in terms of parental piety. It is certainly the case that she is ecstatic when her son is made the "monarch's heir" and she becomes the "queen"[65] (Dry. *TPs*. 309). However, in her passion for Aureng-Zebe she undermines her son's new power, by not having Aureng-Zebe expediently put to death. When her power is brought to an

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[64] Compare Nourmahal's speech to Aureng-Zebe:

> I have not changed, I love my husband still;
> But love him as he was, when youthful grace,
> And the first down began to shade his face:
> That image does my virgin-flames renew,
> And all your father shines more bright in you (Dry. *TPs*. 323).

With Phaedra's speech to Hippolytus,

> This is the truth Hippolytus:
> The face of Theseus is the face I love –
> The youthful ace of former years – the cheek
> That had been smooth, pencilled with its first beard –
> . . .
> His gentle face, below the banded hair,
> Shone with the golden glow of modesty.
> His arms were tender, but with muscle strong
> And his face there was
> . . .
> More like your own
> . . .
> Just so – his head held high; though in your looks
> The natural grace, unkempt, is still more splendid (Sen. *FTO*. 123-4).

[65] Why she is not already so, as the seeming sole spouse of the Emperor is unclear. She has certainly already been referred to as "empress" by Arimant on p. 280 and Dianet on p. 303.

end through Aureng-Zebe's armed action, she tells her followers "[d]isarm, but save my son" (Ibid. 344), expressing once again his central importance to her. There is certainly no parental piety towards her step-son Aureng-Zebe, though. Initially, she acts towards him, as Fowles contemptuously notes, like a "wicked stepmother" (Fowles 31). And later, by falling in love with him she commits what even she describes as a "glorious sin" (Dry. *TPs*. 343).

Much as the Emperor shows no spousal piety towards her, Nourmahal does not act piously towards her husband either. She acts against his interests in helping to spur Morat's rebellious intentions towards his father (Dry. *TPs*. 280). Also, Nourmahal is unfeeling to the Emperor in the role of wife. She seems to be repulsed by his advanced age (Ibid. 295, 297). Yet, there is no question of Nourmahal not having remained a faithful wife in physical terms (Ibid. 296). And as for her approaches towards Aureng-Zebe, her intention to betray her husband can be countered by his willingness to betray her, making her lack of strict spousal piety surely a forgivable omission.

It is likely that Nourmahal is physically attractive, although it has already been noted that physical attractiveness is not necessarily allied to virtue in Renaissance thought. When she is upbraiding her husband for his newfound indifference toward her in the second act, she reminds him of their betrothal when he competed for her hand. She reminds him that "my beauty drew/All Asia's vows" when she was "[t]hat long-contended prize for which you fought" (Dry. *TPs*. 298). Also, when she seeks to define the beautifulness of Indamora, she comes to regard her as a copy of herself (Ibid. 342).

In summary, Nourmahal, whilst manifesting elements of self-awareness, bravery and concern for her son, is, on the whole, far from being the kind of virtuous ruler idealised in the Renaissance. Of all of the potential rulers in the play, it is clear that Aureng-Zebe by far excels all others in terms of virtue.

3.2.6 Further Political Points in *Aureng-Zebe*

Other political points related to the play should now be examined. Initially, the possible routes to the crown manifested in the play will be investigated. In this

play, three ways are presented as the route to ultimate power in the polity, and they are succession through nomination, the traditional Islamic equal hereditary right, and primogeniture. The first to be examined will be succession through designation. In the play, the Emperor is portrayed as having the right to designate his successor. For instance, Aureng-Zebe is content that, as concerns the crown, his father "[w]ear it, and let it where you please descend" (Dry. *TPs*. 301). It is not made explicit in the play, but without any suggestion to the contrary, it can be assumed that this designation should necessarily hereditarily involve one of his male children. As it is learned from Indamora that Aureng-Zebe is the person who the Emperor "esteemed above/Your other sons" (Ibid. 294), it would naturally be assumed that he is the obvious choice, as he indeed would have been could he have given up Indamora (Ibid. 301). However, Aureng-Zebe's noble intransigence tied to the Emperor's passion causes the Emperor to settle the succession on Morat instead (Ibid. 307). Having done so, it still appears to be the case that he feels he can alter the succession at will. Hence, his renewed rejected offer of the empire to Aureng-Zebe in return for his rival's giving up Indamora (Ibid. 311). Having regained his self-control, right at the end of the play the Emperor confers the monarchy onto Aureng-Zebe. It may be the case though that there is no other surviving hereditary candidate left[66]. Despite that caveat, it is clear that Aureng-

[66] Morat is certainly dead, and there has been no mention of the other two sons, who have either also died or simply been forgotten about. Whether the failure to remember them is solely the case for the characters in the play or also for its author remains irresolvable. Interesting, in the historical case, whilst Dara Shukoh's fate is known for certain – "a party of slaves entered Dara's prison on August 30 [1659] and hacked his head from his body" (Gascoigne 215) – the fate of Shah Shuja is somewhat mysterious, as it is in the play. He and his family probably "were murdered by pirates" in Arakan, to where they had eventually fled following his defeat by Aurangzeb. However, Gascoigne then relates that:

> . . . nothing certain was ever heard of their fate, in spite of considerable efforts by Aurangzeb to establish that they were dead and so rid himself of recurrent rumours that Shah Shuja was about to return and claim the throne (Gascoigne 211-2).

Zebe is the son the Emperor intended to succeed him, save for the periods when overcome by passion.

Another legitimate route to the crown seems, in keeping with Islamic tradition, to be that of the hereditary heirs fighting it out amongst themselves until there is an ultimate victor. The people over whom this victor is to rule, as Arimant puts it, "servilely from fate expect a king" (Dry. *TPs*. 278) whilst the process is taking place. Thus, it is understood that victory against one's siblings confers legitimacy, and certainly, the play opens with Arimant exclaiming:

> Heaven seems the empire of the east to lay
> On the success of this important day:
> Their arms are to the last decision bent,
> And Fortune labours with the vast event:
> She now has in her hand the greatest stake,
> Which for contending monarchs she can make.
> Whate'er can urge ambitious youth to fight,
> She pompously displays before their sight;
> Laws, empire, all permitted to the sword,
> And fate could ne'er an ampler scene afford (Dry. *TPs*. 277).

The actual outbreak has been ignited by the fragile state of the Emperor's health (Dry. *TPs*. 278). The sons obviously – as in the historical case on which the play is based – did not expect their father to survive, and did not want to fall into the Hobbesian trap of delaying too long to strike first in delaying their action for certain news of their father's death. Their situation is understandable when Aureng-Zebe's comment on the nature of the succession in his country is borne in mind. As he pithily puts it, "[t]he sons of Indostan must reign, or die" (Ibid. 303). Moreover, it may even be the case that the ruler himself feels more legitimate if he takes his throne through the use of violence. Morat makes clear how success in arms would make him feel more like a monarch. His designation as ruler by his father on its own leaves him feeling dissatisfied:

> I scarce am pleased I tamely mount the throne:—

> Would Aureng-Zebe had all their souls in one!
> With all my elder brothers I would fight,
> And so from partial nature force my right (Dry. *TPs*. 308).

Following the last conflict between Aureng-Zebe and Morat, the victorious Morat makes a somewhat compelling case for the right of rule that is won by the sword, and a seemingly fair condemnation of primogeniture. He declares:

> Birthright's a vulgar road to kingly sway;
> 'Tis every dull-got elder brother's way.
> Dropt from above he lights into a throne;
> Grows of a piece with that he sits upon;
> Heaven's choice, a low, inglorious, rightful drone.
> But who by force a sceptre does obtain,
> Shows he can govern that, which he could gain (Dry. *TPs*. 337).

With Morat's death, and the two other brothers out of the picture, Aureng-Zebe is clearly the legitimate heir through the Islamic form of succession too. However, significantly and confusingly considering that this play is settled on a different notion of legitimacy, in Morat's speech quoted above, Morat does admit that the eldest son is "Heaven's choice" (Dry. *TPs*. 337). The complex question of primogeniture in this play will be examined next. First, though, it also needs to be noted that although there is no historical basis for this, Aureng-Zebe in fact abrogates the traditional form of succession once power has been settled in his own hands, to presumably be replaced with that of primogeniture. He announces that "[o]ur impious use no longer shall obtain;/Brother no more by brothers shall be slain" (Ibid. 346).

Despite there being no primogeniture in Mughal India, in this play the concept is brought in alongside the two other forms of legitimacy mentioned above. In addition to Morat's remark, it seems to be the case that right at the beginning of the play, Dryden has created a mix of the Islamic system of succession by prowess in arms over one's siblings and primogeniture. So when in response to Asaph

Khan's labelling of the Emperor's sons as "[r]ebels and parricides" for having risen up, Arimant sympathetically explains:

> Brand not their actions with so foul a name:
> Pity at least what we are forced to blame.
> When death's cold hand has closed the father's eye,
> You know the younger sons are doomed to die,
> Less ills are chosen greater to avoid,
> And nature's laws are by the state destroyed.
> What courage tamely could to death consent,
> And not, by striking first, the blow prevent? (Dry. *TPs*. 278).

Here, the right to rule clearly falls to the eldest, who then executes his brothers. Why it should be necessary to slaughter one's siblings if they anyway have no right to a primogeniture-designated crown, remains unclear. The fratricide that took place in the Islamic empires was necessitated by the equal legitimacy of all heirs. Without that concept, there should be no more need for brother-slaying than in the succession to any of the Western European thrones. Also, it is unclear why Aureng-Zebe feels the need to revoke the traditional form of succession, if primogeniture is in force. After all, if primogeniture truly designates the heir, then subsequently killing that heir is simply a case of regicide, and not fraternal strife. Still, there are further references to primogeniture in the play. For instance, the Emperor exclaims to Aureng-Zebe that "[y]our elder brothers, though o'ercome, have right:/The youngest yet in arms prepared to fight" (Dry. *TPs*. 301). The Emperor himself also, later tells Morat that in raising him to power, he gave him "what your birth did to your claim deny" (Ibid. 328). However, this also, even more confusingly, shows that even if there is primogeniture in place, it is also in the Emperor's power to name his successor.

Even more confusingly, it is possible that there is also a criticism of primogeniture in this play. Wheatly's point that "Morat's restless energy cannot be bound by the conventions of patrilineage and he is destroyed because of it" (Wheatley 76) has already been noted, and Morat's speech against his brothers,

quoted above, has been shown as a seemingly fair condemnation of primogeniture. Whatever the case, once again, with his elder brothers out of the picture, Aureng-Zebe apparently also becomes the legitimate heir through primogeniture.

One final point about the route to monarchical power remain to be briefly made. The first is that Nourmahal also, for a short period in the fifth act, takes control of the empire, when, in concert with Abbas, her forces have defeated both the "emperor's party" and then those commanded by Morat (Dry. *TPs*. 341). This possibility has already been foretold by Melesinda, who believed that her mother-in-law "would herself usurp the state" (Ibid. 340). Melesinda's choice of verb here is significant. She cannot view any attempt by Nourmahal for the crown as anything but usurpation. Furthermore, no attempt at legitimacy is put forward by the empress. Thus, although it is feasible that she could claim a right to absolute rule through marriage, she does not do this. Her intentions either to pass the throne onto Morat or share it with him (Ibid. 341) imply that her usurpation has been carried out in the name of her son, who was declared legitimate heir by the Emperor.

What is of particular relevance in relation to this work is that Aureng-Zebe at the end of the play is unquestionably the legitimate ruler. He has been designated successor by his father, and has defeated his other brothers in battle, one of which at least is dead – although not by his hands. This has conferred on Aureng-Zebe double legitimacy, which is possibly further increased with through the concept of primogeniture. Thus, once again, the most virtuous figure in the play is also the one who is legitimately to rule, Dryden pairing these two concepts in *Aureng-Zebe* as in his other plays examined in this work.

Additionally Dryden uses this play to make four other political points. Firstly, he uses it to exhibit the nature of unhealthy polities. For instance, the play clearly exhibits the disastrous effects of civil war that can be brought about over a disputed question of succession. The conflict between the sons of the emperor has had a great cost in terms of lives. As Asaph Khan relates:

> Indus and Ganges, our wide empire's bounds,
> Swell their currents with their native's wounds:
> Each purple river winding, as he runs,
> His bloody arms about his slaughtered sons (Dry. *TPs*. 277).

A system in which smooth succession could be guaranteed – most obviously with primogeniture, Dryden's preferred form – would prevent this horrific bloodshed.

Secondly, it is important to note that the most virtuous of the princes – Aureng-Zebe – makes no attempt to usurp the throne for himself, allowing the obvious conclusion that a righteous prince will not try to overthrow his father. Indeed, *Aureng-Zebe* also shows how usurpation begets further usurpation, thus making a further argument in favour of smooth and accepted succession to the crown. After Morat seems to have won his way to the crown at the beginning of Act V, Indamora reveals to him the core problem of gaining the throne through usurpation:

> By your own laws you such dominion make,
> As every stronger power has right to take:
> And parricide will so deform your name,
> That dispossessing you will give a claim (Dry. *TPs*. 337).

Thirdly, it is also the case that the play in itself seems to show that an unstable body politic will yearn for a stable system of legitimacy. This is the probable reason why, quickly following Nourmahal's *coup d'etat*, Abbas comes to report that "[t]he fort's revolted to the Emperor", and that the forces of Aureng-Zebe and Morat are now "joined" (Dry. *TPs*. 346). The people of Agra want an end to repeated changes of ruler, and a return to that of the Emperor, whom Aureng-Zebe represents.

Lastly, it is to be noted that, as in his other plays, Dryden's depiction of the people as a potential political force is pejorative. Aspah Khan says of the people that "[i]n change of government,/The rabble rule their great oppressors' fate;/Do sovereign justice, and revenge the state" (Dry. *TPs*. 278). Moreover, the Emperor,

when drawn to pleasure rather than the duty of rule, describes "[t]he vulgar, a scarce animated clod,/Ne'er pleased with aught above them, prince or God" (Ibid. 309). It is the case that Aureng-Zebe is the most popular prince in the eyes of the populace of Agra (Ibid. 303, 311), being the "best beloved" of the four brothers (Ibid. 313). However, the people's support of Aureng-Zebe is not regarded by that prince to their credit. Dryden portrays Aureng-Zebe as a righteous prince who disdainfully has no wish to rule through popular sovereignty. He tells his father that "[t]he people's love so little I esteem,/Condemned by you, I would not live by them" (Ibid. 311).

3.3 *Oedipus* (1679)

The next play to be examined is *Oedipus*, as it deals with two other types of princely legitimacy, which are that of elective right, and succession through marriage. This play itself was first printed in 1679, but it may well have first been performed in the previous year (Dry. *Vol6*. 94). Unlike the other dramas of Dryden examined in this work, this particular play is a collaborative piece. Dryden wrote it in partnership with Nathaniel Lee[67]. The first and third acts are the work of Dryden, whilst the remainder were written by Lee (Johnson 79, Scott 189). Nonetheless, it is valid to regard the whole play as one of Dryden's works, because, as Scott reveals, it was Dryden who also "arranged the general plan, and corrected the whole piece" (Scott 189). Indeed, it is this fact that ensures "the tragedy has the appearance of general consistence and uniformity" (Dry. *Vol6*. 93).

As the play's title suggests, it deals with the Classical mythological character of Oedipus, and, as such, it is based on plays by Sophocles, Seneca, and Corneille (Johnson 79), particularly, in the view of Scott, that of Sophocles[68] (Dry. *Vol6*. 91). Aside from differences in style and approach – for instance its being full

[67] With whom he would also collaborate with on *The Duke of Guise* in 1683 (Johnson 77).

[68] Scott is referring to Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* and not his *Oedipus at Colonus*.

of "Elizabethan and Jacobean effects" (Edmunds 93) as will be seen below – the major contrast in Dryden's version is that it contains a romantic and political "subplot" (Ibid. 93). Scott, who admires the play in general and even in certain instances believes "improves on" (Dry. *Vol6*. 93) Sophocles' play, describes this subplot as "contribut[ing] little either to the effect or merit of the play" (Ibid. 93).

What makes the play particularly relevant to this study is its political themes. Susan J. Owen has named this play as one of what she terms as "Tory tragedies"[69] whose dominant themes are "to idealize heroic absolute loyalty, to place a high value on 'quietism,' and to demonize rebellion" (Owen 164). Nonetheless, it is to be noted that this play is very ambiguous about the nature of succession, and as such differs from the other three plays examined in this work. Three different forms of monarchic succession are dealt with within it, and they are elective, hereditary through primogeniture and succession through marriage. It is also unique amongst these four plays in that the most virtuous claimant of the crown within it, that of Oedipus, does not survive to rule the kingdom at the end, although as the kingdom itself is actually left without any obvious ruler at all, the connection between virtue and legitimacy made whilst Oedipus is still alive makes it relevant to this thesis overall.

3.3.1 The Characters and Legitimacy

Indeed, it is the case that Oedipus is depicted, for most of the play at least, as the legitimate monarch of Thebes, where the play is set. He is depicted as the legitimate ruler for one specific reason, that of his election, although his marriage and birth also possibly provide him with extra legitimacy, the latter ironically of course. These three factors of legitimacy will be examined next. Before doing so though, it is to be remembered that when, long antecedent to the actual action of the play, Oedipus first appears at Thebes, due to his having unknowingly slain the previous king, Lajus, the throne of the kingdom is vacant.

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[69] The only other play by Dryden Owen mentions in this context is his 1679 *Troilus and Cressida*.

The first source of Oedipus' legitimacy as king comes from popular election. Even though Oedipus is ironically thought of as a foreigner, even by himself, it is his service to the state of Thebes that results in him being elected to the crown. This is revealed by the fact that at the beginning of the drama, when the fickle crowd have been stirred into rebelliousness against Oedipus by Creon's meddling, Tiresias rebukes them, and reminds them of how Oedipus came to be their king. Oedipus rid them of the horrors of the "Monster *Sphinx*" and the people, in gratitude, "offer'd him/[Their] Queen, and Crown; (but what was then [their] Crown!)/And Heav'n authoriz'd it by his Success" (Dry. *Oed*. 10). Finally, to hammer home his point, Tiresias rhetorically asks the crowd "Speak then, who is your lawful King?" (Dry. *Oed*. 10 – my italics) and the response of all is "'Tis *OEdipus*" (Ibid. 10). The idea that the crown was up for election at that time, is also made earlier in the same opening act, when Creon is in conversation with his followers, and they lament that they do not have "[a] Monarch Theban born" but that they "might have had one" on the condition that "the people pleas'd" (Ibid. 3). Ignoring the irony that Oedipus is indeed "Theban born" as no one is aware of that fact, this reveals that the choice of successor to Lajus lay in the people's hand. It, at least in that instance, was an elective monarchy.

The second way in which Oedipus seems to have been made a legitimate king is through the influence of Jocasta. Along with the people's choice, it appears that Jocasta also favoured Oedipus for the crown. As noted above, it is Tiresisas' contention that the queen and the crown were given by the people together. Creon, however, while discussing the question with his followers, makes no comment about the people making a choice, and instead blames the succession of Oedipus on his sister Jocasta. He imputes that this choice was due to her sexual desires (Dry. *Oed*. 3). There are two possible interpretations of this. The first is that Jocasta was instrumental in assuring Oedipus' succession, perhaps by using her influence with the people for his election. The second is that she was merely pleased with the people's choice. It does though seem that Oedipus' authority as ruler is made more secure by his marriage when the rebelliousness of the crowd is taken into account.

The other form of legitimacy for Oedipus is ironically that of primogeniture. As Lowell Edmunds points out, Oedipus "would have been the lineal successor of the king of Thebes. He has . . . hypothetically, full legitimacy" (Edmunds 95). Thus, it can be argued that though Oedipus, by pushing for the truth, eventually and inadvertently reveals the whole horrendous secret of who he truly is, he also ironically seems to make his rule more legitimate by doing so, as he proves he is the male child of Lajus and Jocasta. He has shown himself to be what Tiresias, earlier in the play when revealing the secrets of Apollo, has unknowingly named as "the first of *Lajus* Blood"[70] (Dry. *Oed*. 22). The possibility of this being the case is hinted at in the first act of the play, when Tiresias, in calming the rebellious mob tells the crowd that "Your King [is] more lawful/Than yet you dream" although in "Heav'ns dark Volume, which I read through Mists" (Dry. *Oed*. 10) it is not clear why[71]. Nonetheless, it appears that the gods, once the truth is out, do not accept Oedipus' legitimacy in this way, and so this legitimacy is not divinely sanctioned. Tiresias, who presumably speaks for the gods, tells Oedipus, once everything has been revealed, that he is "banish'd [from] *Thebes*" (Ibid. 63). Thus the denouement is unlike that of *Marriage a la Mode*, where the truth of parentage gives Leonidas his access to the throne; whereas here the truth of parentage takes it away. Of course, for Oedipus the problem is that as a revealed parricide[72], he cannot remain

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[70] Or as it is put in Sophocles *Oedipus at Colonus*, he is "[b]orn of the royal blood of Thebes" (Soph. *TTP*. 297).

[71] It seems even to be the case that Oedipus is not only technically but also literally a Porphyrogenitus. Ægeon reveals that the baby Oedipus given to him was one of whose "Swaddling-bands were Purple, wrought with Gold" (Dry. *Oed*. 60).

[72] In the wider myth cycle, the unfortunate event of Oedipus' killing his father is brought about in fulfilment of the curse on Laius given by Pelops for Lauis' causing the suicide of Pelop's son Chrysippus after his "kidnapping and raping" of this son (Soph. *TP*. xxx).

in the city in any capacity, whether that of king or a normal inhabitant[73], so the question of his continuing to rule is impossible.

There is a fourth form of legitimate succession that is raised in the play through the character of Oedipus, but this one is not in connection with Thebes. It is the concept of legitimacy through adoption and it is relevant to the crown of Corinth. Oedipus grew up in that city thinking that he was the natural son of Polybus and Merope, its rulers, although he is in fact only their adopted son. Oedipus' view of his origins though explains why he ironically, to protect himself from ever carrying out his prophesized parricide and incest, fled from Corinth. When Ægeon comes to Thebes to bring Oedipus news of Polybus' death, he also makes clear that he is to be Corinth's ruler (Dry. *Oed*. 54). Soon after, Oedipus learns that he is only the adopted son of Corinth's rulers (Ibid. 55), but this fact does not seem to delegitimize him. When he asks Ægeon if he was "made the Heir of *Corinth*'s Crown,/Because *Ægeon*'s Hands presented me?", he is answered in the affirmative (Ibid. 56). Furthermore, this right to Corinth's crown appears to have divine blessing. This is because, later in the play, once the truth of Oedipus' parentage and unintentional sins has been made clear, Tiresias, presumably speaking for the gods, announces, "Tho' banish'd *Thebes*, in *Corinth* you may Reign;/Th' infernal Pow'rs themselves exact no more" (Ibid. 63). It should, however, be pointed out that in common with the ambiguity surrounding the question of legitimate succession for Thebes made in this play, it is possible that in Corinth too simple inheritance of the crown is not sufficient to make one king. Should the widowed Merope take another spouse, which she is adamant she will not, it is implied that a rival to Oedipus' succession would be created. This is because Merope, according to Ægeon, has for the "sake" of Oedipus "sworn to die unmarry'd" (Ibid. 54). In the same dialogue is also hinted that "the general

[73] It is the case though that in *Oedipus at Colonus*, Seneca's *Phoenician Women*, and Statius' *Thebaid* for instance, Oedipus is depicted as having remain in the city – at least for a time –without further consequences. This is presumably because he has then atoned for his "crimes" through self-blinding.

Homage/Of [the] Corinthian Lords" may also be requisite for the coronation of a Corinthian king (Ibid. 54).

Whilst Oedipus is thus represented as the legitimate king of Thebes, there are other characters that also possibly have a legitimate claim to the crown, especially after Oedipus' fall from grace. However, even before this occurs, Creon makes an attempt on it in his own right. Creon's own bases for his potential legitimacy are now to be examined. Firstly, however, a point about Oedipus' elected status needs to be considered. It has already been noted that Oedipus became king of Thebes through popular acclaim. It is unclear, though, whether once having been chosen, he was given the right to rule unto his death, or if he has to maintain the support of the people as monarch. Tiresias believes that Oedipus is in fact elected monarch for life. That is why, in the first act of the play, he condemns the Thebans for choosing Creon as their new king while Oedipus is still alive. He first attacks them for a variety of ordinary sins and then adds:

> And yet, as if all these were less than nothing,
> You add Rebellion to 'em; impious *Thebans*!
> Have you not sworn before the Gods to Serve
> And to obey this *OEdipus*, your King
> By publick Voice elected? (Dry. *Oed*. 9).

His point is accepted by the people, so it appears as if Oedipus is supposedly ruler for life. Even if this is true, and even though it places him in a stronger position as monarch than one in which he constantly requires public support, it remains the case that a monarch that has relied at some point on the people for his legitimacy is likely to remain more vulnerable to the public mood than a monarch who inherits the throne through primogeniture, and this point will be examined later.

It is presumably Creon and his followers' being aware of this weakness in Oedipus' position that led up to the election of Creon which Tiresias condemned. Prior to the election Creon's followers feel that Oedipus' absence can be exploited in the interest of Creon's own ambition (Dry. *Oed*. 3). This leads Creon to feel he

has a good chance to "snatch the Crown" if he "make[s] haste 'ere *OEdipus* return" (Ibid. 6). Creon and his followers set to work on the public of Thebes, and they are soon offering Creon the crown. He pretends to wish to reject it, much as Julius Caesar does in Shakespeare's play, in order to make their support of him more adamant, and to appear he has the virtue of modesty. He initially succeeds in gaining their affirmation of him as a ruler (Ibid. 7-8). Even though Tiresias' above mentioned intervention swings the crowd back behind Oedipus, Creon's followers exploit Oedipus' supposed foreignness, to win them back. Tiresias then reminds them of what Oedipus did for them in ridding them of the Sphinx. This gets the crowd to support Oedipus again. Due to the fact that the crowd is able to be manipulated so easily, the matter might not have rested with Oedipus being finally acclaimed, but for his triumphant return from his military campaign at this point. The cowardly Creon then conceals his ambition, and instead appears to welcome Oedipus home as "our Victorious King" (Ibid. 12). The potential for Creon to exploit a difficult situation and be elected to the crown has been proved by his experience though.

Alongside the election of the monarch, the idea of legitimacy through descent is also confusingly accepted in Thebes, and this can be made use of in Creon's quest to be made the legitimate king. Creon's supporter Diocles, is able to counter Tiresias' point about the people having sworn fealty to Oedipus, and their breaking of their oaths being treachery by reminding the crowd that they were "sworn before/To *Lajus* and his Blood" and then affirming that:

> While *Lajus* has a lawful Successor,
> Your first Oath still must bind: *Eurydice*
> Is Heir to *Lajus*; let her marry Creon:
> Offended Heav'n will never be appeas'd
> While *OEdipus* pollutes the Throne of *Lajus*,
> A Stranger to his Blood (Dry. *Oed*. 9).

Aside from the great unwitting irony of the last two lines, this speech gets the people to rally behind Creon again. Thus the idea of fealty being owed to the

legitimate descent of Lajus is also accepted. Creon's plan to gain the crown through marriage to Eurydice, just as Oedipus has through his marriage to Jocasta, fails though due to the feelings of repulsion that she has for him.

It is also noteworthy that in the myth-cycle upon which the *Oedipus the King* play by Sophocles is based, Creon actually does wind up as ruler of the state. He becomes king following the deaths of Oedipus' two sons Eteocles and Polynices at each other's hands. Thus, he is the king in Sophocles play *Antigone*, the action of which commences soon after this mutual killing. His right to the throne, following the elimination of Oedipus' male bloodline, is due to his descent from Cadmus. Creon is the son of Cadmus' second son Menoeceus, and Jocasta is his elder sister. Laius on the other hand is the grandson of Polydorus, Cadmus' first son (Soph. *TTP*. 425). This is why, in the play *Oedipus at Colonus*, Creon refers to his "ties of blood" (Ibid. 839) to the old and exiled Oedipus, who, unlike in Dryden and Lee's play, does not commit suicide soon after finding out the truth of his birth. In Dryden and Lee's play it is repeatedly made clear that Creon is Jocasta's brother[74]. That he is also of high birth is strongly suggested. Creon obviously is far from being an ordinary citizen. The able figures of Diocles and Pyracmon back Creon's attempts for the crown, without coveting it themselves, implying that Creon is of higher birth than them. There is also a remark in the play that suggests Creon belongs by blood to the royal house of Lajus. When Tiresias condemns the people for what he sees as their treachery to Oedipus, he reminds them of the time of the Sphinx when, as he says, "This Creon shook for fear,/The Blood of *Lajus* cruddled in his Veins" (Dry. *Oed*. 10). Creon's being of the "Blood of Lajus" would surely be through their common ancestry of Cadmus. The point is not made explicitly clear though.

If Creon is of the house of Cadmus, and as it would not be known that ironically Oedipus is in fact Lajus' heir, aside from the powerful potential female claim of Eurydice, the male figure with the greatest right to the throne would

[74] For instance at pp. 3, 16.

appear to be Creon. And this would give his ambition a considerable legitimate boost. Edmunds certainly feels that "Creon could in fact have been a legitimate claimant to the throne" (Edmunds 95). That Dryden and Lee knew of Creon's ancestry as the ancient Greeks regarded it is strongly suggested by their making Creon romantically interested in Eurydice, a figure who in ancient mythology is not Laius' daughter, but Creon's wife.

What is certainly the case in the play is that Creon does take power for himself. His assumption of the crown occurs between the end of the fourth act, which sees Oedipus' discovery of the truth about himself, and Tiresias' revelation that the gods will not permit him to rule in Thebes any longer, and the opening of Act 5 when expresses his satisfaction that he is now king of Thebes (Dry. *Oed*. 64). It is not clear how Creon has assumed the crown, whether through public election or through claims of descent. It does seem though that his attainment of it is not completely secure. That is why, in response to Creon's euphoria, Pyracmon advises him to "give the fatal Choice [to Euydice]/Of Death, or Marriage" (Ibid. 64). By advising Creon in this way, Pyracmon reveals that Eurydice is a potential threat to his power. She, however, can be used to enhance his power through marriage, or at least be eliminated as a threat. Furthermore, there could be a return of Oedipus to deal with as well. Thus, Creon's other supporter, Alcander, advises Creon to have Oedipus killed as simple "Banishment" cannot "give Assurance to your doubtful Reign" (Ibid. 65). It is also highly significant that Alcander uses the term "doubtful" to describe Creon's reign here, as Creon also is not the monarch in the eyes of all. When Hæmon comes to see Creon he is weeping over "what has happen'd to the desperate King" (Ibid. 65), by whom he means Oedipus. Creon is not bothered by the viewpoint of the man he sees as "foolish" (Ibid. 66), but it is an indication that the change in authority is not one that is universally accepted. Most striking is the fact that when Creon finally orders Oedipus to be put to death, he commands the death of "The King" (Ibid. 75), thus making it appear that even he himself still regards Oedipus as the legitimate ruler of Thebes.

Another character with a possible legitimate primogenital claim to the throne as Laius' supposed only child is Eurydice. Until the last act of the play she is uninterested in making such a claim for herself though. Whilst Diocles refers to her as the "lawful Successor" (Dry. *Oed*. 9) to Lajus, Eurydice makes no attempt to challenge Oedipus' rule of Thebes. She seems content with Oedipus' rule in the play, and it can be assumed that she was satisfied with the election of Oedipus by the people, and perhaps partook in it herself. With the fall of Oedipus, the situation changes for her, though. Whilst she feels that "a Crown seems dreadful" (Ibid. 67), more importantly, she has long been aware that Creon is a threat both to her and her lover Adrastus, but with the machine of the state behind him, Creon now has the potential of doing them great harm. That is why, when Creon is attempting to get Adrastus either expelled from Thebes or put to death, Eurydice finally acts. She appeals to all present:

> Hear me, O *Thebans*, if you dread the Wrath
> Of her whom Fate ordain'd to be your Queen,
> Hear me, and dare not, as you prize your Lives,
> To take the Part of that Rebellious Traytor.
> By the Decree of Royal *OEdipus*,
> By Queen *Jocasta*'s Order, by what's more
> My own dear Vows of everlasting Love,
> I here resign to Prince *Adrastus* Arms
> All that the World can make me Mistress of (Dry. *Oed*. 68).

It must be noted though that from the perspective of political legitimacy, this speech is complicated for two reasons. Firstly, Eurydice uses the authority of Oedipus and Jocasta, who are still alive, for what she is about to do. Thus she is implying that they still have legitimate authority, although she has already just claimed the authority of being queen herself prior to doing so. Secondly, Eurydice is assuming that even if she is legitimate queen, she is able to dispose of her legitimacy in any way she seems fit; and in this case, to grant it to Adrastus. It is unclear whether her authority enables her to do so, and for her to place as ruler of Thebes a foreigner, and even more a former enemy of the city, is quite an

audacious act. It seems as if it would almost certainly be challenged later by the people of Thebes, whose latent xenophobia has already been directed against Oedipus. These questions are left unresolved by Creon's murder of Eurydice, and Adrastus' being slain by Creon's soldiers.

The other potential legitimate rulers through primogeniture, who are the sons of Oedipus and Jocasta, are also dealt with through murder, although in this case at their unbalanced mother's hands (Dry. *Oed*. 76). Except for the sympathy they evoke at their offstage fate, they have no role within the play, and thus their technical legitimacy needs not be considered, especially considering they do not survive anyhow[75].

The play closes without Thebes having a ruler, or as Edmunds puts it "[t]he play ends with Thebes, as far as its government is concerned, a tabula rasa" (Edmunds 95). Oedipus, Jocasta and their children are all dead. The other child of Laius, Eurydice, is also dead. The ambitious Creon, of royal blood and who at least showed some Machiavellian qualities, has not survived either. The possibility of Thebes passing under the control of an able foreign prince, like that of Denmark being taken over by Fortinbras in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, is likewise out of the question once Adrastus is slain. Thus the situation at the end of the play resembles that of Shakespeare's *King Lear*. It is Hæmon and Tiresias who actually close the play. Whilst Hæmon has proved himself a loyal servant of Oedipus, Creon's earlier judgement of him as "most honest, faithful, foolish *Hæmon*" (Dry. *Oed*. 66) raises questions over his ability to guide the state should he aspire to rule it. Moreover, whilst Tiresias declares that the "Thebans" are people "Whom Heav'n decrees to

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[75] In the original Oedipus myth-cycle, the children of Oedipus, who are considerably older than their versions in Dryden and Lee's play, do indeed survive, and once Oedipus has fallen from power, the rule of Thebes passes to his two sons, Eteocles and Polynices, who are to rule each for a year at a time, or what Statius calls "successive rule/or revolution of authority" (Statius 1.128-9). In *Oedipus at Colonus* it is related by Oedipus' daughter Ismene that while her two brothers "[a]t first were eager to leave the throne to Creon/not to pollute the city any longer" (Soph. *TTP*. 400-1), soon afterwards they change their minds, and decided to rule themselves.

raise with Peace and Glory" (Dry. *Oed*. 77), it is unclear that this could be done under his control as despite his proven ability with the Theban people, he is very old and seems to have committed himself to the priesthood. It is also worthy of note that the question of who will become Corinth's ruler is also left unresolved.

In order to show that within this play, as with the others investigated in this work, virtue and legitimacy are closely tied with the most virtuous character being the legitimate ruler, the virtues of Oedipus will be examined next. It is the case, however, as in the other plays, that Oedipus is not flawlessly virtuous, and so his lapses from virtue will also be analysed.

3.3.2 Analysis of the Virtues of the Character of Oedipus

Overall, Oedipus is a virtuous monarch. He has been described by Edmunds as a character who "displays every virtue in this play" (Edmunds 95). He is certainly viewed as a virtuous figure by other characters within the drama. Jocasta makes reference to his "noble Core" (Dry. *Oed*. 49), and maybe the greatest complement paid to Oedipus in the play is that of Lajus, his father murdered by him. Lajus' ghost sees Oedipus as the embodiment of "Temperance, Justice, Prudence, Fortitude,/And every Kingly Vertue" (Ibid. 40). Indeed it is his virtue that makes him a great king and explains why his former enemy Adrastus also holds him in high esteem (Ibid. 23). The great esteem in which Oedipus is held by Adrastus is most clearly exhibited in Act 4. Here Adrastus has escaped from the prison into which he was thrown by Oedipus, in the turmoil that occurs when the mob come to storm the palace. However, Adrastus does not seek to flee the city. Instead, he comes to offer his services to Oedipus, whom he regards as such a great ruler that he even decides to ignore what he has seen the ghost of Lajus reveal, and is willing to risk his life for the Theban king (Ibid. 50). Oedipus' overall greatness as a ruler surely also explains why he remains after his fall "belov'd" by the people, and is "much lamented" by them (Ibid. 64).

Oedipus' individual virtues will now be examined, beginning with the cardinal virtue of wisdom. It has been shown that one aspect of this princely virtue is that it makes the ruler act in the interest of the state. This is something that

Oedipus certainly does. He has taken the measure of sending Dymas to Delphi to learn of the reason for the plague affecting the city (Dry. *Oed*. 13), and then works to atone the gods for the plague (Ibid. 17). More significantly, he shows himself willing to sacrifice himself for his people. Once he has returned from battle, in consternation at what is happening to Thebes, he pleads with the gods thus:

> Hear me thus prostrate. Spare this groaning Land,
> Save innocent *Thebes*, stop the Tyrant Death;
> Do this, and lo I stand up an Oblation
> To meet your swiftest and severest Anger,
> [D]o[']t all at once, and strike me to the Center (Dry. *Oed*. 18).

It is the case though that, as with his justice and temperance for example, whilst his inner tension grows as the play progresses, his wisdom suffers. This leads him to place his trust in Creon. Oedipus gives credence to the false suggestion of Creon that Tiresias and Adrastus are conspiring together to get Adrastus freed. Oedipus thus unwisely turns against his supporters. Following this, he actually places Creon in a great position of public trust, which even Creon himself feels is worthy of amusement (Dry. *Oed*. 47), and which he uses to turn the people of Thebes against Oedipus by announcing the revelation of the true murderer of Lajus to them (Ibid. 47-8). Oedipus is unaware of this though, and as the crowd surge towards the palace, Oedipus shows his continuing trust for Creon by calling him "worthy *Creon*" and giving him a military command to deal with the mob (Ibid. 50).

Oedipus manifests the cardinal virtue of justice in seeking to discover who Lajus' killer actually was, and he is amazed that this had not been done prior to his own reign (Dry. *Oed*. 14). However, in his attempt to achieve justice for the former slain king, he ceases to be just when he comes to face obstacles in his investigation – which are ironically raised for his own protection – and becomes tyrannical instead. For instance, when Tiresias refuses to tell Oedipus whom Lajus named as his murderer, and despite Tiresias' total and loyal support to him prior to this refusal, Oedipus reacts by accusing Tiresias of being the "Author, or Accomplice,

of this Murther" (Ibid. 41). He also calls Phorbas a "shifting Traytor, Villain,/Damn'd Hypocrite [and] equivocating Slave" (Ibid. 60) when Phorbas is simply trying to conceal a truth which will break the spirit of his king. Additionally, he demands that if any of the public withhold information from him, they will be punished with "sudden Death" (Ibid. 57).

Moreover, when a figure has been accused by Oedipus, he does not justly allow that person the opportunity to provide his side of the story, such as when he unfairly condemns Adrastus to prison (Dry. *Oed*. 42). Additionally, tyrant-like, he shows a willingness to use torture as against Phorbas for his repeated evasions (Ibid. 61). This torture is certainly of an exceptionally cruel kind involving "his Skin flead off" and his being "burnt alive" (Ibid. 61). It is to be noted that his injustice extends to his close companions too. With the full knowledge of who he is, his self-loathing passion causes him to unfairly turn on those who care for him. For instance, whilst Jocasta contracted her marriage to Oedipus with as clear a conscience as his, once the truth has been revealed, he is initially unjustly hostile towards her. He describes her as "worse than worst/Of damning Charmers!" and an "abhor'd, loath'd Creature" (Ibid. 69). When she has simply come in compassion to see him and take her leave of him, he accuses her of wishing "to reap new Pleasures" (Ibid. 69) from him. For much of the play therefore, it is not possible to view Oedipus as a just ruler or individual.

He is however clearly a courageous one. When Oedipus learns that the people have turned against him, he does not "fly" as Creon advises him to, but in fact orders the "open[ing of] every Gate of this our Palace" in order to "let the Torrent in" (Dry. *Oed*. 50) which he wishes to deal with personally. In fact, he connects his necessary courage here to his role as king. As for the cardinal virtue of temperance, Oedipus shows on occasion great humility. For instance, whilst he cannot understand why he has been accused of killing Lajus, he still allows himself to ponder the most remote possibility of his being culpable of it before rejecting the idea (Ibid. 43). However, his temperance fails him in regard to himself when the truth of his past is finally revealed. While his resulting self-hating distraught state is

understandable, it does not fit with the classical ideal of temperance, and certainly his attempted (Ibid. 63) and then actual suicide (Ibid. 77) under such conditions do not either. Oedipus also exhibits the intemperate quality of arrogance in his earlier interrogation of Phorbas, Phorbas naturally tries to evade the direct line of questioning. This leads an irate Oedipus to arrogantly declare "'Tis a King speaks; and Royal Minutes are/Of much more worth than thousand Vulgar Years" (Ibid. 60).

Until his final intemperate passion and at points within it, Oedipus shows himself as a virtuous figure of piety, though. He is pious towards the gods, towards whom he is humbly grateful for his success in the war with Argos (Dry. *Oed*. 16). And especially, even when being treated by others like a god at the beginning of the play, he piously does not regard himself as one. Rather, he is humble in his approach to the divine, and accepting of its will. Oedipus, in seeking to understand what is happening to Thebes, asks from the "Pleasure" of the gods:

> If that the Glow-worn light of human Reason
> Might dare to offer at immortal Knowledge,
> And cope with Gods, why all this storm of Nature?
> Why do the Rocks split, and why rouls the Sea?
> Why those Portents in Heav'n, and Plagues on Earth? (Dry. *Oed*. 18).

He humbly adds that if it is all just "to fright the Dwarfs/Which your won Hands have made . . . Then be it so" (Ibid. 18). Oedipus also leaves it to the gods to clear up the confusion of whether he is Lajus' murderer or not (Ibid. 46). Moreover, as a pious ruler, he respects the holy sanctuary of the gods within Thebes (Ibid. 35).

It is also possible that Oedipus' self-harm and suicide at the end, whilst intemperate, are pious acts of atonement. Such a reading seems especially valid when it is borne in mind that whilst the Oedipus of *The Thebaid* does not take his own life, his self-harm is regarded by Jove in that poem as an appropriate and righteous act of atonement[76]. In Dryden and Lee's play, the report of Oedipus'

blinding that Hæmon gives to Creon has the suggestion of atonement in it. Oedipus, it is related, cried to the gods before his self-blinding:

> Gods, I accuse you not, tho' I no more
> Will view your Heav'n, 'till with more durable Glasses.
> The mighty Souls immortal Perspectives.
> I find your dazzling Beings (Dry. *Oed*. 66).

He then tears out his eyes. Thus he links his intended self-blindness with a desire to reconnect with the gods. It is especially noteworthy that he decides on this act after condemning himself "For bloodiest Murder, and for burning Lust" (Dry. *Oed*. 66), acts that require some kind of punishment, and for which "ample Satisfaction" cannot be achieved through simple sobbing (Ibid. 66). It seems, therefore, that his act of self-harm is one of atonement[77]. The last point to make here concerns the thunder that is heard as Oedipus plunges to his death (Ibid. 77). If taken in the context of the use of thunder in ancient epics, it could be read as showing divine approval for his action which can then be seen as the most extreme form of atonement[78].

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[76] In that poem, Jove briefly relates Oedipus' story to the other gods:

> A shameless heir ascends his father's bed
> And stains his mother's innocence–seeking
> entrance to his own origin. The man
> is horrible, *but gave a permanent*
> *atonement to the gods*: he threw away
> the light of day. No longer does he feed
> on upper air (Statius 233-9 – my italics).

[77] In contrast, Hæmon believes that it is with "impious Hands" (Dry. *Oed*. 66) that Oedipus blinds himself.

[78] Thunder can be a sign of approbation in ancient epic, and is the especial prerogative of Zeus or Jove who is explicitly connected with this natural force in the play as "Thund'ring *Jove*" (Dry. *Oed*. 51), and in ancient times is known as "the thunder king" (Homer *Ody*. 5.4) or "the Thunderer" (Virgil 7.426). Examples

As a pious figure, Oedipus is also concerned that his conscience is clean. It is important to him that he is "arm'd with Innocence" (Dry. *Oed*. 28) when facing the world. As the plague rages on Thebes, Oedipus analyzes himself for being its cause through any wrongdoing, but finds himself blameless (Ibid. 19). And even

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from the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid* will illuminate this point. In the *Odyssey* two instances of thunder to show divine approval occur after Odysseus has returned to Ithaca, but whilst he is still disguised as a beggar. At one point, Odysseus to be certain of divine support prays thusly to Zeus:

> Father Zeus, if you really willed it so—to bring me
> home over land and sea-lanes, home to native ground
> after all the pain you brought me—show me a sign
> . . .
> And Zeus in all his wisdom heard that prayer.
> He thundered at once, out of his clear blue heavens
> High above the clouds, and Odysseus' spirit lifted
> (Homer *Ody*. 20.109-11, 114-6).

Also when Odysseus, still in disguise, manages to string the bow that none of the suitors are able to:

> At that moment
> Zeus cracked the sky with a bolt, his blazing sign,
> and the great man who had borne so much rejoiced at last
> that the son of cunning Cronus flung that omen down for him.
> (Homer *Ody*. 21.460-2).

In the *Aeneid*, when Anchises is reluctant to leave Troy, "sacred fire" appears around the head of Iülus. Anchises regards this as a good omen for the future of his family, and he supplicates Jove for confirmation of it. Then "Scarce had he said, when on our left we hear/A peal of rattling thunder roll in air" (Virgil 2.940-1). This sign of divine approval is enough to make Anchises overcome his reluctance to leave his city and go into exile with his son and grandson. Thunder is also used as a sign of divine approval at (Ibid. 7.191, 8.694, 9.864). However, in Dryden and Lee's play, the other instances of thunder appear to show divine disproval – at least of the situation in Thebes – for example at the beginning of Act 2 on page 17. Confusingly, thunder can be used to show divine disproval in the classical texts too, for instance in the *Aeneid* when Sinon convincingly depicts thunder as an ominous omen (Virgil 2.157). It is all quite ambiguous. The truth is that the thundering at the end of Dryden and Lee's play could represent divine approval for Oedipus' suicide, divine disapproval for Oedipus suicide or even just a simple use of sound effects to heighten the drama.

when he starts to think it is possible that it is in fact he who is Lajus' killer, he still insists on his clean conscience. As he justly asserts in his appeal to the gods:

> If wand'ring in the Maze of Fate I run,
> And backward trod the Paths I sought to shun,
> Impute my Errors to your own Decrees;
> My Hands are guilty, but my heart is free (Dry. *Oed*. 46).

Moreover, in his despair at the end of the play, Oedipus still believes in his inherent innocence. Thus when the ghost of Lajus appears to him and Jocasta, he appeals to it to destroy his body so "That my poor ling'ring Soul may take her Flight/To your immortal Dwellings" (Dry. *Oed*. 71). In other words, Oedipus is confident that his soul will belong with the gods after his death, and has overturned his slightly earlier doubt that "the Cœlestial Guards" would bar him and Jocasta from the region of the divine, and instead would "dash our Spirits down" (Ibid. 69).

Yet at times of particular emotional stress, Oedipus, however understandably, can speak impiously. For instance, after having discovered the truth of his origins, Oedipus condemns "all the Pow'rs/Cœlestial, nay, Terrestial and Infernal" for having "Conspire[d] the Rack of out-cast *OEdipus*" when in fact, Tiresias has revealed to him that the divine will has decided that while "banish'd Thebes, in Corinth you may Reign" (Dry. *Oed*. 64,63) Thus, Oedipus is impious in imputing to the divinities a desire to fully oppress him, when all they wish is that he no longer pollute Thebes. He condemns them more justly right at the end of the play, when his motivation is selfless compassion for Jocasta and his family. When he has learned of her infanticide and suicide, Oedipus, intending to kill himself too, exclaims:

> Oh! my Children! Oh, what have they done?
> This was not like the Mercy of the Heav'ns,
> To set her Madness on such Cruelty.
> This stirs me more than all my Sufferings,
> And with my last Breath I must call you Tyrants (Dry. *Oed*. 77).

Oedipus also generally exhibits filial piety. This is because whilst it is unquestionably the case that Oedipus is, as his father's ghost calls him, a "Parracide" (Dry. *Oed*. 40), Oedipus' filial piety should be judged in connection to those he believes are his "Parents, *Polybus* and *Merope*" (Ibid. 45), the king and queen of Corinth. His respect and care for the couple he believes to be his parents is so strong that once he has been told by the Oracle that "'Twas my Fate/To kill my Father, and pollute his Bed,/By marrying her who bore me" (Ibid. 46) rather than return home he pledged to avoid the city for the rest of his life (Ibid. 46). Despite feeling revulsion towards the prophesy of the Oracle, he acted to give it no possibility of success, and of course in that way ironically fulfils it. However, it must be noted that in the desperation of his situation in Act 4, Oedipus rejoices when he hears of Polybus' death, especially that he died naturally (Ibid. 53). He is thus able to feel he has cleared himself of the Oracle's claim he will be a "Parricide" (Ibid. 54). Yet, in this heightened emotional state, he is aware that he is not acting piously towards the man he believes to be his father (Ibid. 54). His filial piety causes him to reject the idea of going back to Corinth to claim the crown after Polybus' death, as with Merope still living, he remains fearful of fulfilling the incest part of the Oracle (Ibid. 54). It is also the case that as the truth about Oedipus' past slowly comes out, he learns that he is not in fact the natural son of Polybus and Merope. The moment he hears from Ægeon, whom he had already loyally welcomed to Thebes with "Ten thousand welcomes" as his "Foster-Father (Ibid. 52), that it was "from my Arms" that Polybus received him as a baby, Oedipus assumes that Ægeon could be his father and this leads him to declare to piously place himself wholly in the other's power (Ibid. 56).

In addition to his filial piety, Oedipus, also on the whole evinces spousal piety. Aside from the obvious irony, Oedipus reveals his real affection for his wife when he tells her "So well I love, Words cannot speak how well./No pious Son e'er lov'd his Mother more/Than I my dear *Jocasta*." (Dry. *Oed*. 16). He regards her as "Life of my Life, and Treasure of my Soul" (Ibid. 28). That he is a decent husband

is also show by Jocasta's intense feelings of love for him[79]. Jocasta is so important to Oedipus that it is "by [her] self" that "[t]he greatest Oath" (Ibid. 28) he can swear can be made. It is also to Jocasta that Oedipus turns in his times of great emotional crisis (Ibid. 45). Even after Oedipus has discovered that she is really his mother, his love and need for her remains. Consequently, following his blinding, when they meet again, he knows that they must separate, but he is loath for this to happen, and wishes to return to her as his wife until the presence of the ghost of Lajus that prevents this from occurring (Ibid. 70-1). It should be noted though that Oedipus can be impatient with Jocasta in times of great emotional strain. He is severe when he learns that Phorbas knows the truth of his past. Jocasta, who at that point realizes her true connection with Oedipus, begs Oedipus to "banish Phorbas" (Ibid. 58) and tells him that if he "grant this first Request" he may "Deny [her] all Things else" (Ibid. 58). His response is to ignore her passionate wish, and he tells her instead that "If thou truly lov'st me,/Either forbear this Subject, or retire" (Ibid. 58).

Oedipus exhibits the virtue of magnanimity in his treatment of Adrastus. Although Adrastus is a prisoner of war at the beginning of the play, Oedipus frees him and lets him go and court Eurydice (Dry. *Oed*. 12). Also before he became king, he was magnanimous. In revealing his encounter with Lajus and his followers, whom he mistook for a band of thieves, he relates that "four Men I slew./The fifth upon his Knees demanding Life,/My Mercy gave it" (Ibid. 46). And, even when Oedipus is furious with Tiresias for what he supposes is his slandering him as a murderer, he insults Tiresias, but still accepts that "thy Age protects thee" (Ibid. 42) from more serious repercussions. He is not, however, magnanimous towards the unknown murderer of Lajus. For instance, he calls down the following curse for the person responsible for Lajus' death:

> But for the Murderer's self, unfound by Man,
> Find him ye Pow'rs Cœlestial and Infernal;

[79] For example, see pp. 19-20, 25.

> And the same Fate, or worse than Lajus met,
> Let be his Lot; his Children be accurst;
> His Wife and Kindred, all of his be curs'd (Dry. *Oed*. 15).

The irony that Oedipus unknowingly inflicts this curse upon himself helps to reveal how unjust it is, as he later denounces the gods in the deaths of his children, as noted above. Moreover, while Tiresias is willing to spare the life of Lajus' murderer, with his assertion that "The Wretch, who Lajus kill'd, must bleed or fly;/Or Thebes, cosum'd with Plagues, in Ruins lie" (Dry. *Oed*. 22), Oedipus mercilessly rules out the idea of exile. To Oedipus the murderer is a "most accursed Wertch" and Oedipus' intention is that "sudden Death's his Doom./Here shall he fall, bleed on this very Spot" (Ibid. 22).

Oedipus, therefore, is a generally virtuous figure whose lapses from virtue occur, as with the heroic figures in the other plays being studied, when he is under great emotional stress, either as a result the impediments put up against his just desire to find the murder of Lajus, or more understandably when the truth of his birth has been revealed. Lastly, before moving on to Creon, it is to be mentioned that virtue and appearance are indeed united in Oedipus, who is described by Jocasta as having a "beauteous Out-side"[80] (Dry. *Oed*. 49).

3.3.3 Analysis of the Virtues of the Character of Creon

Creon is unique among all the characters studied in this work in that, unlike Polydamas or even Nourmahal, he does not seem to have a single redeeming quality in terms of virtue. When he is described by Adrastus as an "[u]nheard of

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[80] Oedipus' presumed disability, considering that his "untry'd Feet" were "Bor'd" soon after his birth (Dry. *Oed*. 44), is not exhibited in this play. In Sophocles *Oedipus the King*, the stage directions for Robert Fagles' translation direct, right at the beginning of the play, that "OEDIPUS *comes forward, majestic but for a telltale limp*" (Soph. *TTP*. 159). The original play would not have had stage directions, but Fagles surely bases ones on the condition of Oedipus' ankles as an infant, when they were "pinned together" and from which his name, meaning "swollen foot" (Graves 375), derives (Soph. *TTP*. 220).

Monster! Eldest born of Hell!" (Dry. *Oed*. 75), and "[t]h' inhuman Author of all Villanies" (Ibid. 75), Adrastus is being fairly accurate in his description.

The cardinal virtue of wisdom requires that the leader rule for the good of the state. Creon, however, is a wholly selfish individual. He is even recognized as such. In her anger at Creon's attempt to ensure Adrastus is executed for Lajus' murder, Eurydice justly accuses Creon of being "Thou who lov'st nothing but what nothing loves,/And that's thy self" (Dry. *Oed*. 32). It is also noteworthy that after Creon has taken over power, there is little mention of how effective he is in ruling the state. Yet, a stray remark of Hæmon's to the effect that Creon is "[t]hat Brand which sets our City in a Flame" (Ibid. 73) strongly suggests that he is an ineffective ruler at best, and it can be understood that this is due to his lack of concern as to the interests of the state.

Creon is an unjust figure. For instance, he continuously seeks to usurp the rule of Thebes. His injustice is also aimed at Eurydice and Creon. In the confusion following Apollo's revelation that it is the firstborn of Lajus who is responsible for Lajus' death, Creon, who has been manipulating the situation, confesses to his close confidents that towards Eurydice and Adrastus, his motivations are "Lust, and Revenge". He wants "To stab at once the only Man I hate,/And to enjoy the Woman whom I love" (Dry. *Oed*. 26). His feelings towards Eurydice have earlier been expressed by him. It is "Love with Malice" that is to be assuaged by "seiz[ing] and stanch[ing]/The hunger of my Love on this proud Beauty" and after to "leave the Scraps for Slaves" (Ibid. 6). These are the words of a man intent on rape. Creon's intentions towards Adrastus and Eurydice are therefore murderer and rape. Whilst he proves unsuccessful in his intention to rape Eurydice as his wife or without marrying her, he does succeed in having both of the lovers killed almost simultaneously, Eurydice at his hand, and Adrastus by the soldiers he has ordered (Ibid. 75).

Creon's injustice is also manifested in his abuse of the trust that Oedipus places in him, which has been noted above. Furthermore, Creon attempts to get the people of Thebes to break the oath of loyalty they made to Oedipus as their ruler,

an oath which Creon presumably made himself too. His injustice comes about through his lack of conscience, which he describes as "my Slave, my Drudge, my supple Glove,/My upper Garment, to put on, throw off,/As I think best" (Dry. *Oed*. 34).

Rather than evincing the cardinal virtue of courage, Creon is clearly depicted as a coward. Tiresias says of Creon that during the time of the Sphinx "[t]his Creon shook for fear,/The Blood of Lajus cruddled in his Veins" (Dry. *Oed*. 10). Furthermore, Creon faint-heartedly also immediately abandons his attempt to gain the crown when Oedipus returns, and it is noteworthy that Creon had not accompanied Oedipus in his war against Argos. Moreover, Creon is only able to bring his courageous enemy Adrastus to his mercy through blackmail. It is by threatening Eurydice with death that he gets Adrastus to disband his men (Ibid. 73).

Creon lacks any degree of temperance too. He is ambitious (Dry. *Oed*. 64), but more nefariously he is spiteful. Even though in the second act of the play Creon still does not know Oedipus is the murderer of Lajus, he sees the king is troubled and spitefully wishes death or discomfort on him (Ibid. 25). Creon's intemperance is also directed against himself. He expresses self-hatred:

> 'Tis better not to be than to be *Creon*.
> A thinking Soul is Punishment enough.
> But when 'tis Great, like mine, and Wretched too,
> Then every Thought draws Blood . . .
> I wou'd be young be handsome, be belov'd (Dry. *Oed*. 29).

Creon is also impious. Whilst Creon is understandably angry with the gods for having made him disabled, he does not accept his condition, and worse, he wishes his revenge upon them. That is why he sarcastically expresses his thanks to the divine as "Gods, I'm beholden to you, for making me in your Image" before sincerely adding "Wou'd I cou'd make you mine" (Dry. *Oed*. 12). Additionally, he shows no respect for their holy ground, being sacrilegiously willing to fight a duel upon it (Ibid. 35). In his attempted wooing of Eurydice, he also intends what is

described in Racine's *Britannicus* as a "union" of "impious incest", that is a marriage between an uncle and his niece[81] (Corneille & Racine 225). Oedipus notes that a marriage of "Uncle and Niece . . . 'Tis too like Incest: 'Tis Offence to Kind!" (Dry. *Oed*. 16).

It may not be expected that Creon should be loyal to the stranger Oedipus, who, even if he became his brother-in-law, also usurped his chance for the throne. Nonetheless, Creon feels no sense of familial piety towards his sister Jocasta either, in keeping with feeling no sense of loyalty towards anyone. He reports telling the crowd, after having condemned Oedipus as the murderer of Lajus to them, that "Jocasta too, no longer now my Sister,/Is found Complotter in the horrid Deed./Here I renounce all tye of Blood and Nature" (Dry. *Oed*. 47-8).

Rather than being virtuously honest, Creon reveals himself to be a liar. He himself relates how, after having whipped up the crowd against Oedipus for being the murderer of Lajus, he "to the Palace . . . return'd, to meet/The King, and greet him with another Story" (Dry. *Oed*. 48). When he next sees Oedipus, he mendaciously claims to him that he has personally suffered by making a defence of Oedipus to the populace (Dry.*Oed*. 50). Additionally, Creon attempts to get either Eurydice or Adrastus punished for the murder of Lajus. He uses the revelation of Apollo through Tiresias that Lajus' murderer was "The first of *Lajus* Blood" to condemn Eurydice, the only then known child of Lajus (Ibid. 22). It is not clear whether Creon believes his condemnation or not. However, despite no possible reference to Adrastus by Apollo, Creon denounces him as Lajus' murderer, and concocts a reason for Adrastus' supposed action by claiming Adrastus has been "deny'd" Eurydice's hand by the former king (Ibid. 24). Creon also later slanderously asserts to Oedipus that Tiresias and Adrastus are in a conspiracy with one other and against his interest (Ibid. 42).

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[81] In *Brtiannicus* this remark is made by Agrippina and refers to her own marriage with her uncle, the former emperor Claudius, which is based on an actual historical fact. See Freeman p.407.

The Renaissance and early-modern idea of a link between physical and moral disablement is made in this play too. Not only, as has already been noted, is Oedipus portrayed as a handsome figure, but Eurydice in rejecting Creon's advances points to the latter's disability and calls him "Thou Poison to my Eyes" (Dry. *Oed*. 5). She soon after goes on to insult him thus:

> Nature her self start back when thou wert born;
> And cry'd, the Work's not mine
> The Midwife stood aghast; and when she saw
> Thy Mountain back, and thy distorted Legs,
> The Face it self,
> Half-minted with the Royal Stamp of Man;
> And half o'ercome with Beast, stood doubting long,
> Whose Right in thee were more;
> And knew not, if to burn thee in the Flames,
> Were not the holier Work (Dry. *Oed*. 5).

She then adds that "[t]he crooked Mind within hunch'd out thy Back,/And wander'd in thy Limbs." (Dry. *Oed*. 6). Eurydice's feelings for Creon remain unaltered throughout the play, and later she refers to Creon in front of him as "that hunch-back'd monster" and "Th' excrescence of a Man" (Ibid. 31). As an ambitious disabled figure, he appears similar to Richard III at the beginning of Shakespeare's play of that name. However, as Scott notes, he is a "poor copy of Richard III" as he lacks his "abilities" and "his plots and treasons are baffled by the single appearance of Oedipus" (Dry. *Vol6*. 93).

Creon is one of Dryden's most despicable creations. As has already been noted, he is depicted as a far more sinister and unprincipled character than, for example, Polydamas in *Marriage à la Mode*. Yet whilst Polydamas is a simple usurper who still exhibits some virtuous qualities, the odious Creon does seem to have something of a legitimate claim to the throne, especially after the fall of Oedipus, and seems to be of royal blood. As such, Dryden shows here, and also as will be seen in *The Maiden Queen* with Lysimantes, that belonging to a royal house is no guarantee of virtuous behaviour.

3.3.4 The Question of the Character of Adrastus

There is one aspect to this play which would make the connection between virtue and legitimacy problematic, and that is the question of Adrastus. He is a more virtuous figure than Oedipus in that he shares his virtues but does not share his passion-produced vices, and if Eurydice's designation of the crown to him is accepted as legitimate, he should in fact at some point become ruler of Thebes. However, Dryden does not allow that storyline to develop, so it does not seem incorrect to leave Eurydice's nomination of Adrastus as not forming a solid basis of new monarchical legitimacy in the play, and for this reason there is no need to evaluate Adrastus' virtues. Additionally whilst his manifest virtues surely make him a suitable ruler of Argos, there is no other figure to compare him with from that city, so any assertion that he is the most virtuous candidate to rule there can only be speculative.

3.3.5 Analysis of the Virtues of the Character of Eurydice

Eurydice, as a child of Lajus will be examined for her virtue however, as her claim to legitimacy is more explicit and therefore seemingly valid. It is the case though that her presence in the play is insufficient to form a decent evaluation of her in this regard. Regardless of that, she certainly does possess the wisdom requisite of a virtuous ruler in placing the interests of the state above her own. Once she has been accused by Creon, she is willing to unjustly die for the sake of her city. She announces to the people that "Yes, *Thebans*, I will die to save your Lives" (Dry. *Oed*. 23). Moreover, she unites with this virtue an attractive physical form, as can be seen from Adrastus describing her as "the brightest Beauty" (Ibid. 23), and Creon's praise of her (Ibid. 4).

Her greatest act of virtue is more of the private capacity though, in that she selflessly gives her life to protect the man she loves (Dry. *Oed*. 75). This is significant as it seems to be the case that the role of Eurydice in the play is to help to provide a romantic subplot, and not to play a significant political role. This can also be seen in her slip from virtue when Eurydice, in fear that Adrastus is going to be executed for a crime he has not committed, impiously exclaims, "[i]sthere no God so much a Friend to Love,/Who can controul the Malice of our Fate?/Are they

all deaf? Or have the Giants Heav'n?" (Ibid. 36). It is therefore arguable that Dryden wishes to represent Eurydice as mainly virtuous, and imply she possesses the requisite moral worth that a legitimate princess should have without actually intending she should be regarded as a serious contender for the crown.

3.3.6 Analysis of the Virtues of the Character of Lajus

Lajus is a figure that does deserve an analysis in terms of virtue, as he was, prior to the main action of the play, the legitimate ruler of Thebes. There is less information to evaluate him from than with Oedipus or Creon, but it seems he would have been a ruler of mixed virtue. In regards to the cardinal virtue of justice, for instance, he was clearly willing to kill his innocent baby son, even if it was within the context of an ominous prophecy (Dry. *Oed*. 44). The contrast of Lajus with Phorbas who was unable to kill the infant Oedipus because it would have been a sin (Ibid. 57) and an act of "murder" (Ibid. 62) is instructive.

As for the cardinal virtue of temperance, the ghost of Lajus exhibits a certain degree of it. He is temperately humble not only in being able to recognize, as has already been mentioned, Oedipus' "Kingly Vertue" despite Oedipus having been responsible for his death. Indeed he is temperately modest enough to consider himself to have been the ultimate cause of his own undoing. He says of Oedipus that he:

> Was doom'd to do what Nature most abhors.
> The Gods foresaw it; and forbad his Being,
> Before he yet was Born. *I broke their Laws*,
> And cloath'd with Flesh his pre-existing Soul (Dry. *Oed*. 39 – my italics).

Nonetheless, his potential magnanimity needs to be questioned, as finally at the end of his speech, the ghost of Lajus seems to have run out of compassion and tells the Thebans "[d]o you forbid him Earth, and I'll forbid him Heav'n" (Dry. *Oed*. 40). Additionally, it may be the case that the temperance he has is the result of his experience in the afterlife. After all, it is the case that his intemperate arrogance on the road outside Thebes that created the situation in which he was slain (Ibid. 46).

In his ghostly form, Lajus also evinces compassion towards one who had acted against him, which implies he would have been a particularly magnanimous king if he acted similarly in life. While Oedipus is the author of Lajus' woes in the afterlife, it does appear that Lajus pities him for the fact that "Fate, that sent him wood-winkt to the World,/Perform'd its work by his mistaking Hands." (Dry. *Oed*. 40). Moreover, in life, he is described as having the virtue of strict honesty, Jocasta affirming that he was "The most sincere, plain, honest Man---/One who abhorr'd a Lye" (Ibid. 43). He also has the appearance of "Manly Majesty" (Ibid. 45) that is often in the Renaissance a sign of virtue.

What makes the moral quality of Lajus in life particularly suspect is that the ruler who was the king of Thebes is not in the afterlife in the state a divinely sanctioned king would be expected to be in. He is in a disturbed condition there, and is certainly not residing in Elysium. Once his ghost has been summoned by Tiresias and the Chorus, he reveals that he is in "Pains below" and that he is emotionally tortured by the other shades (Dry. *Oed*. 39). This is probably meant to imply that he is being punished for his sins in life, and thus Oedipus' indirect assumption of his crown marks the succession of a man of superior virtue. It also appears fair to conclude though that however questionable Lajus' virtue was, he was of superior moral worth to Creon, the only other potential candidate the play even possibly offers for the throne prior to Oedipus' appearance. As such, the play, like the others studied in this work, portrays Oedipus as the legitimate king as well as depicting him as the most virtuous of the serious contenders for the throne.

3.3.7 Further Political Points in *Oedipus*

In addition to showing this link between legitimate rule and virtue, the play also makes other political points, such as its implicit condemnation of democracy. This is achieved through Dryden's clearly pejorative representation of the common people, and his depicting them as being unsuited to make political decisions. This is clear from simplicity with which the crowd is swayed in this play, and which echoes both *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus*. The play presents four reasons for why these commoners are so easy to manipulate. The first concerns their vanity, and

explains why Creon tells his close companions to "gull" the masses of Thebes "with Freedom" and see that the result will be "you shall see 'em toss their Tails, and gad,/As if the Breeze has stung 'em" (Dry. *Oed*. 4). By flattering their vanity as supposedly "free" men, Creon can make the assumption of the throne with ease, and with their support ensure they wind up under Creon's own tyrannous government rather than Oedipus' virtuous one. In his direct manipulation of the crowd, Creon's false regard for them as "Fellow-Citizens" wins them over to his side (Ibid. 8). In their vain self-regard, they consider themselves to be without fault (Ibid. 9).

Secondly, they are manipulable due to their foolishness. In the first act of the play, when the crowd have been manipulated into supporting Creon for the crown, Creon, in a deliberate act of false modesty, pretends not to want it, and tells the crowd to "think agen" about their choice. This leads two citizens to reveal an inconceivable level of shallowness. The first citizen exclaims "[t]hink twice! I ne'er thought twice in all/my Life; that's double work" and the second exclaims that "[m]y first Word is always my second; and/therefore I'll have no second Word" (Dry. Ibid. *Oed*. 7). They are so imbecilic that they do not realise that "any Thing but Murder had been/a Sin" and that therefore there was anything impious about "Envy, Malice, Lying" or in "Perjuries", false measurement, or "Extortions" (Ibid. 9). Of course, as fools they are unable to properly judge another person's worth. Thus Creon expresses his view that it is only the "blind Vulgar" who cannot see his true viceful nature (Ibid. 6). He has no doubt that despite his true nature, "Kind Thoughts" about him can easily be "insinuate[d] . . . into the Multitude" (Ibid. 4) Later, Creon is able to whip the populace up into a frenzy by acting as if he were distraught by the revelation of Oedipus as the murderer of Lajus. He describes what happens next, "[a]nd there I wept, and then the Rabble howl'd;/And roar'd, and with a thousand antick Mouths/Gabbled Revenge, Revenge was all the Cry" (Ibid. 48). Then, acting in Creon's interest, they call their virtuous monarch Oedipus, a "cruel King" (Ibid. 50) instead. It is also to be noted that as fools, they

are swayed by emotion rather than reason, and this explains why they can become "drunk with Rage" (Ibid. 24).

The third reason is that they are inconsistent. At the beginning of the play, Diocles notes that "[t]he people [are] prone, as in all general Ills,/To sudden Change" (Dry. *Oed*. 3). It is certainly the case that while they have sworn their fealty to Oedipus, they are willing to switch it over to Creon, and they do not believe that their oaths have a binding nature. That is why, on the rebuke of Tiresias concerning their "Rebellion", one of the citizens complains that "it's a hard World . . . /If a Man's Oath must be his Master" (Ibid. 9). In the second rebellion, the people rise up against Oedipus, who they view as their enemy. However, Oedipus reminds them of the good he has done them by lifting the siege imposed by Adrastus, and this leads to "a sad Repentance" and "general Consternation" (Ibid. 51) among them. In other words, they change their minds once again. Moreover, the king that they had risen up against, when he has finally fallen due to his learning of his past, is then regarded by them with sympathy (Dry. *Oed*. 64). And finally, the simplistic people's interest in monarchy does not seem to extend much beyond pageantry. Thus, while the mob are cheering for Creon at the beginning of the play, the third citizen expresses his view that "Ha, if we were but worthy to see another Coronation, and then we must die, we'll go merrily together" (Ibid. 8). It is also the appearance of Oedipus coming home in triumph, and the chance to chant "*Io Pæans*" that helps to swing the mob back to loyalty towards him (Ibid. 11).

It is thus the case that through this play elected monarchy is implicitly condemned. Whilst the people are able to elect a virtuous monarch such as Oedipus, they are also just as able to elect a villain such as Creon. This is because the people themselves are not seen as sagacious enough to be left with the choice of who should rule them. Furthermore, an elected monarchy, as it relies on the people's choice, is inherently unstable, as the people's choice can be directed elsewhere, and is portrayed in the play as being prone to sudden changes.

Dryden also uses the play to make three other points about monarchy too. For instance, he depicts the act of regicide as being particularly deserving of punishment, as it is not simply a crime but also an act of impiety. According to the Oracle, it is "*Blood Royal unreveng'd* [that] *has curs'd the Land*" (Dry. *Oed*. 13). In other words, the killing of a king is divinely regarded with such aversion that it brings down the wrath of the gods on the whole of the city. At the beginning of the play, Oedipus sees what is happening to Thebes as the action of divine justice:

> [A] King's Blood/
> . . . and by his Subjects shed;
> . . . no wonder then too;
> If Monsters, Wars, and Plagues revenge such Crimes!
> If Heav'n be just, its whole Artillery
> All must be empty'd on us; Not one Bolt
> Shall err from *Thebes*; but more be call'd for, more;
> New moulded Thunder of a larger Size;
> Driv'n by whole *Jove* (Dry. *Oed*. 13).

He reiterates the point of the justice of the punishment, when he also expresses his view a little later on that "Rage will have way, and 'tis but just" (Dry.*Oed*. 20). To be clear, this "just" punishment has, when the play opens, resulted in half of all Thebans dying (Ibid. 11). It also seems to be the case that the appearance of the Sphinx, prior to the action of the play, was also linked to the monarch Lajus' death (Ibid. 14). It is to be noted however, that the scope of the punishment for regicide is portrayed as severe by Hæmon at the end of the play. Having heard of Jocasta's having committed infanticide, Hæmon exclaims:

> Relentless Heav'ns! Is then the Fate of *Lajus*
> Never to be atton'd? How sacred ought
> Kings Lives be held, but the Death of one
> Demands an Empire's Blood for Expiation? (Dry. *Oed*. 76).

There is a further point connecting regicide and impiety, and that is made by Oedipus who feels that a challenge to a king, can lead to a challenge to the king of the gods. As Oedipus puts it, an assult on "anointed Pow'r" should make the "Gods

beware" as "Jove wou'd himself be next,/Could [someone but reach him too" (Dry. *Oed*. 13). When the people turn against him in Act 4, Oedipus reiterates this point. He exclaims that "Who dares to face me, by the Gods as well/May brave the Majesty of Thund'ring Jove" (Ibid. 51). The reason that regicide is such a sin is due to the divinely-sanctioned nature of monarchy. Dryden certainly depicts monarchy in such a way within this play, with for instance, Adrastus referring to Oedipus' "sacred Majesty" (Ibid. 23). And even Creon, when lying to Oedipus about how he dealt with the people following the revelation of Oedipus as Lajus' murderer, still reveals how the monarch is regarded in a divine manner. He refers to Oedipus' "sacred Person" and tells him that "your Life is sacred" (Ibid. 50) whilst he does not believe it himself.

Another political point made by Dryden with this play concerns the question of the nationality of the monarch. The people are shown as being able to be whipped up into a xenophobic frenzy against Oedipus. But Dryden, through his Divine Right legitimist outlook appears to implicitly condemn this form of nativism, as it too can be used to place limitations on monarchic succession. It is certainly the case that, not only does Dryden portray Oedipus, who both the people and himself regard as a foreigner, as a virtuous ruler, he also presents the foreign Adrastus as having great virtue too. This is in stark contrast to the *de facto* leader of the nativist party Creon, a figure, as has been shown, of no redeeming moral worth.

3.4 *Secret Love; or, the Maiden Queen* (1667)

The final play to be analysed is *Secret Love; or, the Maiden Queen*, as it centres on the concept of princely legitimacy through marriage. The play was produced in 1667. As with *Marriage à la Mode*, this play "is a tragic-comedy" (Johnson 65), and much as with that other drama, for the analysis to be made in this work, what Harold Love calls "the 'serious' scenes" (Love 114) of the play will be examined, as what he describes as the "comic scenes" (Ibid. 114) have no political relevance. Nonetheless, it ought to be pointed out that for P. A. W. Collins it is precisely the comic scenes which provide the "vitality" (Collins 161) of the play[82].

In the play, which is set in Sicily, there are four potential candidates for the throne. They are the Queen – who remains otherwise unnamed throughout the play – and her cousin Lysimantes. The other two are Lysimantes' sister Candiope and her lover Philocles, who is also loved by the Queen herself. The bases of their legitimacy will now be examined.

3.4.1 The Characters and Legitimacy

The Queen is legitimate as she already occupies the throne, and for most of the play there is no attempt to unseat her, the attempt that is made towards the end of the play being motivated by jealousy and resentment and not in the conviction that the Queen has no right to rule. Furthermore, she is soon restored to power. Lysimantes has a legitimate claim to the throne should the Queen pass away, as he is next in line through primogeniture due to his kinship with her. He, however, would like to be made king sooner by marrying his cousin the Queen, and he has popular support for his desire (Dry. *Vol2*. 398). Nonetheless, he fails in his aspiration, but he is unambiguously designated by the Queen as successor, right at the end of the play. Candiope, a "princess of the blood", will presumably be next in line after Lysimantes, as Lysimantes vows a life of celibacy on failing to successfully woo the Queen. As Candiope's succession will lead to her soon-to-be husband Philocles becoming king, there is no need to analyse her for virtue, as it is to be assumed that she will not rule more than in title[83]. Philocles' claim to the

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[82] He even quotes part of the final dialogue between these two characters (Dry. *Vol2*. 466) as evidence for his claim that:

> One prominent element in Dryden's plays was the 'Proviso-scene', in which hero and heroine bargained about the conditions under which each might contemplate matrimony; Dryden's success with these scenes established them as a stereotype, and they were much imitated and burlesqued, the bargaining of Congreve's Mirabel and Millamant [in *The Way of the World*] being the most brilliant of the series (Collins 161).

[83] The Queen, as will be seen later in the work, with regard to her own situation, remarks that marriage would "impose a ruler upon [the people's] lawful queen", and for the potential husband, "[s]hould that aspiring man compass his ends,/What pawn of his obedience could he give me,/When kingly power were once invested in

crown will, of course, come through his marriage to Candiope. It is noteworthy that in terms of ability and virtue, the Queen does not believe Philocles unfitting to become monarch, and she herself is deeply attracted to him. However, she does believe that whilst she lives, the fact that Philocles is "not of royal blood" makes him "unfit to be a king" through marriage to herself (Ibid. 405).

An evaluation of princely virtue will thus be made on the Queen, Lysimantes and Philocles. The order of the evaluation will place Philocles before Lysimantes as he is a more virtuous figure, and the play ends focusing on the expectation that Philocles will one day become king, with Lysimantes' reign appearing little more than an interlude. This play deals with the workings of legitimacy acquired through marriage, even though a marriage does not actually take place in the play. How the drama deals with this form of legitimacy will be surveyed in more detail below. For now the virtue of the character of the Queen will be evaluated.

3.4.2 Analysis of the Virtues of the Character of the Queen

Scott notes that "[t]he character of the Queen is admirably drawn" (Dry. *Vol2*. 381). In addition to or in explanation of her being an attractive character, she is, on the whole, also a virtuous ruler. Dryden, in his preface, claims that "the person of the queen" is the "one great and absolute pattern of honour in my poem", and she is the "one character of virtue" (Ibid. 386). Within the play, the Queen is certainly described as "good", "pious" and a "great example" (Ibid. 445) by Asteria, who is not being obsequious in doing so. Similarly to Dryden's other generally virtuous rulers, it is the Queen's emotions that cause her to stray on occasion from strict virtue. In the Queen's case, the stimulant to her emotional "unquiet" (Ibid. 403) comes from her passion for Philocles. Having become, as she herself puts it, "the slave of love" (Ibid. 405), the Queen is not always able to

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him?" (Dry. *Vol2*. 400). This shows that, within the political parameters of the play, it is to be recognized that marriage is expected to render an otherwise powerful queen into little more than a subject to her husband. Thus it is to be understood that Philocles, should he become king through his intended marriage to Candiope, would effectively be sole ruler.

master herself sufficiently to manifest the virtues requisite in the Renaissance ruler. Even under this influence, the Queen, like Leonidas, Aureng-Zebe and Oedipus, remains a moral character though.

For instance, the Queen exhibits the cardinal virtue of wisdom in her recognition that her passion is inappropriate for one of her rank. She condemns herself for being subject to "[a] thing so strange, so horrid", about which she feels shame (Dry. *Vol2*. 404). Yet, an evaluation of the Queen in the light of the cardinal virtue of justice produces a mixed result. She can, however, be regarded as a predominantly just ruler in that her two greatest acts of justice occur at the end of the play, and they both recompense earlier acts of injustice, and are not afterwards abrogated by her. The first act of justice concerns her removing her objection to the union of Philocles and Candiope, and actually blessing it instead. This will be examined in more detail below. The second is her settling the question of who is to succeed her according to primogeniture. She announces publically to Lysimantes that "I here declare you rightful successor,/And heir immediate to the crown", and by doing so shows the "succession firmly settled" (Ibid. 464). It is also to be noted that she intends to continue as a just ruler to the end of her reign, making clear at the end of the play that she intends to rule for the interest of her people. In spurning the idea of marriage, she announces:

> The cares, observances, and all the duties
> Which I should pay a husband, I will place
> Upon my people; and our mutual love
> Shall make a blessing more than conjugal (Dry. *Vol2*. 465).

Earlier on in the play though, the Queen's passion has led her into acts of injustice, although it is once again to be noted that lapses from justice motivated by passion are, in terms of virtue, less culpable than intended ones. The Queen unfairly interferes with Philocles relationship with Candiope by taking Asteria's advice to tyrannically "break his match with her, by virtue of/Your sovereign authority" (Dry. *Vol2*. 405). This causes her to acquiesce in Asteria's plot to discourage

Candiope's mother from the idea of her daughter being matched with Philocles (Ibid. 410). Moreover, she later tells Philocles directly that she forbids the marriage without revealing why (Ibid. 411), and even tyrannically threatens to imprison Candiope if the marriage goes ahead (Ibid. 421). Her reasons are selfish, and therefore unjust. Later in the play, motivated by "hate" and, as Asteria puts it "jealousy, the avarice of love" (Ibid. 424), she sends her soldiers to prevent the couple from eloping (Ibid. 424, 437).

The Queen also acts unfairly towards Candiope herself, when she wishes Philocles to regard her contemptuously. Motivated by jealousy, she insults the appearance of Candiope to Philocles in an attempt to get him to view Candiope as insufficiently beautiful (Dry. *Vol2*. 420). Most especially, she is unjust towards Candiope by calling her "too easy maid" and pretending that Candiope's love for Philocles, by being unsuitable for the former's rank, has caused the Queen herself to feel shame as to her kinship with her. The Queen is of course is motivated not by family honour, but by jealousy (Ibid. 421).

The Queen also manifests injustice when her passion for Philocles causes her to be overly lenient with him in reaction to his behaviour towards her. Having banished Philocles from her presence for the day for his outspokenness towards her, upon next seeing him she disregards this sentence (Dry. *Vol2*. 417). Whilst magnanimity is indeed a virtue in a monarch, this deviation from strict justice on her part is preferential and motivated by passion (Ibid. 417), and therefore her leniency towards Philocles is not virtuous. Indeed, even she recognizes that "[p]rinces sometimes may pass/Acts of oblivion, in their own wrong" (Ibid. 417). The Queen is also unjust in offering Philocles the position of admiral, "the best [position] in all [her] kingdom", even though the virtuous Philocles would probably fulfil the duty of the post admirably, because she is acting selfishly in an attempt to woo Philocles' mind away from Candiope (Ibid. 411).

Outside of her attempts to prevent his marriage, the Queen is additionally unjust towards Philocles in that she misunderstands his loyalty to her. When Philocles is encouraging her to marry, she accuses him of a lack of "obedience"

and of failing to appreciate her (Dry. *Vol2*. 401). She believes that because he has "grown popular" he is no longer motivated by her interest (Ibid. 401). She is also unjust in comparing Philocles' intended flight from court to that of Aeneas from Dido, although they are incomparable cases. Aeneas and Dido were lovers, whilst, to Philocles, all he is doing is fleeing a seemingly "cruel" queen who has unfairly turned on him (Ibid. 423). Additionally, it is the case that the Queen's pride causes her to view her subjects unjustly. She is incensed by the people's desire for her to wed, but she unfairly assumes that they are motivated by thinking that her "government is odious" and that she is "not fit to reign" whereas they are actually motivated by the understandable desire for an heir to their kingdom (Ibid. 400).

Moving on to the cardinal virtue of courage, it is noteworthy that despite this moral quality being traditionally viewed as a masculine one, it is nonetheless manifested by the Queen. Not only does she reject the idea that she requires a husband to protect her (Dry. *Vol2*. 401), but when she is in the hands of Lysimantes, and has no idea what the future holds for her, she boldly confronts him, and tells him:

> Come near, you poor deluded criminal;
> See how ambition cheats you:
> You thought to find a prisoner here,
> But you behold a queen (Dry. *Vol2*. 459).

She also has the courage not to submit to his attempt to blackmail her into marrying him. Lysimantes threatens to name her love-interest and shame her, but her response is to declare "[h]ope not to fright me with your mighty looks;/Know, I dare that tempest in your brow,/And dash it back upon you" (Ibid. 460).

As for the cardinal virtue of temperance, it is a virtue that is sometimes exhibited by the Queen, but one that she also often fails to maintain due to her passion and her pride. Before she fell in love with Philocles, it can be assumed that she was a temperate ruler from this remark of Asteria's about her current condition:

> Where is that harmony of mind, that prudence,
> Which guided all you did? that sense of glory,
> Which raised you high above the rest of kings,
> As kings are o'er he level of mankind? (Dry. *Vol2*. 415).

The Queen is still temperate enough in mind to be aware that her passion for Philocles is unbefitting to her rank (Dry. *Vol2*. 405, 412). She is also aware that passion has caused her to lose her regal temperance (Ibid. 415). She does, though, feel that the struggle against passion is especially intensive due to her being a monarch (Ibid. 416), and thus reflects Cicero's view that the emotions are more powerful in those who rule. The Queen virtuously struggles with her passion. She virtuously seeks to combat her passion through decisiveness of mind. For instance, following Philocles' boldness with her, she affirms that "I resolve/Henceforth no more to love him" (Ibid. 414). She soon has to admit however that "[s]ometimes I struggle, like the sun in the clouds,/But straight I am o'ercast" (Ibid. 414). She feels that she makes an approach to virtue by maintaining some dignity in her struggle against her desire. Thus, upon telling Philocles of the mysterious man that she loves – who of course is Philocles himself – she feels that she has acted rightly in the fact that, as she puts it, "I have concealed my passion/With such care from him, that he knows not yet/I love, but only that I much esteem him" (Ibid. 418).

Seeing Philocles with Candiope causes her to "struggle with my heart" but her emotional strain is so great that she does have to "have some vent," and insults Candiope (Dry. *Vol2*. 420). When she has later ordered Philocles to be apprehended, she is still having severe problems in mastering her emotion and regards herself as "[m]ad" (Ibid. 444). The Queen, towards the end of the play, makes a vigorous effort to defeat her passion. Up to the close of the play though, it is unclear whether she will be successful, and, as Scott notes, this means that "the uncertainty, as to her final decision, continu[es] till the last moment" (Ibid. 381). Her virtuous victory over her passion occurs when she comes face to face with Philocles in the final act. Just before he is due to appear before her, she steadies herself with a soliloquy that is "[n]ow hold, my heart, for this one act of

honour,/And I will never ask more courage from thee./Once more I have the means to reinstate myself into my glory" (Ibid. 461). This involves her struggling against her "love to Philocles" which seeks to "pull back my heart from this hard trial" (Ibid. 461), but she lets virtue defeat passion, and she intends to "put it past my power to undo" (Ibid. 462) by uniting Philocles with Candiope. She is virtuous in that she carries out this intention even when "[t]he fever of my love returns to shake me" upon seeing him (Ibid. 462).

Another failure of temperance connected to the Queen's passion appears in her jealousy. The Queen does not like to hear Candiope praised for her appearance, and the topic of Candiope even causes her to faint (Dry. *Vol2*. 403). Also the idea of a relationship between Candiope and Philocles does not make her as jealous as when she comes across the two of them together (Ibid. 420). Her intemperate envy also leads her into the unbecoming situation of spying upon Philocles' and Candiope's private meeting in the third act. The final element in which the Queen's temperance fails is in her vanity. The Queen has great pride. For instance, she tells Asteria that for Philocles "[t]o be his wife, I could forsake my crown; but not my glory" (Ibid. 405). She also feels the need to be appreciated by her subjects (Ibid. 401). Despite her pride, the Queen virtuously does not prevent true friendship from being able to flourish between herself and her social inferiors. Whilst the motivation in the case of Philocles may be questionable, there is no such questionable motive in her relations with Asteria, and the Queen is not reluctant to regard her as her "friend" (Ibid. 403).

The Queen certainly manifests the virtue of magnanimity in the play. After Lysimantes' attempt to control the Queen is undone by his own and Philocles action, Lysimantes ends up at the restored Queen's mercy. However, the Queen does not seek to take revenge upon him, and is magnanimous in the most virtuous way as Lysimantes action had been against her own person. The Queen declares that whilst "[h]e has incurr'd the danger of the laws,/I will not punish him" (Dry. *Vol2*. 464). Additionally, she more than forgives Caledon for earlier acting against

her, for she also desires to bestow benefits upon this character, who has come to prove his fidelity to her (Ibid. 465).

As for honesty, the Queen's failure to be strictly truthful is motivated by pride and is again related to her passionate love for Philocles. She dishonestly denies having any romantic interest in him, when she is accused by Lysimantes (Dry. *Vol2*. 461). She misrepresents herself by claiming that she has simply shown "grace to Philocles" (Ibid. 461). It is finally to be noted that the connection between physical beauty and moral worth appears to be manifested in the Queen. Lysimantes' description of her is that:

> . . . doubtless she's the glory of her time:
> Of faultless beauty, blooming as the spring
> In our Sicilian groves: matchless in virtue,
> And largely soul'd wherever her bounty gives,
> As with each breath, she could create new Indies (Dry. *Vol2*. 398).

Asteria also tells the Queen that "all must yield to" her beauty (Dry. *Vol2*. 403). Although Scott feels "[t]he characters, excepting that of the Maiden Queen herself, are lame and uninteresting" (Dry. *Vol2*. 381), and certainly neither Lysimantes or Philocles is as virtuous as the Queen, the latter does manifest a number of virtues of his own.

3.4.3 Analysis of the Virtues of the Character of Philocles

Philocles is understood to be, overall, a virtuous character. It is presumably this fact that has caused him to be raised to the position in which he has found himself. Certainly Celadon assumes that this is the case. When he is reunited with his cousin Philocles for the first time in the play, Celadon exclaims:

> [I]n you
> I have a larger subject for my joys.
> To see so rare a thing as rising virtue,
> And merit, understood at court (Dry. *Vol2*. 397).

And Celadon's point of Philocles' moral worth is seconded by Asteria who, when she has learned of the object of the Queen's passion, says of Philocles that "[m]y cousin is, indeed, a most deserving person;/Valiant and wise; handsome, and well-born" (Dry. *Vol2*. 405). As for Philocles having been raised to a high position at court, Lysimantes tells Philocles that he has "deserved it" (Ibid. 398). The Queen praises Philocles to him, without him being aware, when she exclaims that the subject she loves "has a brightness of his own,/Not borrow'd of his fathers, but born with him" (Ibid. 413). Most significantly, she feels this secret beloved is "[o]ne, who deserves to wear a crown" (Ibid. 413). She also tells Asteria that "never man/Was more deserving than my Philocles" (Ibid. 415). It is noteworthy in this context however that Dryden himself denies having "intended [Philocles to be] a perfect character" (Ibid. 386). Indeed Dryden makes clear that Philocles was intended, along with the other characters, through his "defects" to highlight the virtue of the Queen the more (Ibid. 386). That being noted, Dryden does not regard Philocles too negatively either. Rather, he asserts in defence of Philocles' having assisted in rebellion against the Queen that:

> [N]either was the fault of Philocles so great, if the circumstances be considered, which, as moral philosophy assures us, make the essential difference of good and bad; he himself best explaining his own intentions in his last act; and even before that, in the honesty of his expressions, when he was unavoidably led by the impulsions of his love to do it (Dry. *Vol2*. 386).

Philocles certainly lacks the cardinal virtue of wisdom in one respect, although ignorance in the field of romance may surely be excused a Stoic statesman. Philocles failure of wisdom is that he does not recognize the Queen's real feelings for him. It should also be noted in Philocles' defence, that to imagine himself the object of the Queen's love would entail a degree of pride or even vanity that would be undesirable in a virtuous figure. Nonetheless, Philocles' lack of awareness of the Queen's feelings was one of the faults critics of the time found in the character. With his character criticized in such a manner, Dryden felt a need to address this

very point in his preface to the play. His defence[84] of his character in this regard is the same one made above in "that Philocles, who was but a gentleman of ordinary birth, had no reason to guess so soon at the queen's passion; she being a person so much above him" (Dry. *Vol2*. 385).

Justice, which is the second cardinal virtue, is ambiguously exhibited by Philocles. He virtuously claims not to require a "bribe" to help Lysimantes in his suit with the Queen, but then tarnishes the image of virtue thus created by cryptically admitting that in fact "there is a thing, which times may give me/The confidence to name" (Dry. *Vol2*. 399), which is later revealed to be his wish for the hand of Candiope. Also, as a courtier his refusal to flatter the Queen in her desire to marry with a subject – ironically himself – and raise him to be king is also commendable. Instead he, in justice, reminds her of her royal interest.

The third cardinal virtue of courage is certainly exhibited by Philocles. In Act 4, when he is being pursued, Flavia reports to Florimel that:

> When Lysimantes came with the queen's orders,
> He refused to render up Candiope;
> And, with some few brave friends he had about him,
> Is forcing of his way through all the guards (Dry. *Vol2*. 438).

Moreover, when he, soon after, is corned by Lysimantes, and is encouraged to surrender, Philocles bravely counters with "I'll rather die than yield her up" (Dry. *Vol2*. 438).

In terms of the cardinal virtue of temperance, there is a strong element of humility to Philocles. He tells the Queen that by promoting Lysimantes' interests, "[h]ad I sought/More power, this marriage was not the way" (Dry. *Vol2*. 401). Moreover, Philocles asserts that "love alone inspires me with ambition" (Ibid. 411), and this is confirmed when, having been offered the highly prestigious post of

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[84] Dryden claims this defence is not his own, but a defence "made for me by my friends" which "with modesty" he has "take[n] up" (Dry. *Vol2*. 385). Dryden, rather than being sincere is probably making use of a rhetorical convention with this remark.

admiral by the Queen, he shows no interest in taking it, and instead makes clear that he would prefer to marry Candiope (Ibid. 411). As will be seen below, however, this element of humility is challenged within Philocles when he learns of the Queen's love for him. Philocles also exhibits temperate self-awareness, in that he is able to accuse himself of wrong doing. He admits that "I hate myself" when he realizes that he has "dethroned" the Queen "for loving me" (Ibid. 448). He is also aware of how "displeased" he is with himself, following his intention to betray Candiope for the queen, and, thus tells her "[h]ow little I deserve you" (Ibid. 456) – although he does not explain to her what prompts this disclosure. He is aware his original intention is "falsehood" and contrary to "virtue" (Ibid. 456), and views his behaviour as that of "a barbarous man" (Ibid. 456).

Whilst Philocles demonstrates humility, he comes to evince ambition too. In the third act when Philocles and Candiope speak in private after having learned that the Queen definitely opposes their marriage, Candiope makes clear that Philocles is all that matters to her. She exclaims to him that "'[w]ould I for you some shepherdess had been,/And, but each May, ne'er heard the name of queen!" (Dry. *Vol2*. 421). His response seems to be one of consolation. It is:

> If you were so, might I some monarch be,
> Then, you should gain what now you lose by me;
> Then you in all your glories should have a part,
> And rule my empire, as you rule my heart (Dry. *Vol2*. 421-2).

The nature of this consolation does, however, suggest unconscious ambition in Philocles. That is surely why when he goes on to attempt to persuade her to elope with him from the court to live with him "in a cell", she responds with:

> Those, who, like you, have once in courts been great,
> May think they wish, but wish not, to retreat,
> . . .
> Even in that cell, where you repose would find,
> Visions of court will haunt your restless mind;
> And glorious dreams stand ready to restore

The pleasing shapes of all you had before (Dry. *Vol2*. 422).

It is therefore possible that Candiope sees a sense of ambition in Philocles that he himself is unaware of.

Moreover, when Philocles later learns that the Queen loves him, his ambitiousness forces itself into his conscious mind. Thus, he finds himself thinking of "a crown" and is aware of "ambition" within himself (Dry. *Vol2*. 448). In fact, he finds himself "too much yielding" to the temptations of the throne (Ibid. 449). As time elapses into the fifth act, this sense of ambition has come to effectively, yet temporarily, dominate Philocles' whole being. In a short soliloquy he expresses his innermost thoughts:

> Where-e'er I cast about my wandering eyes,
> Greatness lies ready in some shape to tempt me.
> The royal furniture in every room,
> The guards, and the huge waiving crowds of people;
> All waiting for a sight of that fair queen,
> Who makes a present of her love to me.
> Now tell me, Stoick!
> If all these with a wish might be thine,
> Would'st thou not truck thy ragged virtue for 'em? (Dry. *Vol2*. 455).

The great check to his ambition is his continuing love for Candiope. In the opinion of Scott, Philocles is a character that "has neither enough of love to make him despise ambition, nor enough of ambition to make him break the fetters of love" (Ibid. 381). Nonetheless, Philocles is actually a somewhat virtuous figure for whom ambition is really a temporary attraction. This is clear from the fact that the possibility of his ambition being realized actually unnerves him. When he believes that the Queen is about to announce her love for him publically, which will result in his becoming king, rather than becoming joyful, he fears his loss of Candiope and his "floating in a vast abyss of glory" in which he will cease to be himself (Ibid. 463). Moreover, a further small deviation from his rejection of kingly ambition is

overcome by the end of the play when he temperately comes to reject any desire to have anything he does not already possess (Ibid. 465).

For the virtue of filial piety, it is not possible to directly judge Philocles by this standard as nothing is learned of his parentage in the play. However, as for the concept in general, he certainly does not think Candiope should respect her mother's ban on her continuing to see him (Dry. *Vol2*. 419). In terms of his own relation Celadon, who is his cousin, familial piety seems to be important to Philocles. He clearly has a close relationship with him, and takes pleasure in his military successes (Ibid. 397). Philocles is also willing to use his influence with the Queen for the advancement of Celadon (Ibid. 411).

It is also the case that Philocles does not always manage to conduct himself by the virtue of honesty. When Philocles is in a state of regret in believing the Queen did not love him after all, he becomes pensive, and Candiope wishes to know why. Philocles misleads her into believing it is due to his love for Candiope herself which he has still been unable to "digest" properly (Dry. *Vol2*. 464). All in all, Philocles is a character who evidences virtue, but he is somewhat flawed in this regard too. Lastly, it is to be noted that Philocles has the attractive physical appearance expected of a Renaissance ruler (Ibid. 405), and it is this that presumably helps induce the Queen to fall in love with him.

3.4.4 Analysis of the Virtues of the Character of Lysimantes

Now this work will examine the third potential contender for the crown, Lysimantes. Despite Philocles describing Lysimantes to the Queen as a man of "great deserts" (Dry. *Vol2*. 400), he is in fact the least virtuous of the main characters in the play. The Queen more perceptively regards Lysimantes as her "ambitious cousin" (Ibid. 401). Much like the Queen though, it appears to be the case that where he is lacking in virtue, it is his passion that is responsible. Thus, when she is his captive and the Queen reproves Lysimantes with being "[a]mbitious, proud, designing", Lysimantes accepts only with the qualification that "all my pride, designs, and my ambition,/Were taught me by a master" which

is love (Ibid. 459). There is reason to believe that Lysimantes' ambition is aimed at the Queen rather than at the crown, as will be examined below.

Lysimantes is not a figure who exhibits a concern for the cardinal virtue of justice. On the contrary, he reveals his capacity for injustice when he is overcome with jealousy. When he is about to apprehend Philocles, he learns from Flavia that the Queen is in love with Philocles, and this causes him great emotional turmoil. It even causes him nefariously to attempt to take the "opportunity, which she herself/Has given me, to kill this happy rival" and only the intervention of Celadon and his followers prevents this from happening (Dry. *Vol2*. 440). Having almost caused Philocles' death, Lysimantes thinks further on the situation, and then decides to continue to act unjustly towards him. Believing that the simple killing of Philocles would only "exasperate the queen the more", he decides to "strain/A point of honour" and comes up with a plot to get Philocles to help him "seize the queen" (Ibid. 441). This plot is not unjust simply as an act of rebellion against his monarch, but also because Lysimantes intends a tarnishing of Philocles' reputation with the Queen through it (Ibid. 443).

Towards the Queen, when she is his captive following his rebellion, he also unjustly attempts to blackmail her into accepting him. He does this by telling her that he knows of her love-interest, which she denies. He conditionally accepts her denial, telling her "[p]rovided you accept my passion,/I'll gladly yield to think I was deceived" (Dry. *Vol2*. 460). One other aspect of Lysimantes that shows him to not be a just figure is that that he gets Flavia to spy upon the Queen for him (Ibid. 401, 425).

Additionally, Lysimantes does not appear to manifest the cardinal virtue of courage. This is because he agrees to a truce when his men are faced by those led by Celadon rather than opting to fight (Dry. *Vol2*. 440). As for temperance, Lysimantes has elements of it, but he also exhibits traits that are counter to this cardinal virtue. As has already been noted, he is jealous and ambitious. It is important to note, however, that whilst Lysimantes lacks temperance due to his ambition, it does turn out that it is inspired by love, and he does not have the vice

of ambitiousness in and of itself. Learning that he is to become king in time through succession rather than marriage, Lysimantes announces that he is unpleased [i]n the succession of a crown,/Which must descend to me in so sad a way" (Ibid. 465), that is without the Queen's love to accompany it. He reaffirms this in his last speech in the play, when he tells the Queen:

> Since you are so resolved,
> That you may see, bold as my passion was,
> 'Twas only for your person, not your crown;
> I swear no second love
> Shall violate the flame I had for you,
> But, in strict imitation of your oath,
> I vow a single life (Dry. *Vol2*. 468).

In doing so, Lysimantes shows both loyalty to the Queen as a lover, and a desire to live up to the virtue of temperance in constancy. Lysimantes is also able to temperately engage in self-criticism. Hence, once he has been deceived into believing that the Queen actually had no interest in Philocles, he condemns himself in an aside, by saying "Methinks I could do violence on myself, for taking arms/Against a queen, so good, so bountiful" (Dry. *Vol2*. 463).

Consequently, in terms of moral value, the Queen, who is actually the legitimate ruler of the state, is the most virtuous character in the play. Of the possible candidates to succeed her, Philocles is next in rank in terms of virtue. Of course, it is the case that the play ends with it appearing that Lysimantes, who is less virtuous than Philocles, is going to inherit the crown. This fact might make it seem that Dryden is unusually allowing succession to pass to a figure who is morally inferior to another, and thus is allowing a legitimate succession to occur that does not pass to the most morally outstanding character. However, this is not really the case, as the aim of the play is to show how the Queen succeeds in preparing a situation in which the crown should be passed to the most virtuous possible successor without her comprising her own self-worth through marriage,

since Lysimantes is really nothing more than a necessary interruption in this process.

3.4.5 Further Political Points in *The Maiden Queen*

This work will now examine six other political points raised by the play. Firstly, it is significant that the people wish the Queen to beget an heir, as this implies their recognition of the stability inherent in a system of primogenital succession. Thus, the first deputy refers to the pressure they attempt to exert on the Queen to take a husband as "being of no less concern,/Than is the peace and quiet of your subjects" (Dry. *Vol2*. 399). And Lysimantes rejects the Queen's opinion that the people are motivated to pressure her on this question because of dissatisfaction with her rule. Lysimantes asserts:

> So far from that, we all acknowledge you
> The bounty of the gods to Sicily.
> More than they are you cannot make our joys;
> Make them but lasting in a successor (Dry. *Vol2*. 400).

The fact that she chooses to remain celibate, however, means that Lysimantes will become her successor through primogeniture instead. There is a slight confusion in the play in that it also suggests legitimacy is also conferred upon a successor by designation. The Queen, at the end of the drama, nominates Lysimantes as her "rightful successor,/And heir immediate to the crown" and by doing so regards the "succession firmly settled" (Dry. *Vol2*. 464). However, it is probable that the Queen felt the need to name Lysimantes as her successor, following her announcement that she would not seek a husband, in order to placate opposition to her wish, whilst strictly speaking, her announcement of intended celibacy would open the succession of the throne to Lysimantes anyway. Thus, her designation is meant to reinforce Lysimantes' right rather than to confer that right upon him.

What is particularly interesting about this play is that it also deals with the question of legitimacy through marriage. Whilst such an inheritance of the crown does not take place during the period of action of the drama, it is a dominant theme

nonetheless. Whether or not Lysimantes is really inspired by love for the Queen, it is certainly the case that if he succeeded in marrying her, he would automatically have become king. Also, the play ends with the prediction that Philocles' impending marriage to Candiope will eventually enable him to inherit the crown. Of course, the concept of legitimacy through marriage is strongly tied to primogeniture as it is through the marriage of a man to a woman of royal blood who becomes queen by descent that enables her husband to become be crowned king in his turn. Whilst this play has only a prediction of legitimacy through marriage, there is nothing to suggest that the succession will not take place as the Queen foresees it, and thus the play can be viewed as offering a probable example of the succession of a virtuous person to the crown through marriage to a royal princess.

There is one final point to be made about the question of succession in the play, and that is, as in *Oedipus*, there is a strong resistance on the part of the population of the polity to having a foreigner made king through marriage to the Queen. This is revealed by Lysimantes at the beginning of the drama in conversation with Philocles. Lysimantes, in asserting his own hopes for marriage with the Queen, avers:

> I know the people
> Will scarcely suffer her to match
> With any neighbouring prince, whose power might bend
> Our free Sicilians to a foreign yoke (Dry. *Vol2*. 398).

In this Philocles' view is no different. He responds by saying "I love too well my country to desire it" (Dry. *Vol2*. 398). Lysimantes also provides evidence for the nativism of the population. He reveals that "[t]he provinces have sent their deputies,/Humbly to move her, she would chuse at home" (Ibid. 398). Dryden once again though shows that such concerns do not move the monarch, and that she is

not to be limited in her prerogatives in any way whatsoever, including through nativisit concerns.

Aside from the question of succession, the play also deals with the concept of Divine Right. The Queen shows herself to be ruler by this concept. Thus, when she is Lysimantes' and Philocles' captive, she insists that "even when unthroned", she still has the "right" to rule (Dry. *Vol2*. 457). Furthermore, as a monarch ruling by Divine Right, at the beginning of the play, she is unwilling to let thoughts of her subjects, however high in rank they be, determine her behaviour. The deputies of the people are imploring her to wed, but the Queen rejects that they have a right "to govern" and she dismisses their demands on account of her status (Ibid. 399). Moreover, at the end of the play, the restored Queen reasserts her prerogatives in deciding the succession in the way that suits her, by nominating Lysimantes as "heir immediate to the crown" (Ibid. 464). What is significant is that whilst announcing "I hope this will still my subjects' discontents" (Ibid. 464), she actually has ignored her subjects' wishes, as they have always desired her to marry. She is explicit in denying them this desire, as she goes on to announce that "[a]s for myself, I have resolved/Still to continue as I am, unmarried" (Ibid. 464). She then announces her intention to rule in the interests of the people, but in demanding that her wishes "the states shall ratify" rather than leaving the option open to them, shows that the Queen regards the assembly of the nation as not legitimately being able to counter her will (Ibid. 465).

What is especially significant here is that, in a sense, two of Dryden's concerns are in conflict in the play. Dryden is both a proponent of primogenital succession, and of monarchy not being in any way limited by the concerns of the people. In order for primogenital succession to be smooth in the Sicilian kingdom, the deputies of the people feel the Queen needs to marry, and, as has been seen, they attempt to pressure her to do this. However, it is the rejection of the people's demands that reflects Dryden's own views of the respective roles of monarch and subject. Thus, it can be concluded from the play that for Dryden, whilst primogeniture is desirable, it cannot be asserted on the part of the people, and if it

conflicts with the will of the monarch, the monarch's will is the paramount concern. In no regard will Dryden allow the people – or their representatives – any role in the political decision making of the state, regardless of the justice of their demands. This also helps to explain why Dryden has the Queen solve the question of the succession in her own manner, without regard for the people's wishes.

Indeed, the people are further stigmatized in the play by their support for Lysimantes (Dry. *Vol2*. 398), with Dryden himself noting that "the suffrages of all her people" are "destined to Lysimantes" (Ibid. 385). But, as has already been noted, the Queen is a far more virtuous figure – and thus in Renaissance thinking a better ruler – than is Lysimantes. And in marrying Lysimantes, she would be ceding power to him. She herself points out that the desire of the people is to "impose a ruler upon their lawful queen" since "what's an husband else?" (Ibid. 400). Were she to marry and "kingly power" be "invested" in him, she would not be able to force his "obedience" to her (Ibid. 400). Thus, the people, in attempting to force the Queen to marry would, were they successful, substitute an inferior ruler for a superior one. Hence, it is manifestly more in the people's interest that they continue to be ruled by the Queen alone for as long as that is possible. Dryden is showing that the people do not understand what is in their best interest.

The final point that has a relevance to politics is briefly touched upon by Philocles in the play. This point is of great significance in the light of Burke's thought, and that is the question of reason. When Philocles remarks that "[i]nterest makes all seem reason, that leads to it" (Dry. *Vol2*. 442), he is expressing the conservative view that reason is not an enlightening faculty, but rather a limited one that unconsciously works in the service of self-deception, and this implies that any theory of politics based upon it can be fundamentally flawed.

CHAPTER 4

4. BURKE AND DRYDEN

Now that the four plays have been analysed, this work will now assess Dryden's political project through the perspective of Edmund Burke as manifested in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Before doing so, it is necessary to note that this book is unlike most of the seminal texts in political philosophy – such as Aristotle's *The Politics* or Hobbes' *Leviathan* – in that it is in the form of a letter. Burke was asked by "a young French acquaintance", Charles-Jean-Francois Depont, for his view on the French Revolution, and Burke's work is ostensibly a response to it. As it is a letter that is apparently written in response to a specific upheaval in France – the French Revolution – it also differs from other seminal political texts in that it does not appeal to an abstract concept of man's political requirements, and it lacks a "formal structure" (H-M *HMPT* 264). In this sense, Hampsher-Monk compares Burke to Hobbes, whose "aspiration to achieve . . . universality is constant and unmistakable" (Ibid. 261). Nonetheless, Hampsher-Monk also feels that it is possible to find some "general truths" (Ibid. 262) in Burke's work, as "the Revolution posed such a challenge" to Burke that he felt it necessary "to make his assumptions about the basis of civilized order more explicit than he might otherwise have cared to" (Ibid. 264). It is upon these "general truths" that this work will focus in making its comparison with Dryden, rather than with the specific grievances Burke held against the Revolutionaries, such as their creation of a paper currency based upon the confiscated land of the church.

A further point, and an especially significant one, also needs to be made here, and that is that the work is, as John Whales notes, more about England than France. Indeed, Hampsher-Monk quotes a letter of Burke's in which he states that for his famous polemic, "my Object was not France, in the first instance but this Country" (qtd. in H-M *RRF* 195), and Hampsher-Monk himself notes that its main aim was the "warning off those English who flirted with Revolution" (H-M *RRF*

198). As such, the central focus of Burke's ire in the work is the Revolution Society in London. Burke had become greatly concerned about the substance of an address[85] given there by "a leading dissenting minister" (Doyle 167), Rev. Richard Price. This society itself is described by Hampsher-Monk as "an association of dissenting ministers meeting annually to celebrate the Revolution of 1688" (H-M *RRF* 195). This organisation was particularly interested in radical parliamentary reform in Britain (Doyle 166-7). Price saw France as having become more advanced than Britain in terms of its adherence to the principle of liberty, and thus welcomed the revolution there (Ibid. 167). In Price's address, the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the French Revolution then taking place were explicitly linked as having been founded on the same principles. Burke, who regards the bases of the two events as being fundamentally different, took "far-reaching exception" to this (H-M *RRF* 196). Burke felt that Price's viewpoint "affect[s] our constitution in its vital parts" (Burke 13), and if accepted as truth would fundamentally undermine the British state as it then stood, thus making it a "seditious, unconstitutional doctrine" (Burke 25). Consequently, Price's address "focused Burke's mind on the danger revolutionary ideas posed to English political life" (H-M *RRF* 197), especially as he felt that the logical end of Price's doctrine would be the "necessity" of a revolution in England along the lines of that taking place in France (Burke 57).

It is also noteworthy that even though the *Reflections* were written before the actual deposition and execution of Louis XVI in 1792 and 1793, Burke is consistent in rhetorically portraying the new political structure of France as being that of a republic rather than that of a limited monarchy. For instance, he calls the new polity "the republic of Paris" (Burke 52, 211), and a "commonwealth" (Ibid. 249). For Burke the physical survival of the king signifies nothing in political terms, he is a figure who has been overthrown and placed under constraint (Ibid. 130). As he lacks any power of his own in either the legal or military sphere (Ibid.

[85] This, as Hampsher-Monk with significance notes, "Burke provocatively calls . . . a 'sermon'" (H-M *RRF* 195).

201, 220), he is no longer a monarch in the eyes of Burke (Ibid. 209). It is consequently the case that Burke does not see a limited monarchy being established in close proximity to England. He views the establishment of a republic there, and to his mindset this is a highly disturbing development – particularly due to its effect on its supporters in England – and he sets himself to attack it.

Of course, in both his distaste for radical revolution and opposition to republicanism, Burke shares a similar mindset with Dryden from a century before. It is this fact that helps to make Burke's political thoughts so appropriate to an analysis of Dryden's earlier ideas.

4.1 Burke in Concurrence with Dryden

There are eight points in which Burke would agree with Dryden, but as will be seen there is also an implication in Burke's work which seriously undermines Dryden's own political project. The points of similarity will be examined first however.

4.1.1 Contentment with the Established Order

The most obvious and overreaching point upon which Burke and Dryden would agree is on the principal conservative conviction that there is, as Doyle expresses it "nothing fundamentally wrong with the old order" (Doyle 168). This does not mean that either Burke or Dryden regard the state of affairs as they exist as being unimprovable. As a reformer, such a mindset is not possible for Burke, and Dryden at least dislikes the assertiveness of parliament. Nevertheless, for both men, in its fundamentals, society in the way it is hierarchically ordered in their times is essentially how it ought to be. With such a perspective, anything that fundamentally challenges the stability of that society is unnerving to both men. Hence, they share a fear of instability within the state. This is evident in all of Dryden's plays examined in this work, but especially in *Aureng-Zebe*, where the results of instability are explicitly set out in terms of great human suffering. For Burke, the unstable nature of the new regime in France will also inexorably lead to violence and devastation (Burke 249). In order to prevent instability, a strong and established government is a necessity for both men. Burke avers that "[n]othing

turns out to be so oppressive and unjust as a feeble government" (Ibid. 231), and Dryden portrays his monarchs as ideally being able to act without limit, save for that imposed upon themselves by their senses of virtue.

4.1.2 The Importance of an Undisputed Monarchic Succession

Moreover, whilst Burke believes that the work of government should not be concentrated solely in the hands of the monarch, he does agree with Dryden that in order to have a strong government, the succession needs to be undisputed. This is why he interprets the events of the end of the seventeenth century as ironically helping to strengthen such a principle, rather than undermining it. Burke approvingly quotes that the Declaration of Right, issued in the Glorious Revolution, determined that the succession of the descendents of James I was a requirement "for the peace, quiet, and security of the realm" (Burke 17). He does have to accept that "[u]nquestionably there was at the Revolution, in the person of King William, a small and temporary deviation from the strict order of a regular hereditary succession" (Ibid. 18), yet he very much minimizes the import of this claiming that "it was an act of *necessity*" (Burke 18 – my italics), and that it nevertheless followed the rule of succession by crowning Mary "the eldest born of that issue of that king, which they acknowledged as undoubtedly his" (Burke 18). By doing so, in relation to hereditary descent, "the legislature altered the direction, but kept the principle" consequently demonstrating that "they held it inviolable" (Ibid. 22). Burke also approvingly quotes the Declaration of Right as determining that "the unity, peace, and tranquillity of this nation doth, under God, wholly depend" upon "a *certainty* in the SUCCESSION" (Burke 19 – original emphasis).

4.1.3 The Role of Religion within the Polity

Both Burke and Dryden also share a common view of the role of religion within the polity. Their joint perspective rests on the idea that religion can play a utilitarian role in providing societal stability. This, however, for both Burke and Dryden seems to be limited to established faiths, since the two men also share a deep distrust for radical Protestantism, which they regard as being a threat to the stability of the state. From Dryden's play *Tyrannic Love*, it can be seen that Dryden

uses his characters to make a persuasive defence of the Christian faith in general against paganism[86]. However, when it comes to Christianity itself, his judgement on the worthiness of a sect of this faith seems to solely depend upon its relationship with the civil authority in the figure of the monarch. It is Dryden's concern that, in the words of Doralice in *Marriage à la Mode* already quoted, "a clergyman is but the/king's half-subject" (Dry. *TPs*. 254), and this can be true for any other unordained figure with religious inclinations. Interpreted in the light of his propagandist project for the Stuart dynasty, Dryden's outlook during the reign of Charles II leads him to condemn both Catholicism and the dissenting groups, and promote the Anglican Church. To be able to fully appreciate this point, it is also useful to draw upon his 1682 poem *Religio Laici, or, a Layman's Faith*. It is of course the case that this poem was written before Dryden's own conversion to Catholicism.

To regard this poem as essentially a political work rather than a religious one renders comprehensible the comment of Stephen Zwicker – who is surprised at Dryden's decision to write on the subject of faith – about "how indifferent the spirituality" (Zwicker *DPC* 143) of the work. It also makes Fowles correct in regarding this work as being "not a sacred poem" and "[a]rguably" being "less a religious poem than a poem about religion" (Fowles 120). It is certainly not a poem that wishes to take a side on the doctrinal points upon which the different sects of Christianity have taken up such adversarial stances. Indeed, Dryden feels that the "points not clearly known" within the Christian faith – i.e. those on which controversy rages – "[w]ithout much hazard may be left alone" (Dry. *SPs*. *RL*. 443, 444). This is because, whilst Dryden is open to the idea that the text of *The Bible* has not been kept immaculate, he also claims that the Scriptures "[a]re uncorrupt, sufficient, clear, entire/In all things which our needful faith require" (Ibid. 299-300). He also reiterates this point later in the poem (Ibid. 368-9).

[86] See Dry. *Vol3*. 373-6.

Where Dryden does feel that certain sects can come in for criticism, though, is in their relationship to their sovereign. Thus Dryden's attack on Catholicism within this work makes no mention of controversial questions such as that of transubstantiation, but restricts itself solely to a condemnation of its theocratic pretensions, or as Dryden puts it in his preface, the doctrines "that the Pope can depose and/give away the right of any sovereign prince, *si vel paulum*/*deflexerit*, if he shall never so little warp" (Dry. *SPs*. *RL*. *P*. 206-8) and that "an heretic is no lawful king, and consequently/to rise against him is no rebellion" (Ibid. 245-6). Nevertheless, the main target of the poem is not Catholicism, which to Dryden is "the less dangerous" (Ibid. 177) of the opponents of Anglicanism due the small number of adherents and its exclusion from parliament[87] (Ibid. 176-81), but is non-conformism[88]. Indeed, in his preface to the poem, Dryden makes the claim that whilst the Catholics who have taken up the "doctrines of king-killing and deposing" (Ibid. 364) are only a minority, he also remarkably affirms the doctrines "have been espoused, defended, and are still maintained by/the whole body of nonconformists and republicans" (Ibid. 367-8).

Dryden uses much of the preface to this poem to attack radical Protestantism. Whilst at the end of it, he claims to have treated the non-conformists

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[87] Regarding Catholicism as a lesser threat to the English polity is somewhat disingenuous, as at the date this poem was written, the English throne is expected to be inherited at any time by the first Catholic monarch since 1558, causing great concern amongst non-Catholics. Indeed, it is James' succession, his blatantly pro-Catholic policies, and the unexpected arrival of a male heir – that is, another Catholic prince to succeed him – that within three years unite some of Dryden's Tories with the Whigs and leads to the Glorious Revolution.

[88] An equal, but perhaps more balanced, antipathy to the subversive nature of both Catholicism and non-conformism in the state is also made by Hobbes in *The Leviathan* who writes:

> [T]he Presbytery hath challenged the power to Excommunicate their owne Kings, and to bee the Supreme Moderators in Religion, in the places where they have that form of Church government, not lesse than the Pope challengeth it universally" (Hobbes 640).

without harshness (Dry. *SPs*. *RL*. *P*. 376-8), his disingenuousness is evident from the fact that, amongst other accusations, earlier in this essay, he avers that "sectaries, we may see, were born with teeth, foul-/mouthed and scurrilous from their infancy" and that they are marked by "spiritual/pride, venom, violence, contempt of superiors, and slander" (Ibid. 316-7, 317-8). It is also worth adding here that Dryden uses *Marriage à la Mode* to imply they are hypocrites too. As has previously been noted, Palamede, when he goes off to fight for the king declares, "I'm sure we fight in a good quarrel:/Rogues may pretend religion and the laws;/But a kind mistress is the Good Old Cause" (Dry. *TPs*. 243). Dryden's use of the word "pretend" suggests hypocrisy, and it is very significant that he also links it directly with "the Good Old Cause"[89]. What produces this intemperate language from Dryden is once again unconnected to spiritual matters but rather to political concerns. Claiming that "Reformation of church and state has always been the ground/of our divisions in England"[90] (Dry. *SPs*. *RL*. *P*. 354-5), Dryden regards non-conformism as the greatest threat to the Stuart line, and as such, he feels the need to counter it. Hence, in his preface, Dryden provides a history of radical Protestantism which is intended to display its inherent disloyalty to the crown. He gives an example of an intended rebellion against Elizabeth I (Ibid. 322-33), and blames the radicals for the death of "Charles the martyr" (Ibid. 345). Most significantly, he predicts further disruption from this religious body if they are to be left alone (Ibid. 346-8). Consequently, he strongly implies that severe methods ought to be used against them, and he also soon after argues that the contrary position – that of "mercy of the/government" (Ibid. 381) – is interpreted as "weakness" (Ibid. 382) by them.

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[89] See footnote 58 to page 116 above.

[90] This is historically inaccurate of course, but it reflects the perceptions of the time if confined to recent history at least. For instance, Hobbes also avers in a letter that "the dispute betweene the spirituall and civill power, has, of late more than any other thing in the world, bene the cause of civille warre" (qtd. in H-M *HMPT* 2-3).

What makes radical Protestantism so subversive for Dryden is its attitude to scripture. Whilst he believes that "the Scriptures . . . are in/themselves the greatest security of governors, as commanding/express obedience to them" (Dry. *SPs. RL. P*. 359-60), by being open to interpretation by radical Protestants "are now turned to their destruct-/tion, and never since the Reformation has there wanted a text/of their interpreting to authorize a rebel" (Ibid. 361-3). Hence for Dryden, "the fanatics" (Ibid. 171), by which he means the non-conformists:

> have assumed what amounts to an
> infallibility in the private spirit, and have detorted those
> texts of Scripture which are not necessary to salvation
> to the damnable uses of sedition, disturbance and destruction of the
> civil government (Dry. *SPs. RL. P*. 172-6).

The use of the expression "not necessary to salvation" is highly significant. Dryden divides Scripture into that which is unambiguous and ensures future bliss, and which he does not deal with at all, and that which is ambiguous and thus open to interpretation[91]. In order to procure a guide for dealing with the latter, Dryden turns to tradition, as personal exegesis to the Biblical text, for Dryden will lead to a theological anarchism in which "every man will make himself a creed" (Dry. *SPs. RL*. 434). With an appeal to tradition though, resolution of ambiguity is possible in a way that will not anatomize society, and thus Dryden promotes the Church Fathers as Biblical interpreters (Ibid. 336-9, 435-40). Dryden's adamant opposition to private exegesis is made in his preface to the poem, when discussing the radical Protestant tradition. There, he avers that a Bible left untranslated in the ancient languages were better than "that several texts in it should have been prevaricated to/the destruction of that government which put it into so/ungrateful hands." (Dry.

[91] In this he opines a similar view to Hobbes who claims that "the controversies of religion, are altogether about points unnecessary to salvation" (from *Elements of Law* qtd. in H-M *HMPT* 3-4).

SPs. RL. P. 267-9) Of course, he obviously links religion once again to the political realm here.

A further positive point about tradition in religion which Dryden makes is that it is something that "is tried" over time and "after, for itself believed" (Dry. *SPs. RL.* 354). With this commendation for a principle of the acceptance of a traditional idea that has been tried and tested in the conditions of the actual world rather than a newly-created abstract one, Dryden prefigures Burke's particular type of conservatism. It also needs to be stressed how this attachment to tradition is once again utilitarian for the political sphere. What is especially significant in this regard is that Dryden ultimately feels that when authority and personal conscience are in conflict, the former should be chosen, and this is because of the higher utilitarian good of the stability of the state (Ibid. 443-8).

Therefore Dryden's pre-1685 approach to religion can be summarized as one in which the public concerns of stability override individual qualms of conscience, and that, in line with this, authority should be appealed to if necessary when confronted with Scripture that can be interpreted in multiple ways. Thus, it is also a defence of the traditional Anglican Church. Without the structure of this church that can provide a limit to the individual's speculations, the potential for sedition or anarchy is evident to Dryden, and it is likely that it is this fact, rather than the weakness of its adherents, that causes Dryden to regard Catholicism as less of a threat than non-conformism. Moreover, it is the Anglican Church which provides the greatest support for the monarchy. And Dryden is of course aware that not only does the Anglican Church's traditional approach to theology buttress the monarch, but he himself is head of that church. Within such a system, the book upon which the church is based can certainly be read to provide "the greatest security of governors, as commanding/express obedience to them" (Dry. *SPs. RL. P.* 359-60). Thus for Dryden, whilst the opponents of Anglicanism are to be regarded with caution, the established church has a vital role within the state[92].

Consequently, Dryden shares the view with Burke that, regardless of the truth of the various sects of Christianity, it is the established churches that act in the interests of stability as they form part of the state as it stands. For Burke, religion is one of the pillars of European civilization (Burke 78-9), and is "essential" to the English state (Ibid. 99). Burke does accept that for the mass of people, religion contains superstition (Ibid. 159), but he sees a Dryden-like utilitarian motive in not attempting to destroy such superstition as it helps to improve the state itself (Ibid. 160). Moreover, for Burke, religion is not to be seen in purely utilitarian terms, and it is not a benefit that is limited to one section of society. Rather it is needed by both "weak minds" and "the strongest" (Ibid. 159). Whilst therefore it has a political utilitarian benefit, it is not something used by the elite "as a mere invention to keep the vulgar in obedience" (Ibid. 101). Rather, it is just as important for the elite as for the regular mass of humanity (Ibid. 102). And in this he would be in accord with Dryden, who presented his favoured rulers, such as Leonidas and Oedipus, as men of piety[93]. It is the limiting aspect of religion which appeals to both men. Burke states that for the ruling elite:

> They are sensible, that religious instruction is of more consequence to them than to any others; from the greatness of the temptation to which they are exposed; from the important consequences that attend their faults; from the contagion of their ill example; from the necessity of bowing down the stubborn neck of their pride and ambition to the yoke of moderation and virtue (Burke 102).

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[92] Fowles also rather wittily adds that with this perspective, whilst "Milton had set out to justify the ways of God to man" Dryden's poem "is intent on justifying the way of the Anglican Church to the English" (Fowles 120-1). It is also to be noted here that even the "atheist" Hobbes did not feel he could disregard religion in his Leviathan-run republic, and he instead uses it to buttress support for the "Civill Soveraign" (Hobbes 624) in the third part of his political *magnus opus*.

[93] Of course for the two examples given, the religious culture in which their piety is expressed is a pagan one, yet this sense of piety inspires them, much as Christian piety does, to attempt to keep their desires in check, and to rule virtuously.

Burke, in speaking of the situation of France and then of England in the *Reflections*, does not deal with a single branch of the Christian faith, but rather "the common religion" which is wider than any specific sect (Burke 150). Burke however, shares a dislike of radical Protestantism, which he calls "the *hortus siccus* of dissent" (Ibid. 13), with Dryden. It is the advocating of political views by religious figures that Burke takes exception to. He explicitly condemns those like "the political Divine" (Ibid. 16) Dr. Price "who under the name of religion teach little else than wild and dangerous politics" (Ibid. 64). And, as in the English context this is invariably done by non-conformists, it leads Burke to disapprove of radical Protestantism for the same reason as Dryden does. Burke and Dryden share a horror of "the bloody Civil War of the 1640s when religious fanatics fuelled civil and military conflict from the pulpit" (H-M *HMPT* 273). And Burke sees Price as dangerously reviving this tradition (Ibid. 12). It is also the case that just as in Dryden's time, at the end of the eighteenth century, the Dissenters still regarded *The Bible* "as an ultimate authority beyond the established Church hierarchy" (Manly 146), and for both Burke and Dryden this is potentially subversive.

Like Dryden, Burke regards Catholicism with less concern[94]. It is worthy of note here that, in his *Tract on Popery Laws*, Burke had been explicit in his private regard for religion, in this case Catholicism. He saw it as, in the words of Susan Manly, "a principle, which of all others, is perhaps the most necessary for *preserving* society" (qtd. in Manly 152 – my italics). Hence, like Dryden, he believed that it, as well as Anglicanism, could potentially create societal stability, which radical Protestantism inherently could not.

4.1.4 Sceptical Approach to the Power of Human Reason

Dryden and Burke also share a sceptical approach to the power of human reason. It has already been noted that in the play *The Maiden Queen*, Philocles makes a passing remark on reason being subordinate to interest. More significantly, in *Oedipus*, when Oedipus is in prayer attempting to comprehend what is

[94] In fact Burke's tolerance for Catholicism led him to be regarded sometimes as "a crypto-Catholic" (Pitts 154).

happening to Thebes, he also refers to "the Glow-worn light of human Reason" (Dry. *Oed*. 18). It is the case that for Dryden reason is not a potent faculty, and as such it is easily subject to manipulation by the will. In order to understand more fully Dryden's perspective on reason, it is necessary to once again examine *Religio Laici,* where his outlook on this subject is made particularly explicit. The poem contrasts the weakness of reason to find eternal truth as compared with revelation. It opens with the lines:

Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars

> To lonely, weary, wand'ring travellers
> Is reason to the soul, and as on high
> Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
> Not light us here, so reason's glimmering ray
> Was lent not to assure our doubtful way,
> But guide us upward to a better day (Dry. *SPs*. *RL*. 1-7).

Dryden also soon afterwards makes reference to "finite reason" (Dry. *SPs*. *RL*. 40). With reason in as deficient a state as this, it is an unsuitable faculty for the "poor worm" (Ibid. 93) that is man to find a basis of happiness for himself. That is why for Dryden, even the great philosophers of antiquity "least of all could their endeavours find/What most concerned the good of humankind" (Ibid. 25-6).

For Burke too, reason is an insufficient guide for the creation of successful political systems upon which human beings' happiness ultimately depends. Of course, the critique of reason made by Dryden in *Religio Laici* is restricted to its ability to find religious truth, but Philocles' full remark in *The Maiden Queen* shows that Dryden, like Burke, is uncomfortable with the use of reason as a guide to political change as well. The full remark is that "[i]nterest makes all seem reason, that leads to it;/Interest that does the zeal of sects create,/To purge a church, and *to reform a state*" (Dry. *Vol2*. 442 – my italics). Burke would most certainly concur with Dryden's outlook, as it the use of reason as a motor for political change particularly disturbs him. Burke was certainly opposed to the "confident rationalism of the Revolution" (H-M *RRF* 199), which gave the revolutionaries

themselves "a certain inward fanatical assurance and illumination upon all subjects" (Burke 217). That Burke held a contrary view though can be seen in his own references to "the fallible and feeble contrivances of our reason" (Ibid. 34). With such a perspective the idea of reforming society from the basis of such a disabled faculty is obviously ill-advised, and if attempted, highly perilous. Burke thus regards the Revolutionaries, who both venerate reason and do believe it to be the necessary foundation stone for society negatively, describing them for instance as the "coxcombs of philosophy" (Ibid. 52).

4.1.5 Negative Regard for the Lower Classes

Burke would also broadly approve of Dryden's perspective on the lower classes. From the evaluation made of the plays in this work, it is evident that Dryden repeatedly presents the people as a political class in a highly pejorative manner, especially when it comes to their involvement in the political arena. On the whole, Burke would concur, although he exhibits compassion to the lower classes when their potential role in politics is not in question[95]. Thus, in their Revolutionary potential, Burke describes the populace as "a swinish multitude" (Burke 79) and "the immoderate vulgar" (Ibid. 160). It is also noteworthy that in his 1791 *Thoughts on French Affairs*, Burke derides a working-class organization, the "Fifth Street Alliance", that had got into a separate correspondence with the National Assembly in France. He referred to their correspondence as "the delirium of a low, drunken, alehouse club", and regarded it as "low and base" (qtd. Gilmartin 100). He could not regard their action in the same treasonable way as he did the Revolution Society though. That is because, as Kevin Gilmartin notes, "[t]he very capacity for serious criminal responsibility, let along legitimate political participation, was in Burke's account beyond the political reach of the lower orders" (Gilmartin 100).

What is especially important to Burke and Dryden, however, is that the populace, due to its ignorance, is easily open to be led by ambitious figures from

[95] See for instance Burke 161.

outside. Thus, Creon is easily able to enrage it against Oedipus, and for Burke, "the many" are led "to rapine" by the Revolutionary leadership (Burke 50). Burke notes that the people are deceived by the revolutionaries (Ibid. 243), a group which, whilst not effective in government, is effective in their ability to "raise mobs" (Ibid. 241); his use of the term "raise" itself implying that mobs are not organically formed but are brought into being under an outside influence. Thus, for both Dryden and Burke, the people, when they come to regard themselves as the true depository of political power, become especially malleable as "a most contemptible prey to the servile ambition of popular sycophants or courtly flatterers" (Ibid. 94).

4.1.6 Wariness as Regards Natural Rights

Dryden and Burke also have an affinity on the question of natural rights. Unlike Filmer, they accept the concept, but they are both wary of it, and see the state as inimical to it. In his 2002 book, *The Blank Slate*, the professor of Psychology Steven Pinker credits John Dryden with having first used the term "noble savage" (Pinker 6), the idea of which has come to be particularly associated with Jean Jacques-Rousseau. Pinker notes that it first appears in Dryden's play, *The Conquest of Granada*. The character who uses the term in the play is Almanzor and he is reacting to the king of Granada, Boabdelin, who has ordered his death for having slain one of his subjects. Pinker only quotes the last three lines of Almanzor's speech, but to see its full political relevance, the full seven lines are quoted here:

> No man has more contempt that I of breath
> But whence hast thou the right to give me death?
> Obeyed as sovereign by thy subjects be,
> But know, that I alone am king of me.
> I am as free as nature first made man,
> Ere the base laws of servitude began,
> When wild in woods the noble savage ran (Dry. *TPs*. 25).

Not only is Almanzor a typical Dryden hero – his fearlessness of death exhibiting his courage here – but he is also making a point about natural rights. As he is not a

"subject" of Boabdelin, he rejects any sovereign right that Boabdelin feels he has over him. In formulating Almanzor's speech in this way, Dryden is alluding to the idea of natural rights: that is the idea that man is naturally free to act in any way that he wishes. By putting the speech into the mouth of the play's hero, Dryden may look as if he supports the concept. However a more attentive reading can reveal a different conclusion, more in line with Dryden's general outlook of the necessity of obedience to a sovereign. Firstly, it is the case that Almanzor exempts only himself from Boabdelin's authority. Whilst the idea of a foreigner not being subject to the authority of the land in which he is residing has little support in legal history[96], and is thus quite an audacious one, it is as a foreigner that Almanzor makes his claim. He is "as free as nature first made man" in Granada because he is not a subject of Boabdil. As for everyone else in the state, his remark of "[o]beyed as sovereign by thy subjects be" is valid. Thus, the subjects of Boabdelin have no right to appeal to natural law, should they wish not to obey their king. Secondly, and this is the truly significant point, Almanzor's speech leaves the implication that if his assertion of natural right were to be universalized, and consequently include those living within monarchies, everybody would be "king" of himself. In the political societies represented by Dryden in which there is tension and strife that is only prevented from descending into chaos by the power of a single monarch, any idea of a multitude of monarchs in the universe of Dryden must entail conflict and disorder. Thus it can be assumed that Dryden regards the concept of natural right as a frightening one.

Burke too regards the concept with great concern, seeing it as "threatening" (H-M *RRF* 200). Burke does not see it as the basis on which to build a polity, as with Milton, Rousseau or the American Revolutionaries. Indeed for Burke, the advocacy of natural rights can lead to nothing but "to plunge us back into Hobbes' brutal and uncivilized condition" (Ibid. 200). Hence, Burke, much like Hobbes, sees the point of the state in being a repressor of these rights, which is

[96] A notable exception to this is the "Capitulations" system of the Ottoman Empire. See Palmer pp. 6,205.

"incompatible with society" (Ibid. 200). For Burke, as "[s]ociety is indeed a contract" (Burke 96), this contract necessitates all of those in society to renounce their natural rights in favour of the common good. Burke explains:

> One of the first motives to civil society, and that which becomes one of its own fundamental rules, is *that no man should be a judge in his own cause*. By this each person has at once divested himself of the first fundamental right of uncovenanted man, that is, to judge for himself, and to assert his own cause. He abdicates all right to be his own governor. He inclusively, in a great measure, abandons the right of self-defence, the first law of nature. Men cannot enjoy the rights of an uncivil and a civil state together. That he may obtain justice he gives up his right of determining what it is in points the most essential to him. That he may secure some liberty, he makes a surrender in trust of the whole of it (Burke 60).

Indeed Burke affirms that for the good of society, it is necessary that "the inclinations of men should frequently be thwarted, their will controlled, and their passions brought into subjection" (Burke 60). This perspective naturally brings Burke to the conclusion that the advocacy of the Rights of Man, rather than aiding in the construction of a fair society, actually causes society to cease to exist (Ibid. 97). It also removes any obligation of the individual towards the government, which becomes nothing more than "a consideration of convenience" (Ibid. 60). This, for Burke, and for Dryden, creates a state of anarchy, which is an "antagonistic world of madness, discord, vice, confusion, and unavailing sorrow"[97] (Ibid. 97).

4.1.7 Belief in a Natural Gradation in Society

Both Burke and Dryden also believe that there is a natural gradation in society. Burke condemns the revolutionaries of France for having been "so taken up with their theories about the rights of man, that they have totally forgot his nature" (Burke 64). In fact, for Burke, it is submission within a polity that is natural (Ibid. 97) and he believes that not only is natural gradation natural, but a positive

[97] Not unlike Hobbes' "warre of every man against every man" (Hobbes 188), also resulting from natural rights.

regard for it is too (Ibid. 86-7). This leads Burke into a condemnation of the populace having political power. By ignoring the natural gradations of society, democracy is "an *unnatural* inverted domination" (Burke 94 – my italics). So, should the mass be given any role in the political direction of the state, "the state suffers oppression" as instead of "combatting prejudice" such a move puts one "at war with nature" (Burke 49). Also, for Burke, democracy is bound to fail due to the need for natural gradation (Ibid. 49). All a revolution will do is replace one elite with another, albeit one that pays lip service to the idea of equality. The example of Creon in *Oedipus* is once again instructive here.

It ought to be noted though that to neither Dryden nor to Burke is this natural gradation solely dependent upon birth. It has been seen that Dryden's Philocles in *The Maiden Queen* is a virtuous figure who is expected to eventually inherit the throne, despite his lower origins. Burke also feels that a person of virtue should not be excluded from political power, as in an inflexible aristocratic system, but that such a person should not find his promotion "from obscure condition" to be a straightforward one, but should pass through "some sort of probation" first (Burke 50). As has been seen, Philocles seemly fits such a description, as it appears that he attained his rank through his merits, and has managed to win the esteem of the elite, presumably over a period of time.

It is additionally to be noted that with their pejorative view of the general populace, neither Dryden nor Burke favour direct democracy in which the people would direct the affairs of state. However, Burke also shares with Dryden a distaste for representative democracy. Whilst Dryden favours an absolute virtuous ruler, Burke prefers a ruling aristocracy. Yet both men regard the practice of representative democracy as one that weakens the moral sense of the ruler or rulers. The reason for this is that, in the words of Burke, "when the leaders choose to make themselves bidders at an auction of popularity, their talents, in the interests of the state, will be of no service. They will become flatterers instead of legislators; *the instruments*, not *the guides* of the people" (Burke 247). Burke adds that should a leader attempt to act in the interests of the state by rejecting this abject approach, he

will be "outbid by his competitors" against whom he needs the support of the people, and will thus be obliged to act to win their support in a way that will prevent him from later acting in the interests of the state (Ibid. 247). The only exception to this is through hypocrisy; that is the equally distasteful winning of the people's support without any intention of fulfilling the promises made to them, such as Creon and his supporters do in Dryden's *Oedipus*.

It is also the case for Burke and Dryden that naturally superior virtuous rulers exempt from the influence of the populace are necessary for the good of the populace itself. Due to the ignorance of the masses, they do not know their own interest, and can, for example prefer a Creon in place of an Oedipus, or a Lysimantes in place of the Queen. The problem for these conservative thinkers is that, as Burke puts it, "[t]he will of the many, and *their interest*, must very often differ" (Burke 52 – my italics). The implication of such an assertion is that the people do not know what their interest is, and thus require being ruled by one – alone for Dryden and in combination for Burke – who does.

4.1.8 Perspective on the Actual Motivations of Revolutionaries

The last point upon which Burke would concur with Dryden is on the actual motivation of revolutionaries. In the plays examined in this work, Dryden portrays those who compete for the crown as being selfishly motivated by their own interests. For instance, this is true for the three disloyal sons of the Emperor in *Aureng-Zebe*. However, it is also the case that Dryden depicts men of high birth who are motivated by selfish ambition and make use of the people to further that ambition. Thus, Creon attempts to incite the mob in *Oedipus* to attempt to remove Oedipus from power, and Lysimantes in *The Maiden Queen* supports the representatives of the people in their attempt to get the Queen to agree to a marriage. Burke also shares a distrust of the motivations of those who wish to initiate political change. Whilst the declarations of the Revolutionaries and their supporters in England use exalted terms such as "the rights of man", Burke questions their real motives. This comes from his empirical study of history, rather

than an attachment to abstract philosophizing about the real nature of man. Burke draws on the past to make a penetrating psychological observation. It is that:

> History consists, for the greater part, of the miseries brought on the world by pride, ambition, avarice, revenge, lust, sedition, hypocrisy, ungoverned zeal, and all the train of disorderly appetites, which shake the public . . . These vices are the *causes* of these storms. Religion, morals, laws, prerogatives, privileges, liberties, rights of men, are the *pretexts*. The pretexts are always found in some specious appearance of real good (Burke 141 – original italics).

The Revolutionaries and their English supporters are for Burke especially motivated by three specific vices, which are selfishness, envy and ambitiousness. Burke is adamant that it is self-interest that drives the Revolutionaries rather than their new-found advantages being a by-product of high principle. It is only in their ambitiousness that "they are thoroughly in earnest" (Burke 166).

Burke regards their English supporters – called by him "those democratists" – as hypocrites who, whilst apparently acting in the interest of the people, in fact "when they are not on their guard, treat the humbler part of the community with the greatest contempt, whilst, at the same time, they pretend to make them the depositories of all power" (Burke 56). In addition to self-interest, Burke feels that the Revolutionaries – again like Creon in *Oedipus* for instance – are inspired by envy. Without understanding the "sour, malignant, envious disposition, of the Revolutionaries, it would be impossible to understand the "joy" which they exhibited at "the unmerited fall of what had long flourished in splendour and in honour" (Ibid. 139). These considerations lead Burke to have a view of an ideal statesman that is similar to Dryden's. It is that "[t]he true lawgiver ought to have an heart full of sensibility. He ought to love and respect his kind, and to fear himself" (Ibid. 169). Thus, whilst Burke would not concur with Dryden's restriction of the virtuous statesman solely to the person of the monarch, he would regard positively Dryden's depiction of what such a figure should be.

4.2 Burke and the Flaw of Dryden Concerning Legitimacy

Now this work will examine a central aspect of Dryden's political project and show how it is undermined by a strong implication drawn from Burke's *Reflections*. In order to understand Burke's observation in context though, it is necessary to state one particular criticism Burke makes of the address of Dr. Price. It is that Burke says of Price that "[h]e tells the Revolution Society, in this political sermon, that his majesty 'is almost the *only* lawful king in the world, because the *only* one who owes his crown to the *choice of his people*'" (Burke 13 – original italics). Burke's concern is how such a doctrine affects the sitting monarch in England.

Burke feels there are two possible responses to the domestic implication of Price's assertion. The first is that it is simply "nonsense" and as such "neither true nor false" (Burke 14). Burke clearly does not regard it in such a way, however, or he would not have gone to such great lengths to refute it. Rather, Burke considers the assertion as one that "affirms a most unfounded, dangerous, illegal, and unconstitutional position" (Ibid. 14). And the reason Burke views it in this way is revealed by his drawing out its obvious implication. For Burke, the obvious induction from Price's sermon is that "if his majesty does not owe his crown to the choice of his people, he is no *lawful* king" (Burke 14 – original italics). Of course, Burke himself affirms that "nothing can be more untrue than that the crown of this kingdom is so held by his majesty" (Ibid. 14), and that "the king of Great Britain is at this day king by a fixed rule of succession" (Ibid. 15) and owes nothing to any kind of election.

Burke's reaction to this specific assertion of the Revolution Society is particularly relevant to Dryden, and his propagandizing use of drama. Of course, Dryden would have had no sympathy with the general outlook of the society. Indeed, he is even more conservative than Burke, who accepts that the British monarch is limited by the "legal conditions of the compact of sovereignty" (Burke 15), whereas for Dryden, as a believer in the Divine Right of Kings, there can be no limitation of any kind on the monarch's freedom of action. Nonetheless, Burke notices what to him is a unsettling psychological factor inherent in Price's claim,

and it is this psychological factor that is relevant to Dryden too, as will now be seen. For Burke, it is not that the people who immediately hear Price's address would wish to overthrow the monarch. The contrary is true, as he has the support of the people. But the address also has a vitally important gradual subversive implication which is pointed out by Burke. It is that:

> The propagators of this political gospel are in hopes that their abstract principle (their principle that a popular choice is necessary to the legal existence of the sovereign majesty) would be overlooked whilst the king of Great Britain was not affected by it. In the mean time the ears of their congregations would be gradually habituated to it, as if it were a first principle admitted without dispute . . . By this policy, whilst our government is soothed with a reservation in its favour, to which it has no claim, the security, which it has in common with all governments, so far as opinion is security, is taken away (Burke 14).

Thus, Burke's observation is that due to Price's granting the British monarch an exceptional status, with time, a habituation to a subversive idea will take place in the minds of the populace, and this in future could lead to the overthrowing of a consecrated king.

It is also surely the case that habituation to the idea of the legitimate monarch being necessarily virtuous could also take place amongst the audiences of Dryden's many dramas. Whilst Dryden's dramatic work is aimed at securing the Stuart throne, the implication of Burke's criticism of the Revolution Society shows how unintentionally, Dryden, through his propaganda, could have in fact been undermining it. By habituating his audiences to the idea that the legitimate monarch is inevitably a figure of virtue, Dryden is also inadvertently making for the monarchy "a reservation in its favour, to which it has no claim". Thus, when it seems that the succession will inevitably fall upon Charles II's brother James, whose Catholicism alone would make him a potential tyrant in the eyes of a powerful section of British society[98], the "security" of the succession, which

Dryden had been aiming to ensure "is taken away" by the conflated concept that only a man of virtue belongs upon the throne, and James as a potential tyrant can be no such figure.

As the opponents of the succession are not opponents of monarchy *per se* – as will be evidenced a little further below, and can especially be seen in their attempt to have Monmouth made king – they too could use the habituated mindset created by Dryden to further their claim to disrupt the normal nature of succession. This is because, if in the figure of James the ideal conflation of legitimacy and virtue is to separate, Dryden in his propaganda has not prepared the ground for legitimacy to be given greater credence than virtue in deciding which factor is more requisite for the throne. He has unwittingly created the potential circumstances for a situation of confusion, in which the outcome he supports, desires and has worked for is rendered less certain. Indeed, the potentially disruptive implication of Dryden's confutation of legitimacy and virtue threatens the sitting monarch as well. Although as a Divine Right of Kings advocate, Dryden does not wish to place any limitations upon the monarch, by designing a picture in which the legitimate monarch is expected to be virtuous, he has not prepared his audiences for continued loyalty when the monarch does not live up to what is ethically expected from him.

There is a related final element in which Burke's observation is particularly damaging to Dryden's propagandist work, and that is in the problem of perspective. Dryden's dramatic monarchs are so exaggerated that a unanimous evaluation of them as virtuous is at least possible. However, in the unadorned realm of day-to-day politics in England, perspectives upon the moral worthiness of the sitting monarch are far less likely to be in full agreement. The psychological bias of pre-existing preference will allow for the same monarch to be perceived as virtuous by his supporters and less so, or in a contrary way, by his opponents. Thus Dryden, by creating a paradigm in which the monarch unites legitimacy with virtue,

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[98] Hampsher-Monk for instance noting that in Dryden's time "arbitrary government . . . was associated in people's minds with Catholicism". He also quotes Shaftesbury as claiming "slavery and popery, like two sisters go hand in hand" (H-M *HMPT* 69).

inadvertently enables those who do not regard the monarch as virtuous to not seemingly be wrong in questioning his right to rule. It is also perhaps worth noting here that even Dr. Price, the advocate of revolution, does not wish for the dethroning of good kings.

It is also necessary to tackle the potential objection that Dryden was propagandizing on the principle of monarchy in general, and thus had to portray his legitimate princes in a positive light in order to defend the institution itself. Such an objection does not stand up to scrutiny. This is because in the context of Dryden's time, there was no need to defend the principle of monarchy in general. It was, so to speak, the default position in politics. Few of Dryden's contemporaries would have contested Schopenhauer's remark that "[t]he monarchical form of government is the form most natural to man" (Schopenhauer 153) – at least if not taken exclusively – made over a century and a half later. And the strongest proof for this can be found in the case of the republican Cromwell himself. This is because whilst the war of the 1640s against the king had a broad level of support amongst Cromwell's peers, his decision to have him put to death did not. It is the case that Cromwell himself, even as late as 1647, "had still been anxious to preserve the monarchy in some form" (Ashley 87). And even when he had changed his mind, the "Rump Parliament" which had been repeated "purged" to reflect the outlook of the army, its decision to put the king on trial "was carried by a mere 26 votes to 20 in the depleted House of Commons" with the Lords being left unconsulted (Ibid. 87). Moreover, when the king was finally convicted, "many of the commissioners refused to sign the death warrant" (Ibid. 87), and in fact "[i]t was mainly by Cromwell's personal efforts that a plausible number of signatures was collected" (Ibid. 87-8). Certainly the king's beheading was not met with any sense of rejoicing, but rather a stunned silence (Ibid. 88). These facts alone help to show the disposition towards monarchy that existed in seventeenth-century England.

However, there are other elements that occurred subsequent to this event that provide further proof of a monarchical inclination. And none is more

significant than that Cromwell was actually offered the crown himself in 1657 (Ashley 101). He rejected it, Dryden himself praising Cromwell for this in his *Heroic Stanzas* by exclaiming "[n]or was his virtue poisoned soon as born/With the too early thoughts of being king" (Dry. *SPs. HS*. 27-8). The truth, however, is a little different, Ashley noting that Cromwell was "sorely tempted" by the offer which attracted not only his ambition but additionally his "honestly" thinking "it might aid stability" (Ashley 101); this point in itself being a strong indication of the people's disposition towards monarchy. Moreover, whilst not being enthroned, Cromwell had already become a powerful monarch in all but name by having dissolved parliament by force in 1653 and in the new Parliament he set up in 1656, refusing to let his opponents sit in it (Ibid. 101). Indeed, Ashley sums up the political nature of the Commonwealth by noting that "it was indeed a monarchy without a monarch" (Ibid. 101). An extra piece of evidence for this is that upon his death, his eldest son Richard had been named as his successor by Cromwell, who as Ashley reveals "wanted to be a dynast" (Ibid. 104), creating an effective succession by primogeniture[99]. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that during the Commonwealth, in the constitutional uncertainty that took place and before being offered the crown himself, Cromwell even "played with the idea of restoring some form of monarchy, perhaps with the youngest son of Charles I as a figurehead" (Ashley 96-7). Lastly, it is also surely significant that Dryden, in seeking to praise Cromwell in the aforementioned 1659 poem speaks of Cromwell's "mien" of

[99] A modern parallel can be found in the situation of the pre-Arab Spring Middle East. In societies that for centuries had been ruled by monarchies, the post-Second World War republican revolutions that deposed kings in certain countries led to the establishment of powerful presidents whose power came to be set up in such a way that it would pass to their sons upon their deaths, making them monarchies in all but name. In the case of Hafiz al-Assad's son Bashar al-Assad this actually came to pass, and it was only the overthrow of Hosni Mubarrak, Muammer Gaddafi and Ali Abdullah Saleh that will have prevented their sons from succeeding to power in their turn. See 2011 Article by Professor Juan Cole at: http://www.juancole.com/2011/12/2011-revolutions-and-the-end-of-republican-monarchy.html

"majesty" (Dryden. *SPs*. *HS*. 71-2) and refers to him as a "prince" in two different stanzas (Ibid. 125, 138).

As this was the situation in the time of the republic, and as republicanism was a spent force in England at the time of the Restoration[100] it is evident that there was no need for Dryden to propagandize for the concept of monarchy in general. It was effectively universally accepted as necessary to government. Hence a monarch who was regarded as virtuous would need no extra theoretical support. It was for a monarch not regarded in this way that such theoretical support would be required, and Dryden's propagandist work had done nothing to prepare the English people for such a king.

[100] That this was the case can be understood from Goldberg and Orgel's remark that during this period Milton "increasingly represented himself as virtually the sole repository of a republican spirit that had been abandoned and betrayed" (Milton *SP*. xii).

CHAPTER 5

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this work has shown that the seventeenth-century poet and playwright John Dryden used his literary work to follow a political program of propagandizing for the Restored English monarchy and what he considered to be its legitimate succession. In his dramatic work, he does this by depicting the legitimate rulers as being superior in terms of virtue to any other contenders for the throne, as has been seen from the analyses carried out in this work on the plays *Marriage à la Mode*, *Aureng-Zebe*, *Oedipus*, and *The Maiden Queen*. In doing so, he provides support for the concept of the Divine Right of Kings – that is that the ruler should be invested with full prerogatives that cannot be alienated. Additionally, Dryden uses his dramatic work to counter the concept of representative government through his unfavourable depiction of the populace. Dryden also portrays states which do not adhere to the Divine Right of Kings theory with its attendant primogeniture as being inherently unstable, but in such a way that even in these states the rights of the rulers, however they attain their position, are still to be paramount. Moreover, this work has shown that Dryden's general approach fits with that of the conservative thinker Edmund Burke. This is because both Dryden and Burke share a similarly broad satisfaction with the conventional hierarchical structure of society, as well as agreeing upon how important a smooth monarchic succession is. Additionally, they share a similar political viewpoint on religion, reason and natural rights. Moreover, they both evidence a disdain for the lower classes and suspiciousness over what really motivates revolutionaries. However, this thesis has also revealed there is an aspect to Burke's thought that implies Dryden's program of connecting princely legitimacy to virtue is flawed, and which undermines Dryden's program itself. This aspect is that a linking of the concept of legitimacy with another concept in fact weakens the notion of legitimacy itself.

Indeed, whilst Dryden enjoyed great political influence when Charles II was alive – most particularly with his satires *Absalom and Achitophel* and *The Medal* – and this influence continued with the succession of James II, Dryden's political program would anyhow become an irrelevance even in his lifetime, once his patron had lost his throne in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Hence, it turned out that Dryden had been on, what can be described as, the wrong side of history with his political program as concerned England. The Glorious Revolution initiated a process by which the power of the crown would gradually be reduced, and parliament become effectively sole sovereign in the realm. Furthermore, along with the fall of James II, Dryden too lost his influence at court, and was stripped of his position as poet laureate under the new dispensation (Scott 300). This "left Dryden an alien in his own country" (Erskine-Hill 61). It may be the case that in literary terms this was more of a blessing than a curse, as it enabled Dryden to refocus his literary attention and produce a new kind of work. Erskine-Hill feels that for Dryden, with the exception of *Aureng-Zebe*, all of his best drama was written in the post-revolutionary period (Ibid. 52, 54), as the plays from this time are not marked with Dryden's former overconfident certainty (Ibid. 58). Also, had Dryden not fallen from grace, it is probable he would not have commenced his voluminous translation work of "extraordinary quality" (Ibid. 62), the most prominent of which is his version of the *Aeneid*. James Morwood has summarized the reception of Dryden's rendering of this work of Virgil's into English as follows:

> Alexander Pope called Dryden's *Aeneid* 'the most noble and spirited Translation I know in any language.' And it has worn well. A modern commentator who has conducted a survey of other translations (Taylor Corse in 1991) echoes Pope's view, feeling that 'compared with later versions, including the recent admirable one by Robert Fitzgerald, Dryden's version shows to great advantage (Virgil xx).

It is the case, however, that the dramatic works that have been dealt with in this thesis are of a kind that have also ended up being on the wrong side of history. They soon fell out of fashion with audiences, heroic drama even doing so during

Dryden's lifetime (Zwicker *DPC* 149), and have pretty much remained so ever since. Less than a century after they were written, Samuel Johnson evinced, in general, little respect for Dryden's dramatic output, which had it not been so enormous, Johnson implies he would have happily "omitted" (Johnson 63) completely from his biography of the poet. As for today, Erskine-Hill remarks that:

> There is no doubt great difficulty for modern directors and actors in addressing themselves to many of Dryden's tragic or tragicomic plays. They are part of a courtly, late Baroque, mode, not without its theatrical energies and rituals, but alien to modern theatrical practice[101] (Erskine-Hill 61).

Moreover, within academic circles, these plays "are conventionally seen as a frivolous departure from the main tradition of British drama" (Love 114), and as such, the academic interest given to Dryden's dramatic work is focused mainly on *All for Love* and *Don Sebastian*, with the majority of his dramatic output being, in Loves' words, "left to genealogists of the grand narratives of colonialism, imperialism and orientalism" (Ibid. 114-5). It has therefore been possible for Fowles to exclaim that even though Dryden "expended some 30 years of his life in writing plays" and "[b]etween 1667-1680 he wrote in no other form", undeniably, "[i]t is a quite astonishing fact that his fame, the admiration for poetic achievement he evoked in succeeding generations depends on virtually none of this output" (Fowles 26). Indeed, it is even possible that Dryden himself would not be greatly offended by his posthumous reputation as a dramatist. Johnson believes that Dryden's whole career as a playwright was "compelled undoubtedly by necessity" and supports his supposition with the claim that Dryden "appears never to have

[101] For the reading public, the current status of Dryden as a playwright can be reckoned from the availability in print of his work. For instance, in the United Kingdom, whilst the prestigious Penguin Classics currently publish a lengthy edition containing Dryden's selected poems and have a version of his *Aeneid* available, they have not seen fit to print any of his plays. See: http://www.penguinclassics.co.uk/nf/Search/QuickSearchProc/1,,dryden,00.html?id=dryden

loved that exercise of his genius, or to have much pleased himself with his own dramas" (Johnson 63). Indeed, Dryden claims that "I never thought myself very fit for an employment" – that is playwriting – "where many of my predecessors have excelled me in all kinds; and some of my contemporaries, even in my own partial judgement, have outdone me in Comedy" (Dry. *TPs*. 271).

Scott contrasts Dryden and Milton to explain their opposing successes in their lifetimes and posthumously. During the Restoration, it was the case, as Scott puts it, that Milton was regarded as "obnoxious for his share in the usurped government" (Scott 142). Moreover, as regards *Paradise Lost*, its initial unpopularity was clearly explicable. Scott notes that the epic work's "turn of the language, [was] so different from that of the age [and] the seriousness of [its] subject, [was] so discordant with its lively frivolities" (Ibid. 142). Furthermore, Milton, in turn, had little but contempt for the England of the restored monarchy. For instance, E. M. W. Tillyard notes that *Samson Agonistes* is "nothing less that stark defiance of the restored government and a prophecy that it will be overthrown" (Tillyard *Mil*. 279). There is even a reading of this play in which "[t]he violence and wholesale destruction Samson . . . wreaks on God's and Israel's enemies" is interpreted as "Milton's wish-fulfilment of obliterating his enemies" (Lewalski 534), represented by "[t]he court of Charles II [which] was awash with licentiousness, scandal and Catholic influence" (Lewalski 398). Moreover, Scott notes that by having "retired into solitude, if not into obscurity", Milton was "relieved from every thing like external agency either influencing his choice of a subject, or his mode of treating it" (Scott 143). This enabled him to use his "profusion of genius" to write a work, whose reputation, whilst evidencing "slowness of growth" ended "with the permanency of the oak" (Ibid. 142). Scott makes the distinction with Dryden, after whom the period of Restoration literature even came to be named (Walton 233), by pointing out that:

> [T]he taste of Dryden was not so independent. Placed by his very office at the head of what was fashionable in literature, he had to write for those around him, rather than for posterity . . . It followed that Dryden could not

> struggle against the tide into which he was launched, and that, although it might be expected from his talents that he should ameliorate the reigning taste, or at least carry those compositions which it approved, to the utmost pitch of perfection, it could not be hoped that he should altogether escape being perverted by it, or should soar so superior to all its prejudices (Scott 144).

Nevertheless, before closing this work, it is worth noting that Dryden in his plays has in fact points of interest that are relevant to our contemporary age. Dryden makes use of comedic elements in his work, and comedy has been linked to perspectivism. Sigmund Freud made this connection, Mark Edmundson noting that for Freud humour "show[s] awareness of that there is more than one simple reality to take into account, one truth: [humour] testif[ies] to there being contending forces at play in the world, contending interpretations of experience" (Edmundson 237). Dryden also depicts strong independent women in his work. He has women at the helm of government, as in *The Indian Queen* and *The Maiden Queen*, and in the latter at least, the ruling queen, as has been seen, is an effective virtuous ruler. He also depicts many of his liberated female characters as willing to bargain as equals with men to achieve the relationships they desire, such as Florimel in *The Maiden Queen*. Additionally, Dryden is multicultural in that he sets a number of his plays in different parts of the world. More significantly though, he does not depict those places as being culturally inferior to Europe. Rather than being regions of unenlightened barbarism, the peoples within them deal with problems and issues identical to those faced by his characters in his European plays. They thus imply an equality of human value across cultures. Indeed, as has been seen in this work in the case of the character of Aureng-Zebe, Dryden has created a virtuous individual despite clearly being Indian, putting him at odds with his historical counterpart Aurangzeb who has been described as "bigoted and bloodthirsty" (Gupta 219). Furthermore, the coming of the European Spanish into both Mexico and Granada in *The Indian Emperor* and *The Conquest of Granada* is not portrayed as the successful completion of the march of progress, but rather as events of great

disruption. Additionally, Dryden's concern over the potentially subversive effect of religious extremism within the body politic resonates today.

Lastly, it is a multicultural perspective that perhaps also provides Dryden's political program with more longevity than first appears, especially if it is refocused on his belief in the need for an all-powerful autocrat rather than on legitimate primogenital descent. It is true that in England, and across Europe, the triumph of democracy, which was almost wholly completed in the twentieth century, has brought about, in that continent, what Francis Fukuyama has called "the End of History"[102] – that is the acceptance of liberal representative democracy. Yet in other parts of the world, the debate between popular sovereignty and absolutism continues. Not only are certain monarchies of the Arabian Gulf region, Swaziland and Brunei as absolute – in fact even more so – that the Stuart dynasty of Dryden's time, but much of the world still lives, and indeed prospers, under some form of autocracy. And, even where democracy has flourished, it should still be borne in mind that if such esteemed thinkers as Freud[103] and Erich Fromm[104] are right, the triumph of democracy in one generation, does not entail that autocracy will not return in another, meaning that the issues that Dryden dealt with may once again become relevant on his home continent too.

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[102] See: http://ps321.community.uaf.edu/files/2012/10/Fukuyama-End-of-history-article.pdf

[103] Freud believed that autocracy has, and always will have, "amazing powers of attraction" (Edmundson 241) to a populace because it allows the individual within the state to resolve the psychological tension created by his inhibiting superego by replacing with the role of the superego with an omnipotent leader (Edmundson 100), who is, moreover, able to "offer purpose, resolution, and Truth" (Edmundson 240).

[104] In his work *The Fear of Freedom*, first published in 1942, Fromm notes the irony that "millions in Germany were as eager to surrender their freedom as their fathers were to fight for it" (Fromm 3), and explains how the freedom that is foundational to democracy can indeed be psychologically undesirable, initiating an "escape" (Fromm 122) from it into authoritarianism (Fromm pp. 122-153).

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APPENDIX A

TURKISH SUMMARY

Bu tez John Dryden oyunlarındaki siyaset anlayışının bir analizi ve Edmund Burke'ün fikirleri aracılığıyla değerlendirilmesidir. Tezde öncelikle 17. yüzyıl İngiliz devletinin siyasi yapısının ne olması gerektiği üzerindeki tartışma ve bu tartışmanın, patlak veren İngiliz İç Savaşlarıyla şiddete dönüştüğü sergilenir. Dönemin üç büyük şairi olan John Milton, Andrew Marvell ve John Dryden'ın bu tartışmaya, Milton ve Marvell'ın güçlü Stuart Hanedanı'na farklı derecelerde muhalif olarak, Dryden'ın ise destek vererek katıldığı belirtilir. Dryden'ın, bu kraliyet ailesini desteklemek amacıyla oyun yazarlığı da dahil olmak üzere sanatını bir propaganda aracı olarak kullandığı siyasi bir tasarısı olduğunu gösterilir. Tezde, Dryden'ın siyasi programını oyunlarında ortaya koyduğu yedi yolla izlediği açıklanır. Öncelikle ve en önemlisi, meşru yöneticileri yüksek erdemli şahsiyetler olarak canlandıran yazar, böyle yaparak meşru prenslerin tam monarşik imtiyazlarının hak olduğu izlenimini yaratır. Ayrıca, meşru hükümdarlarını tamamen yüksek erdem duygusuna sahip oldukları için, kendinden ideal sınırsız eylem özgürlüğüne sahip olarak resmederek, oyunlarını monarşinin konumunu desteklemek için kullanır. Bununla birlikte, kral katlini bir dinsizlik eylemi olarak canlandırır ve meşruiyeti vazgeçilemez bir şey gibi gösterir. İlaveten, halkı siyasi mesuliyet taşımaya uygun olmayacak şekilde tasvir eden Dryden, temsili hükümet kavramını zayıflatmak ister. Oyunlarını ayrıca, krallarının ayrıcalıkları üzerinde meşru olmayan bir sınır koyan halk bölgeci duyguları reddetmek için kullanır. Son olarak, oyunlarında istibdatın etkileri ve istikrarsızlığın sivil savaşa yol açabileceğini gösterir. Dryden için bu iki sorunun çözümü, sabit en büyük erkek çocuk sistemidir (primogeniture). Tezde, Dryden'a göre saltanatın meşruiyetinin, kendisinden doğduğu sistemden daha önemli olduğu noktasına dikkat çekilir. Sonuç olarak, oyunlarda, en büyük erkek çocuk sisteminden farklı bir yolla tahta gelmiş olsalar bile meşru prenslerin en erdemli kişiler olarak gösterildiği belirtilir.

Çalışmada daha sonra yukarıdaki hususları göstermek amacıyla, Dryden'ın seçilen dört oyunu açıklanır. *Marriage à la Mode* (*Modaya Uygun Evlilik*), *Aureng-Zebe (Evrengzib), Oedipus* ve *Secret Love; or, the Maiden Queen* (*Gizli Aşk ya da Bekar Kraliçe*) adlı bu oyunların her biri, krallığın babadan oğula geçişinin birbirinden farklı biçimlerini sergiler, ancak hepsi de, meşruiyetinin kaynağı ne olursa olsun kadın veya erkek meşru veliahtı olası en faziletli yönetici olarak tasvir etmede tutarlılık gösteren oyunlardır. Tezde daha sonra Edmund Burke'ün bakış açısıyla Dryden'ın siyasi tasarımı incelenir ve bu tasarımın değerlendirilmesinde, neden uygun bir siyasi düşünür olarak Burke'ün görüldüğü açıklanır. Tezde bu amaç için Burke'ün seçilmesinin üç varsayıma dayandırıldığı gösterilir. Herşeyden önce, bunların zamanla değişen temel siyasi tartışmalar olduğu ve böylece Dryden ile aynı zaman ruhunu paylaşan bir siyaset düşünürü tarafından incelenmesinin aydınlatıcı olacağı vurgulanır. İkincisi, kritik siyasi bir analiz yapılabilmesi için, kendi zamanlarının yayınlanmış en derin düşünürleri olmaları nedeniyle ölümlerinden sonra kavuştukları ünle de itibarları zaman sınavına direnen böyle siyaset düşünürlerinin önemli bilgiler sağlamaları beklenebilir. Üçüncü olarak, Dryden'ın siyasi anlayışının derin bir değerlendirmesinin yapılmasında genel olarak ya tamamen ona saldıran ya da kayıtsız kalan bir yazardan çok kendisine daha yakın bir yazarın daha ince gözlemler ortaya koyabileceği açıktır. Bunun ardından ileri sürülen üç varsayımla, Burke'ün burada Dryden ile bağdaşan en uygun kişi olduğu gösterilir. Her şeyden önce Burke ve Dryden aynı "uzun on sekizinci yüzyıl"a ait olmakla benzer bir ortak görünüş paylaşır, ikincisi, Burke tüm zamanların özellikle de muhafazakâr çevrelerin en büyük siyasi düşünürlerinden biridir ve üçüncüsü, düşüncenin geniş kapsamı içinde belirli konuların kendi içinde ilginç anlayışlara yol açtığı kabul edilecek olursa, Dryden'ın değerlendirmesinde Burke gibi açıkça meşru hilafet sorunuyla ilgilenen bir muhafazakârın özellikle alakalı olduğu anlaşılır.

Tezde aynı zamanda, halk devriminin ikisinin de ortak korkusu olması gibi, Dryden ve Burke arasında güçlü bir benzerlik duygusu sağlayan başka bir faktör olduğuna değinilir. Dryden, çalışmalarını Restorasyon devrinde, yakın zamanda

gerçekleşmiş devrimci İngiliz cumhuriyetinin gölgesinde yazmıştır. Burke ise Fransız Devrimi'nde İngiltere için aynı tehditi görür. Dahası, yalnızca onyedinci yüzyıl ortası olayları ile Fransız Devrimi arasında paralellik çizmek değil, ancak bu paralelliklerin Burke'ün kendisi tarafından çizilmiş olması özellikle önemlidir. Belirtilen şekillerde devrim korkularının etkisiyle, halk egemenliğinin yıkıcı düşüncelerine karşı bir siper olarak her iki adam da, aralarında daha sonra tespit edilen ortak bir modelde, kendi dönemlerinin monarşisinin yetki, güç ve prestijini koruma ihtiyacı duymuştur. Tezde, Dryden'ın muhalif olduğu Şanlı Devrim'i desteklediği ve mutlakiyetçi monarşi iddialarına karşı bir reformcu olarak görülebileceği için Burke'ün, onun değerlendirilmesinde uygun olmayacağı yönündeki olası itiraz reddedilir. Çalışmada her iki adamın temel endişelerinin siyasal yapının çözülmesini önleme olduğu ve Burke'ün de, sadece sistemi korumak için bir zorunluluk olarak reforma razı olması nedeniyle, gerçekte aralarındaki farklılıkların önemsiz olduğuna işaret edilir. Ayrıca, eğer yalnızca önceki açıklamalarından biraz farklı ve Dryden'ın kendi görüşlerine daha yakın olan ileri muhafazakar bir tartışma çizdiği *Fransız Devrimi üzerine Düşünceler* adlı eseri göz önüne alındığında Burke'ün fikirlerinde kati bir tutarlılık eksikliği olduğu noktasına değinilir.

Sonra, Dryden'ın siyasi programının bir bağlama yerleştirilmesi amacıyla, tezde İngiltere siyasi tarihinin belirli yönleri incelenir. Tudorlar'ın, Ortaçağ Güller Savaşı'ndaki başarısının İngiltere'de güçlü bir monarşinin oluşmasına neden olduğu gösterilir. Ancak İngiliz Reformasyonu ile birlikte VIII. Henry'nin Roma ile bağlarını koparma ve hilafet sistemini belirlemede yardıma çağırdığı Parlamento da güçlendirilmiştir. Bu çalışmada daha sonra, 1603 yılında I. James tahta çıktığında, meclisin daha iddialı, kralın kendisinin ise mutlakçı Kralın Yönetme Hakkı görüşünün bir savunucusu olduğu gösterilmektedir. Bu, Parlamento ve hükümdar arasında gerginliğe yol açmış ve yalnızca James'in pragmatik doğası nedeniyle daha kötü bir şeye neden olmamıştır. Bu durum oğlu I. Charles'ın saltanatı devralmasında da devam etmiş ve Charles'ın daha uzlaşmaz bir doğası olduğu için giderek kötüleşmiştir. Nitekim söz konusu anlaşmazlık, İngiliz İç Savaşı,

Parlamentonun buyruğuyla kralın öldürülmesi ve İngiltere'de bir cumhuriyet kurulması ile sonuçlanmıştır. Ancak bu cumhuriyet 1660 yılında çökmüş ve I. Charles'in oğlu, II. Charles olarak kraliyet tacı giymek üzere İngiltere'ye dönmüştür. Bu olay her tarafta kutlanmış ve John Dryden da kralın dönüşünü övgü dolu bir şiirle karşılamıştır.

Tezde daha sonra, Geç Oliver Cromwell'i İngiliz cumhuriyetinin başkanı olmadan yaklaşık bir sene önce öven bir eser yazmış olan Dryden'ın krala da yaptığı övgüler nedeniyle karşı karşıya kaldığı ikiyüzlülük suçlamalarını hak edip etmediği incelenir. Dryden'ın Cromwell ile ilgili şiirinin incelenmesi, Dryden'ın toplumsal istikrarı garanti edebilen güçlü bir yönetici üzerine yaptığı vurgu ile Restorasyon öncesi ve sonrası siyasi yaklaşımının oldukça tutarlı olduğunu ortaya koyar. Bu çalışmada daha sonra, 1660'lı yıllar ilerledikçe, yeniden tahta çıkarılmış kralın artık pek tutulmayan bir figür haline geldiği ve on yıllık bir sürenin ortasında ününün özellikle üç ulusal afet tarafından tehdit edildiği belirtilir. Bu felaketler Büyük Veba, Büyük Londra Yangını ve İkinci İngiliz-Hollanda Savaşı'dır. Onlara karşılık olarak Dryden, kralı olağanüstü bir adam olarak sunmak ve hükümdarın itibarını geri kazandırmayı amaçlayan bir şiir yazmıştır. *Annus Mirabilis* (*Harikalar Yılı*) adıyla bilinen bu şiir, kralı görkemli ve çok sevilen bir figür olarak canlandırır. Bununla, II. Charles'ın dikkatini çeken Dryden saray şairi olarak atanır. Bu andan itibaren, Dryden kariyerine bir oyun yazarı olarak başlar ve oyunlarını Stuart monarşisinin propagandasını yapmada kullanır. Bu, isyankar Şeytan'ı ve diğer düşmüş melekleri, Parlamentonun Kutsal Kral'a karşı eylemi gibi tasvir ederek yeniden yorumladığı Milton'un dramatik *Kayıp Cennet*'inde kolayca görülebilir.

1670'lerin sonlarında Stuart hanedanını tehdit eden yeni bir kriz başlar. Papalık komplosu, kendisi gibi hiçbir meşru çocuğu olmadığı için kardeşi James'den sonra tahta gelen II. Charles'ın durumunu sorgulayan Katolik-karşıtlığı bir histeri yaratır ki, zaten James'in Katolikliği de artık kamuoyunun bilgisi dahilindedir. Nitekim, Meclis bu dönemde hanedanın hilafetine müdahale etmiş ve tahtı devralmak için James'i dışlamak için çalışmıştır. Stuart hanedanı için çok zor

olan bu süreçte destek, Stuartlar'ın lider muhalifi Shaftesbury Kontu'nu hedefleyen *Absalom ve Achitophel* ile *The Medal* (*Madalya*) adlı iki siyasi hiciv ile Dryden'dan gelir. Bu yazılar, Shaftesbury üzerinde yıkıcı bir etki yaratır ve II. Charles'ın siyasi inisiyatifi yeniden ele almasına yardımcı olur. Yayımlanmalarından kısa bir süre sonra Shaftesbury, Hollanda cumhuriyetine kaçar ve çok geçmeden ölür. Partisi Whig ise, ağır bir şekilde zayıflamaya terkedilir. Tezde Dryden'ın *Madalya*'da halk egemenliğinin istikrarı bozucu etkisini, mutlak iktidarın monarşiye ait olduğu ihtiyacını ve siyasi olarak yıkıcı doğası nedeniyle radikal Protestanlığa muhalefetini savunan siyasi bakış açılarını arzettiği gösterilir.

Çalışmada daha sonra John Dryden oyunlarında ele alınan siyasi meşruiyet formları incelenir. İngiltere'de 13. yüzyılda Kral John saltanatı ile babadan oğula hilafetin en büyük erkek çocuk kuralına bağlı hale geldiği ve bu sistemin daha sonra gerçekleşecek azılı gasp vakalarında bile büyük ölçüde zarar görmediği gösterilir. Çünkü II. Edward'dan VII. Henry'e kadar saltanatı gasp yoluyla ele geçirenler dahil, kendilerinden sonra en büyük erkek çocuk sisteminin devamını istemiştir. Çalışmada ayrıca, Orta Çağ boyunca, her ne kadar on yedinci yüzyıldan önce gücü sorgulanabilir durumda olsa da Parlamentonun kurulması ve *Magna Carta* yoluyla kralın gücüne bir sınırlama getirildiği, Orta Çağ ilerledikçe, Kilisenin bir zamanlar İngiltere'de sahip olduğu siyasi etkisinin sona erdiği gösterilir.

Daha sonra, İslam dünyasında, meşru vesayetin iktidardaki hükümdarın herhangi bir oğlu için mümkün olduğu ve bunun sık sık iç savaşa neden olduğu konusu işlenir. Örnek olarak da, Babür Hindistan'ında Şah Cihan'ın ardıllarının vesayet durumu verilir. Ayrıca, bu tezde Roma tarihinde tayin ve seçim yoluyla meşru vesayet örnekleri olduğuna değinilir. Birinci yöntem, haleflerini belirleyen birçok imparator tarafından kanıtlanmıştır. İkincisi ise, Roma hükümdarı olmak için Julius Caesar'ın, aynı zamanda William Shakespeare tarafından da dramatize edilmiş girişiminde görülebilir. Sonra, Bizans İmparatorluğu'nda görüldüğü gibi, meşru bir kadın hükümdarla yapılan evlilikle tahta çıkmanın bir başka yolu daha

olduğu gösterilir. Son olarak, tahtın meşru vesayet şekillerinden herhangi birinde gerçekleşebilecek ve zorbalıkla yakından bağlantılı gasp yoluyla meşru olmayan bir şekilde alınması konusu incelenir.

Bu aşamada, eserlerinde Kralların İlahi Hakkı olgusunu destekleyen Dryden incelenir. I. James ve Robert Filmer tarafından savunularak ileri sürülen ve her ikisinin de hükümdarları Cennet'teki tek Tanrıya benzeten, yanısıra Allah tarafından kendisine her şeyin üzerinde tam güç verildiği Adem'in meşru soyu olarak gören bir dinler tarihi okuması da içeren kuramlara bakılır. Kralların İlahi Hakkı teorisi, hükümdara karşı herhangi bir isyanın meşruiyetini bozduğu gibi, Parlamentonun da, sonuçta tamamen ona bağımlı olduğunu doğrular. Sonra, Dryden'ın hükümdarlarını ve onlara meydan okuyanları, Rönesans'taki fazilet standartlarına göre değerlendirebilmek için, dönemin ideal hükümdardan beklediği erdemler sıralanır. Tezde, bu erdemlerin Platon, Aristoteles, Cicero, Seneca ve Plutarkhos gibi antik düşünürlerin yanı sıra Baldassare Castiglione, I. James, Michel de Montaigne ve Francis Bacon gibi son dönem Rönesans yazarları tarafından tespit edildiği gösterilir. En önemlileri, bilgelik, adalet, cesaret ve ölçülülük olan erdemler, ideal hükümdardan beklenen "temel erdemler"dir. Bunlar daha sonra dindarlık, yücelik, özgürlük ve dürüstlük ile tamamlanır. Tezde aynı zamanda, ideal bir hükümdarın erkeksi bir cesaret ve fiziksel bir çekiciliğe sahip olmasının beklendiğine işaret edilir. Ayrıca, bu erdemleri taşımayan bir yöneticinin ise, bir tiran olduğu noktasına vurgu yapılır.

Sonra, çalışmada incelenmeye alınan belirli oyunların analizine geçilir. Bakılacak ilk oyun 1671 tarihli *Marriage à la Mode* (*Modaya Uygun Evlilik*) adlı dramdır. Bu oyun, en büyük erkek çocuk vesayet sistemi konusuyla ilgili bir oyundur. İki ana karakter Leonidas ve Polydamas'tır. Birinci karakter, Sicilya kralının daha bebekken tasfiye edildiği ve gerçek kimliğinden habersiz kent dışında yetiştirildiği için oyunun büyük bölümü boyunca kendisinin de farkında olmadığı tahta çıkma hakkı elinden alınmış meşru oğludur. İkinci karakter ise, Leonidas'ı bebekliğinden beri meşru haklarından mahrum eden gaspçıdır. Erdemlilik hallerinin bir analizi, Polydamas'ın dindarlık gibi açıkça görülen bazı olumlu

nitelikleri olsa bile, Leonidas'ın erdem bakımından ona üstün bir şahsiyet olduğunu gösterir. Bununla birlikte, Leonidas'ın kendisi de, fazilet açısından mükemmel biri değildir. Genellikle, Palmyra'ya karşı sevgisi meselesinde sergilediği duygusal stres ile ifade edilen acımasız davranışlar sergileyebilme potansiyeli ile lekelenir. Oyunun sonunda kral olarak taçlandırılır. Bu yolla Dryden, oyunda üstün erdem ile meşruiyeti bağdaştırır. Oyunda ayrıca, meşruiyetin sadakati teşvik ettiği ve dışlanamaz birşey olduğu gösterilir. Bununla birlikte gaspın, istikrarsızlıktan başka iç savaşa da neden olduğu gösterilir. Dahası, gaspçının taht haklarının zayıflığı nedeniyle daha zorba bir şekilde hükmedeceğine dikkat çekilir. Bunların yanısıra, bu dramda, inançlı insanların da sadakatlerinin kısa bir sorgulaması yapılır.

Tezde analiz edilen sonraki oyun 1675 tarihli *Aureng-Zebe* (*Evrengzib*) adlı dramadır. Bu oyun, yazılmasından yaklaşık yirmi yıldan az bir süre önce, Şah Cihan'ın ardıllarının tahta geçmesine ilişkin Babür İmparatorluğu'nda yaşanan gerçek olaylara dayanır. Oyun İslami sistem, atama ve babadan oğula geçiş olmak üzere meşru üç vesayet formuna odaklanır. Karakterlerin, fazilet açısından tahlil edilmesi ile Evrengzib'in bu yönden en üstün kişilik olduğu gösterilir. İmparatorun, taht kavgasının neden olduğu iç savaşa karışmış dört oğlundan biri olan Evrengzib, babası adına mücadele eden tek karakterdir. Tıpkı Leonidas gibi, Indamora'ya tutkusu nedeniyle sergilediği duygusal istikrarsızlık, erdemliliği noktasında kusurlu olduğunu gösterir. Evrengzib'in aksine, karşılıksız bir aşkla Indamora karakterine tutkun olduğu için mevcut hükümdarın erdemi de eksiktir. İmparatorun oğlu Murat ve eşi Nurmahal tahtın potansiyel, ancak Murat gururu –aynı zamanda Indamora'ya- tutkusu nedeniyle taşkın, Nurmahal ise kontrolsüz kıskançlığı ve Evrengzib'e duyduğu ensestvari ilgisi dolayısıyla erdemlilikte kusurlu varisleridir. Böylece, Evrengzib'in yeni hükümdar yapılması ile biten oyun bir kez daha erdemi meşruiyet ile bağlar. Oyun aynı zamanda, Dryden'ın babadan oğula veraset sisteminin üstünlüğü, ardıllık tartışmalarının yol açtığı bir iç savaşın felaket içerdiği ve sıradan halkın siyasi bir role sahip olmasının uygunsuzluğu gibi fikirlerinin altını çizen öteki bazı siyasi saptamalarda da bulunur.

İncelenecek üçüncü oyun 1679 tarihli *Oedipus*'tur. Bu oyunu her ne kadar Nathanial Lee ile işbirliği içinde yazmış olsa da, oyunun Dryden tarafından tasarlanmış olması ve tamamlandıktan sonra baştan sona kendisi tarafından gözden geçirilmesi, tezde bu oyunun Dryden'ın çalışmalarından biri olarak kabul edilebilirliğinin geçerliliğine işaret edilir. Oyunun kendisi bir altplan içermesine karşın, Sofokles'in klasik oyunun bir uyarlamasıdır. Bu dramda, seçim yoluyla bir prense meşruiyet verilmesi meşruiyetin ana şeklidir. Teb halkının meşru hükümdarı olan Oedipus, Sfenks'i başlarından defettiği ülkeye kral seçilir. İlginçtir, önceki kral Lajus'un oğlu olduğu için babadan oğula vesayet hakkı da bulunmaktadır, gelgelelim gerçek kimliği açığa çıktığında tanrılar tarafından krallığı devrilecektir. Oyunda Creon, komplolarla hareket etmeyi tercih ettiği için Oedipus'a doğrudan olmasa da, taç için meydan okur. Karakterlerin analizi ile, Oedipus'un esasında erdemli, ancak yine de, belli bazı durumlarda insafsız olabilmekten dolayı erdem konusunda ciddi kayıpları olduğu ortaya çıkarılır. Ancak herhangi iyi bir vasıfla takdim edilmeyen Creon, bu haliyle erdem bakımından ondan çok daha geridedir. Böylece bir kez daha, her ne kadar Oedipus intihar ettiği ve Creon öldürüldüğü için Teb kralsız kalsa da, en erdemli olanın meşru hükümdar olduğu beyan edilmiş olur. Oyunda diğer bazı siyasi tespitler de yapılır. Bunlar, bir kez daha, kibri, aptallığı, döneklik ve sığlığı gibi nedenlerle kolayca manipüle edilebilir şekilde gösterilen insanların siyasi bir rol oynamak için elverişsiz olduğunu içeren saptamalardır. Dryden, aynı zamanda varlığı kutsal temele dayanan monarşiye karşı dinsiz bir davranış olması nedeniyle kral katlinin özellikle cezayı hakeden bir suç olduğunu gösterir. Bundan başka, Dryden'ın, taht verasetinde herhangi kavimci bir duygunun sınırlayıcı rolünü kabul etmediği açıklanır.

Tezde değerlendirilecek son oyun 1667 tarihli *The Maiden Queen* (*Bekar Kraliçe*)'dir. Bu da, evlilik yoluyla meşru saltanat sorunu ile ilgilenir. İktidardaki hükümdar Kraliçe'dir ve kendisi son derece erdemli bir karakter olarak gösterilir. Erdemliliğinde bulunan zayıflıklar ise, kraliyet kanı taşımayan ama onun sadık danışmanı Philocles'e karşı duyduğu aşktan kaynaklanır. Philocles'in kendisi, oyunun sonunda Kraliçe'nin kuzeni Candiope ile yaklaşan bir evlilik yoluyla tahtın

muhtemel varisi olarak bırakılır. Ancak erdem açısından kendisinden daha üstün olduğu için Kraliçe oyun boyunca meşru hükümdar kalır. Ayrıca Candiope'nin erkek kardeşi ve Kraliçe'nin doğrudan halefi Lysimantes karakteri de, gerçeşleştiği anda kral olabileceği için Kraliçe ile evlilik ister. Ancak, hem Kraliçe hem de Philocles'e oranla daha düşük bir erdeme sahip olan Lysimantes'le evlenmeyi, üzerindeki baskıya rağmen Kraliçe reddeder. O da tahtın mirasçılarından olduğuna göre, oyunun tasarımının en erdemli karakter olarak Kraliçe'yi meşru olan, bir sonraki erdemli kişi Philocles'i ise veraseti alacak şekilde yapıldığının altı çizilir. Bu oyunda da, yine meşruiyet dışlanamaz, bölgecilik ise reddedilir biçimde tasvir edilirken, insanlar da haklı bir şekilde politik karar alma sürecinin dışında tutulur.

Tezde daha sonra Dryden ve Burke'ün paylaştığı ortak noktalara bakılır. İlk önce *Fransız Devrimi Üzerine Düşünceler*'inde Burke'ün hedef kitlesinin, gerçekte Fransızlar değil, İngilizler olduğu kaydedilir. Ona göre gerek 1688 Şanlı Devrimi gerekse çağdaş Fransız Devrimi yanlış ve yanıltıcı bir şekilde aynı ilkelere dayandırılmış olarak tasvir edilmiştir. Radikalizmden rahatsız olan Burke, Fransa'daki olaylar cumhuriyetçiliğini de böyle anlar ve İngiltere'de bunun gibi bir yaklaşıma karşı çıkar. Bu açıdan Dryden'la benzer bir tavır içindedir. Tezde, Dryden ve Burke'ün, her ikisinin de yaşadığı toplumda temel bir sorun görmemesi dolayısıyla muhafazakarlıklarında kesiştikleri gösterilir. Ayrıca, her ikisi krallık bahsinde babadan oğula ardıllığı tartışmasız bir zorunluluk olarak görür. Din konusuna gelince, her iki adam da, devlet içinde istikrarsızlaştırma etkisi yüzünden radikal Protestanlık korkusu paylaşır. Böylece onlar, özellikle Anglikanizm olmak üzere kurulu bir dini, devlet içinde dengeleyici bir güç olarak gerekli dini bir sistem şeklinde değerlendirir. Her ikisi de, akılcılık adına yapılan iddiaları kuşkuyla karşılar. Akıl, Dryden için zayıf bir yeti iken, Burke için toplumun reform için bir rehber olarak yetersizdir. Bununla birlikte Burke'ün, alt sınıflara karşı Dryden'dan daha az aşağılayıcı, ancak, özellikle güçlü figürler tarafından manipülasyona açık olmaları dolayısıyla siyasi bir rollerinin olmasına bir o kadar karşı olduğu belirtilir. Bu noktada da, Dryden ile aynı fikirdedir. Her ikisi de, doğal haklar gibi bir kavram kabul ederler, ancak bu hakları, bir devletin temeli olarak değil, aksine

devletin rolünün, bu hakları bastırmak olduğunu düşünürler. Doğal bir hiyerarşinin var olduğuna inanan Dryden ve Burke için bu, tamamen doğuşa dayalı değildir. Monarşiyi Burke'ün aristokrasisine tercih eden Dryden, iktidar gücü açısından daha sınırlı iken, her iki adam da demokrasi fikrine karşıdır. Son olarak, her iki adama göre devrimcilerin, retorikleri bir yana, aslında bencil bir motivasyona dayandığı hususundaki inançlarına dikkat çekilir.

Öte yandan, Burke'ün Dryden'ı zayıf düşürmesi noktası, Dryden'ın meşruiyet ve erdemi birleştirdiği siyasi programı ile bağlantılıdır. Burke bu meseleye doğrudan değil, ancak *Düşünceler*'inde İngiliz hükümdarının, insanlar tarafından seçildiği için meşru tek hükümdar olduğu yönünde yaptığı radikal bir iddia ile değinir. Burke İngiliz hükümdarının herhangi bir popüler seçimden bağımsız olduğu fikrinde kararlıdır. Ona göre, meşruiyetin popülerlikle bağlantılandırılması anlayışı, daha sonra sevilmeyen bir hükümdarın tahta geçtiğinde gayrimeşru ilan edilmesine izin vereceğinden, kraliyetin istikrarını baltalama potansiyeline sahiptir. Tezde bu görüşün çıkarımının Dryden'ın görüşlerini etkilediği belirtilir. Çünkü Dryden erdemi popülarite ile değil, meşruiyet ile ilişkilendirir. Bununla birlikte, erdemli olmayan bir hükümdar, bir başka ifadeyle bir despotun hükümdarlığı durumu da sorgulanır. Dryden, böyle bir figürü meşru kabul etse de, hükümdarlığın bu şekilde görülmesi için seferber olduğu propagandası pek başarılı olmaz. Nitekim hükümdarda bulunması gereken en önemli özelliğin meşruiyet mi, yoksa erdem mi olduğu düşüncesi siyasi programında pek açık değildir. Dolayısıyla bu karşıklık, halihazırda tahtta oturan kral için de geçerlidir. Bu durum, özellikle herkesin erdem derecesini aynı hükümdarda aynı şekilde göremeyeceği düşünüldüğünde anlaşılır.

Tezde son olarak, Dryden'ın ideal hükümdarların, kralın meşruiyetinin dışında, kraliyet kurumunun kendisini savunmaları için oluşturduğu potansiyel itirazlar ele alınır. Burada 17. yüzyılda monarşiye karşı eğilimler çok güçlü olduğundan, soyut bir ilke olarak monarşi lehine propagandaya gerek bulunmamış olduğunu belirtir. Bunu, İngiliz İç Savaşları sırasında Cromwell'in kendisinin bile başlangıçta monarşiyi aynı biçimde devam ettirme fikrinde olduğunu ortaya

koyarak yapar. Ayrıca, monarşinin kuramsal savunmaya ihtiyaç duymadığı Restorasyon dönemindekine oranla daha olumsuz görüldüğü İngiliz cumhuriyeti döneminde, Cromwell'in kraliyet tacına sahip çıkarak, geleneksel monarşinin oğlu tarafından devam etmesini dilediği belirtilir.

Tez, siyasi programında Burke'ün bakış açısından görülebilen kusurlara rağmen, Dryden'ın bu tasarısının, 1685 yılında kral olan ikinci hamisi I. James'in tahtını 1688 Şanlı Devrimi'ne kaybetmesi nedeniyle, kendi döneminde bile geçersiz olduğunu belirterek sonlanır. Tezde, Dryden'ın siyasi program çerçevesinde deyim yerindeyse, tarihin İngiltere ile ilgili yanlış tarafında bulunmuş olduğunun altı çizilir. Bunun nedeni olarak, Şanlı Devrim'in, taht gücünün giderek azaldığı, parlemantonun ise etkili tek egemen haline geldiği bir süreç başlatması gösterilir. Aynı zamanda, tezde ele alınmış dramatik eserlerin de, çok geçmeden izleyicisi azalmaya başladığı ve günümüzde de pek tutulmadıkları için, tarihin yanlış tarafında oldukları vurgulanır. Bununla birlikte tezde, Dryden'ın oyunlarında günümüzle alakalı noktalar olduğuna dikkat çekilir. Dryden, eserlerinde komedi unsurlarını kullanır ve komedi, örneğin Sigmund Freud ile perspektivizme bağlanmıştır. Ayrıca, Dryden'ın eserlerinde güçlü ve bağımsız kadınları tasvirine dikkat çekilir. Eserlerinde hükümetin dümenine kadınlar yerleştirir, bundan başka, istedikleri ilişki tarzını elde etmede erkeklerle eşit olmaya istekli özgür birçok kadın karakteri vardır.

Ek olarak, oyunlarının birçoğunu dünyanın farklı yerlerinde kurgulayan Dryden'ın çokkültürlü olduğu belirtilir. Daha da önemlisi onun, bu yerleri Avrupa'dan daha düşük yerler olarak tasvir etmemesidir. Aksine aydınlanmamış barbarlığın bölgeleri olmaktan çok, bu oyunlardaki insanlar da Avrupa oyunlarındaki karakterlerin karşılaştığı özdeş sorunlar ile uğraşmaktadır. Dolayısıyla kültürler arasında insan değerinin eşitliği ima edilmektedir. Bu dünyanın birçok yerinde popüler hükümdarlık ile mutlakiyet arasındaki tartışmanın devam ettiği belirtilir. Aynı zamanda demokrasinin geliştiği yerlerde bile, Freud ve Erich Fromm gibi saygın düşünürler doğru ise, bir kuşak demokrasinin zaferi, başka bir kuşakla otokrasinin dönmeyeceğini garantilemeyeceği hatırlatılır.

Dolayısıyla Dryden'ın ele aldığı sorunlar, kendi ülkesinde bile tekrar güncel hale gelebilir.

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