PERKIN WARBECK IN HISTORICAL FICTION

A STUDY

IN

HISTORICAL FICTION:

JOHN FORD'S *PERKIN WARBECK*

AND

MARY SHELLEY'S *THE FORTUNES OF PERKIN WARBECK*

By

ROSANNE PAULETTE GASSE, B.A.

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AUTHOR: Rosanne Paulette Gasse, B.A. (McMaster University)

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Abstract

This thesis is a detailed study of two fictional works, John Ford's Perkin Warbeck and Mary Shelley's The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck, which deal with the story of the Royal Pretender Perkin Warbeck. It strives through these to show how historical fiction is written and how it relates to an author's own time and interests. It also glances at how historical fiction relates to posterity.

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INTRODUCTION

Historical fiction is a form of literature which has been present in every culture from the earliest times. Myths, legends, sagas, the stories and poems recorded by the early Anglo-Saxon chroniclers, the writings of the mediaeval historians such as Geoffrey of Monmouth, the Renaissance histories and above all the Tudor history plays are all, in part or in whole, fictionalized accounts of historical personages and events. The writing of historical fiction did not end, of course, with the Renaissance. It is still a favourite with authors and readers alike. The novels of Sir Walter Scott and a vast number of contemporary authors attest to that.

It would be extremely difficult to establish historical fiction as a genre all its own since it spans every literary form. There are historical novels, historical poems, historical plays and historical short stories. Indeed, it is difficult to establish even the great history plays of the late Elizabethan period as being a separate subclass of drama, as Irving Ribner points out in The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare.[1] For the purpose of this thesis, a historical fiction is a literary work, in any genre, which imaginatively modifies, expands or distorts historically verifiable facts in the context of a specific historical period.

Any period of history can be a fruitful one for the writer of historical fiction. Colorful personalities, conflict, intrigue and

suspense -- qualities which every generation of mankind produces -- create potent situations. English history has had its share of dramatic incidents. Perhaps no time was better designed for historical fiction than the crisis-filled Wars of the Roses. Although Henry Richmond was triumphant on Bosworth Field in 1485 and there established the Tudor dynasty, it was not until 1499 with the execution of the Earl of Warwick, the son of the Duke of Clarence and the last recognized male Plantagenet, that the issue was irrevocably solved. It was during this time-period of change and upheaval that one of the most controversial characters of English history arose: the Pretender Perkin Warbeck.

Few historians give serious consideration to Perkin Warbeck's claims to be Richard, Duke of York. They assume that his confession, although made under duress, is essentially true and that he was really the son of John Warbeck (Osbeck) of Tournay. As further evidence historians cite apparent discrepancies in Warbeck's age and the Duke of York's, the lack of Yorkist support after the execution of William Stanley, and Warbeck's extremely 'un-Plantagenet' behaviour in three well-known cases.

From the historian's point of view, Warbeck's parentage, since he died unsuccessful and childless, is a moot point. In the face of the Henrician controlled evidence and since Warbeck's only proofs to his claims were his word, the word of obviously biased Yorkists such as Margaret of Burgundy and his own impressive physical appearance, it is perhaps inevitable that historians will decide that Warbeck was an impostor. The high estimation that historians hold of Henry VII no doubt also contributes to their decision.

For the author of historical fiction, however, the case is different. Mystery is bountiful in his life story. There is just enough chance that he was the Duke of York. Besides this, there is much romance in his story: his early largely unknown life, his reception by crowned heads of state, and his marriage to a beautiful and devoted Scottish princess. With this material the story writer can weave around the baser historical reality a tale which, as Mary Shelley expresses it, "(takes) away the sting from the ignominy which might attach itself to his fate."[2]

The historical Perkin Warbeck was executed in 1499 for treason.[3] He had claimed to be Richard, Duke of York, the younger of the two young princes, the sons of Edward IV, who were commonly supposed to have been murdered in the Tower on the order of Richard III. Warbeck's career was meteoric. He first appeared in Cork, Ireland, in 1491. For the next six years he was a great source of worry and of embarrassment for Henry. European monarch after European monarch acknowledged Warbeck as the true and rightful king of England. Warbeck found a secure base at the court of his 'aunt' the Duchess Margaret of Burgundy, sister of Edward IV.

Disaffected Yorkists were not idle in England and plans were readied for an invasion. Henry too was busy. His spies reported back the truth of Warbeck's parentage. Through bribes and promises of pardon Henry won over Sir Robert Clifford, one of Warbeck's staunchest supporters who had claimed he knew him to be Richard by sight. Clifford betrayed the Yorkist conspirators: Lord Fitzwater, Sir Simon Mountford, Sir Thomas Thwaites, William Daubeney, Robert Ratcliffe, Thomas

Cressenor and Thomas Astwood, besides the Dean of St. Paul's and some other priests and friars. The result was that the Yorkists were left totally dispirited and disorganized. Clifford's betrayal was to doom an even more important official, however, Sir William Stanley, the King's own chamberlain whose timely intervention in the Battle of Bosworth Field had put Henry on the throne. Stanley was arrested, tried for treason and on February 16, 1495 executed. His vast wealth was confiscated by the king. The threat of internal Yorkist rebellion was effectively quelled.

Warbeck, meanwhile, was preparing an invasion fleet financed by Maximilian of Austria. On July 3, 1495 Warbeck and fourteen ships appeared off the coast of Kent near Deal. A band disembarked and was greeted by seemingly enthusisatic natives. Warbeck remained on board despite being encouraged to land. When the peasants could entice no more of Warbeck's soldiers to shore, they furiously attacked them and drove them off. When no news reached Warbeck he feared the worst and set sail for Ireland leaving the survivors to the tender mercies of the Kentish peasants and to Henry.

The disastrous Kent invasion marks the end of Warbeck's real threat to Henry. Henry had managed to establish his dynasty in the hearts of the English people. The Yorkists, either still disorganized or now reluctant to risk their lives for the Pretender, failed to rise at his arrival. It only remained for Warbeck to be apprehended by Henry.

This, however, did not transpire for more than two years. Warbeck fled to Ireland where after a futile eleven-day siege of Waterford he was grateful to accept the offer of refuge given by James IV

of Scotland. On 27 November, 1495 he arrived at Stirling and was greeted by a royal reception. In Scotland James and Warbeck prepared an invasion force for the early fall of 1496. Sometime during this idyll in his career Warbeck married Katherine Gordon, a near kinswoman to James.

Meanwhile, Henry was busy. He succeeded, through treaty and policy, in barring Warbeck from the Continent. He widely publicized Warbeck's true origins. He was close to allying himself with the Holy League. Now, faced with the threat of a Scottish invasion, Henry prepared his defences. He sent an embassy north to propose marriage between James and the Princess Margaret. He enlisted the Spanish, so helpful in pressuring Maximilian of Austria away from Warbeck, to bring about a reconciliation between James and himself. He used the information his Scottish spies, most notably Lord Bothwell, supplied him to prepare a counter-attack when the Scottish army came over the border.

The invasion did not occur until September 15, 1496 and even then it was little more than a glorified border raid. 1500 men crossed over to England and, when no expected Yorkist uprising came about, on James' order pillaged the countryside. It was then that Warbeck made his quixotic plea to James for the carnage to stop. James is reported to have replied jestingly that Warbeck should not be so concerned for another man's property. The invasion did not last long. An English army under Lord Surrey rapidly advanced. The Scots fled back into Scotland. Warbeck's Scottish period was essentially over. By early July of the next year, he, his wife and his remaining followers left Scotland just days before an English embassy arrived demanding that he be delivered

up to Henry.

Henry was enraged by the Scottish invasion and ordered William Daubeney to lead an army into Scotland. James was saved, however, because to finance the invasion Henry needed to levy taxes. The Cornish rebelled over what to them was an unneccessary tax. 15,000 rebels advanced within sight of London. Henry was caught completely off guard by this blow as his power was concentrated northward. Daubeney received counter-orders and he turned back from Scotland to quell the rebellion. On June 17, 1497, near St. George in the Fields, the two armies met and the rebels were routed.

Despite the easy victory over the Cornish rebels, Henry's position still looked shaky. Another Scottish invasion was imminent. Warbeck had escaped to Cork. Cornwall was still restive. James and Warbeck may have planned a simultaneous invasion of England from the north and south but it never happened. In July James laid siege to the castle Norham-onTweed but was repulsed by Lord Surrey. It was then that James gave his challenge to Surrey for personal combat. Surrey declined respectfully. Twice rebuffed in his efforts to invade England, James signed a seven year treaty with Henry on September 30, 1497.

Meanwhile in Ireland, Warbeck received an enthusiastic welcome only in Cork. After another futile seige of Waterford, Warbeck received an invitation from the dissatisfied Cornish and at the end of August he sailed to Cornwall landing at Whitsand Bury, near Land's End, with 120 men. There he proclaimed himself Richard IV and headed an army of 3000 men to Exeter. There was a brief unsuccessful seige, then Warbeck led his depleted ranks to Taunton where they arrived September 20th.

The royal army under Daubeney advanced to meet them there. Around midnight on the 21st Warbeck, either having lost his nerve or experiencing the same horror of war he had shown in Scotland, abandoned his camp with a few followers and made for sanctuary at Beaulieu. His army surrendered unconditionally. Warbeck reached Beaulieu but surrendered himself up on September 28th, probably because he realized the hopelessness of his situation. He was returned to Taunton on October 5th where he made a full confession. Later at Exeter in the presence of his wife (who had been apprehended by Henry's forces at St. Michaels Mount) he was forced to repeat his confession.

For the next nine months Henry treated Warbeck with surprising leniency. He was kept under house-arrest at Westminster. But by June 9, 1498 Warbeck had had enough of Henry's mercy and attempted to escape. He reached the monastery at Sheen where he was delivered back to Henry. His life was spared at the prior's intercession. From Sheen Warbeck was put in the public stocks on June 15th, where he again repeated his confession. He was then removed to the Tower and put in close confinement. He remained there for the next year and a half.

What happened next is a matter of conjecture. Henry claimed that Warbeck had plotted with the Earl of Warwick, who had been imprisoned in the Tower for fourteen years, to escape and to renew the rebellion. What seems more likely, however, is that Henry wished to implicate the only surviving male Plantagenet with the impostor. Warbeck and Warwick were arraigned on the 16th and 21st of November, 1499 respectively and were sentenced to death for treason. Warwick was beheaded on Tower Hill on November 28th in his 25th year; Warbeck, after again repeating his

confession, was hanged at Tyburn, his head cut off and placed over London Bridge on November 23, 1499. He was 25 years old. It was said that he took his death meekly.

As improbable as it may seem, Warbeck's peculiar and pathetic story has inspired several dramas and novels. Just slightly more than a hundred years after his death, Warbeck's life was reconstructed in a play, now lost, the knowledge of which we owe to the historian Thomas Gainsford. In his History of the Earl of Tirone (1619) he wrote

> How Perkin Warbeck for all his exhaled vapouring, went forward assisted by the Scottish policie, Flemmish credulitie and inveterat malice of the Duchess of Burgundy, against the house of Lancaster, our stages of London, have instructed those who cannot read.[4]

Gainsford himself wrote the history True and Wonderfull History of Perkin Warbeck (1618). His work was quickly followed by another history which dealt with the subject, Francis Bacon's History of the Reign of King Henry VII (1622). Both of these are histories in the Renaissance manner; we would call them rhetorical exercises rather than critical biographies. When John Ford wrote Perkin Warbeck within the next ten years, he used both Gainsford and Bacon extensively as sources. His play was first published in 1634 and was later reprinted in 1714, a time when the English were again having problems with a Royal Pretender. It is known that a stage performance was held at the theatre at Goodman's Fields on 19th of December, 1745 when the Young Pretender was much in the news.[5] The prompt-copy for the performance is almost certainly the manuscript now in the Bodleian (Rawl. poet 122) which is vastly mutilated by cuts and alterations, most notably affecting Warbeck and Katherine. In the nineteenth century there was an explosion of interest

in historical fiction headed by the novels of Sir Walter Scott. The story of Perkin Warbeck was inevitably included. In 1830 two novels, one Mary Shelley's three volume The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck A Romance, the other Alexander Campbell's The Court of James IV of Scotland[6], were published. In 1892 J. W. Aizlewood published his ten-act play Warbeck complete with a dramatic prologue. Even in the twentieth century Warbeck's story has attracted the novelist. His life has been the subject of several minor novels.[7]

What makes the Perkin Warbeck story of interest to the writer of historical fiction? Its vagueness is certainly an asset to the writer. The author can decide who Warbeck was and what his motivations were in seeking the crown of England. But this is hardly enough. The end of the story forbids a happy conclusion. It is most readily a tragedy. But the historical Warbeck is not the stuff from which a hero is made. He never won a battle, indeed he twice fled the scene. He died confessing his impostorship. Drastic measures are needed to make him a worthy hero. One measure could be to shift the emphasis to someone or something else.

A possibility might be to make Henry VII the central figure. But this has its drawbacks as the Warbeck plot would be submerged by the other intrigues surrounding Henry. The only other alternative would be to focus much of the attention on Warbeck's personal life and charm and thus to make him a 'hero of the heart' rather than of statesmanship. This is precisely what both John Ford and Mary Shelley do.

John Ford's play, Perkin Warbeck, is generally acknowledged to be the last of the great history plays. Although it may not be the best of Ford's work, it is indoubtedly singular and has generated much

renewed critical interest. Mary Shelley's novel, however, The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck, is an obscure work, but of interest because it handles the same material as Ford in a vastly different fashion. A comparison of the two works will show the different approaches and concerns of historical fiction.

Both John Ford's drama and Mary Shelley's novel will be studied in the present thesis. Elements examined will be technical information on date and publication, characterization and historical distortions. A section by section analysis of the works will conclude the individual studies. A final chapter, which will compare and contrast Ford's and Mary Shelley's achievements, will examine the similarities and differences of the two and explain why Ford's drama has gained critical acclaim while Mary Shelley's novel has sunk into obscurity.

Notes

[1]Irving Ribner, The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare (London, 1965), pp. 1-11.

[2]Mary W. Shelley, The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck; A Romance (London, 1830), vol I, p. viii. All further references to this work will be in brackets after the quote.

[3]The first modern researched history of Warbeck is by James Gairdner, History of the Life and Reign of Richard the Third to Which is Added The Story of Perkin Warbeck, first published ca. 1878 by the Cambridge University Press. He uncovered new evidence which almost conclusively proves Warbeck was an impostor. The short history given in the introduction of this thesis is derived from his work.

[4]Thomas Gainsford, The History of the Earle of Tirone (Amsterdam, 1968), p. 4.

[5]The battle of Culloden was fought April 16, 1746.

[6]The bibliography listing for the Alexander Campbell novel is:
Alexander Campbell, Perkin Warbeck; or The Court of James the Fourth OF Scotland. An Historical Romance 3 vols., London: A. K. Newman, 1830. [B.M.]

[7]Among these are: A Trusty Rebel; or a Follower of Perkin Warbeck by Mrs. H. Clarke (Nelson, 1904), A King of Vagabonds by Beth Ellis (Blackwood, 1911), Merchant of the Ruby by Alice Harwood (Bobbs, 1950), and The Wrong Plantagenet by Marian Palmer (Doubleday, 1972).

CHAPTER ONE: JOHN FORD'S PERKIN WARBECK

I

John Ford's Perkin Warbeck was entered in the Stationer's Register on 24 February 1634 as follows:

> Hugh Beeston. Entred for his Copy under the hands of S^r Henry Herbert and m^r Aspley Warden (observing the Caution in the License) a Tragedy called Perkin Warbecke by Io: fford.

It is unknown exactly what the unusual phrase 'observing the Caution in the License' refers to, but it seems most likely that Herbert was nervous about something in the play and that he ordered the players to suppress or alter particularily sensitive passages. His nervousness would be understandable. The subject of an attempt on the English throne, especially during a contemporary period of growing political tension, was bound to upset the Caroline court as Richard II had upset the Elizabethan. Besides that, Herbert had either just been or was shortly about to be troubled by a similar case with Philip Massinger's Believe As You List.[1] In Massinger's case, Herbert refused to license the play until the contemporary political allusions, not even English ones, were somewhat masked by setting the play in the classical period. Ford's play thus received unusual treatment in being allowed, despite its troublesome nature, to be performed and published.

It was printed with the following title-page:

> THE / CHRONICLE / HISTORIE / OF / PERKIN WARBECK. // A Strange Truth. // Acted (sometimes) by the Queenes / MAIESTIES Servants

> at the / Phoenix in Drurie lane. // Fide honor. / [double rule] / LONDON, / Printed by T. P. for Hugh Beeston, and are to be sold at his Shop, neere the Castle in / Cornehill. 1634.

T. P. was Thomas Purfoote Jr., a master printer since 1591 and the Senior Warden of his Company in 1634. 'Fide honor' is an anagram of Iohn Forde and can be found instead of his name on several of the title-pages of his plays.[2] It is curious that a strange phrase should appear on both the Stationer's Register and the title-page. It suggests, if the 'acted (sometimes)' refers to the same situation as the Caution did, that the play was censored if not actually prohibited. This is not necessarily the case, however, as 'sometimes' could mean that the play was performed much earlier than its date of publication.

Unfortunately, there is no hard evidence concerning either the composition date or the date of performance. The date of composition is sometime between the years 1622 and 1634, the earlier limits being set by the sources Ford used, Thomas Gainsford's The True and Wonderfull History of Perkin Warbeck (1618) and Francis Bacon's History of the Reign of King Henry VII (1622), and the later limits by the date of its registration by Herbert. There is little else to date the play by. The traditional date is 1633, but in recent years critics have begun to question this as being much too late. The late 1620's is suggested by the belief that the 'sometimes' is equivalent to 'formerly' and not 'occasionally' and that the death of Thomas Gainsford in 1624, which sparked renewed interest in his works by several authors, stimulated Ford also at this time.

Another argument for placing the drama's date of composition much earlier than before assumed is the question of its authorship. In

1959 Alfred Harbage[3] proposed that Ford collaborated with Thomas Dekker on Perkin Warbeck and thus dated the play between 1622 and 1625, the known period of time the two worked together. Harbage argued his theory on the basis of many points, but Peter Ure[4] so thoroughly refuted his arguments that a joint authorship now appears doubtful.

One of Harbage's reasons for claiming that Dekker had a part in Perkin Warbeck is that the play is so totally different from the rest of Ford's work. To be sure, there are strong Fordian elements in the play: the concern for visual effects, the problem of enforced marriage, the variety of language styles. Nevertheless, critic after critic has acknowledged that there is something different about Perkin Warbeck. The play lacks the horrific and the grotesque qualities of his other works. There is no scene comparable to that in 'Tis Pity -- where Giovanni enters with the heart of Annabella on his dagger, or to that in Loves Sacrifice -- when Fernando, dressed in a winding sheet, comes out of Bianca's tomb. Compared to these plays, Perkin Warbeck is austere in its presentation. But the play does not lack grandeur or a wideness of scope. On the contrary, the scale is unusually large for Ford. A performance of the play would require no fewer than thirty actors and would take, uncut, approximately 3½ hours to perform.[5] Visual effects are abundant, including processions, a masque, changes in costumes, the use of lighting, the presence on stage of the throne and later the stocks. Yet Ford downplays the grotesque in this play and the result is that Perkin Warbeck is the most stately and the least horrifying of his tragedies.

It may not be fair to compare Perkin Warbeck to 'Tis Pity or

Loves Sacrifice or any of Ford's other tragedies. This is because our play is caught in the nebulous area between genres. It is both history play and tragedy, indeed the title-page calls it a 'chronicle history' while Herbert registered it as a 'tragedie'. It cannot afford to add unusual features which would blur its generic backgrounds even more. To understand the play requires a double vision. The critic must not over-emphasize the tragic elements at the expense of the historical, nor may he analyze the play as if it were a straightforward history.

Among the plays of the same time, Perkin Warbeck reminds the reader most of all of Shakespeare's Richard II. Richard II was a role model for Ford. Several spots in his play seem obviously to derive their spirit and action from Shakespeare. Both plays combine history and tragedy, and deal with an attempt on the English throne. Both have the antagonist and protagonist polarized into efficient Machiavelle and artistic dreamer. Most critics would proclaim Richard II the better play as they assume Shakespeare is the better dramatist. But in fairness to Ford, he had difficulties to overcome that Shakespeare did not. Shakespeare's two central figures, Richard II and Henry Bolingbroke, are near equals in rank and charisma; Ford's Henry VII and Perkin Warbeck are not. Ford had to improve the noble aspect of Warbeck, a hard task considering that he and his companions were low-born. Second, Shakespeare could count on sympathy for a dethroned monarch; Ford had to generate it for an unsuccessful impostor. Third, Shakespeare's historical material was helpful in forming direct confrontations between his two major characters; Ford had to distort his material to

bring them face to face. Ford had the more difficult task and, keeping in mind that he is not as polished a playwright as the mature Shakespeare, his accomplishment is considerable.

There are three main ideas in Perkin Warbeck: Truth, State and Passion. Truth and State are introduced in the Prologue to the play where Ford writes

> nor is here
> Unnecessary mirth forced, to endear
> A multitude; on these two rests the fate
> Of worthy expectation: Truth and State.[6]

Truth is also implicit in the alternate title of the drama 'A Strange Truth'. Passion is not explicitly mentioned until the play's epilogue

> Here has appeared, though in a several fashion,
> The threats of majesty, the strength of passion,
> Hopes of an empire, change of fortunes .... (1-3)

But it is dominant between Warbeck and Katherine. The three ideas reflect the basic worldviews of history and tragedy. 'State' is the traditional historical view. It deals with problems such as the rights and responsibilities of kingship, the nature of a good king, and the stability of the realm. It is concerned with the public good. Opposed to this is the tragic view of 'Passion'. Passion stresses the individual and personal. The two ideas threaten to wrench the play apart. They are prevented from this by the idea of 'Truth'. As Tucker Orbison[7] points out, there is an inherent doubleness in the meaning of 'Truth'. It can mean 'fact' or 'loyalty'. It encompasses both the personal view and the public. 'Truth' must be looked at with the double vision the entire play demands. The result is a unified whole.

Ford was well aware that he was reviving a dead literary

tradition when he wrote Perkin Warbeck. Only thirteen history plays are extant from 1616 to 1640 as compared to the forty-two written between 1590 and 1616.[8] Justifying the revival Ford writes

> Studies have of this nature been of late
> So out of fashion, so unfollowed, that
> It is become more justice to revive
> The antic follies of the times than strive
> To countenance wise industry. No want
> Of art doth render wit or lame or scant
> Or slothful in the purchase of fresh bays,
> But want of truth in them who give the praise
> To their self-love ....
> From him to clearer judgements we can say
> He shows a history couched in a play,
> A history of noble mention, known,
> Famous, and true: most noble, 'cause our own;
> Not forged from Italy, from France, from Spain,
> But chronicled at home; as rich in strain
> Of brave attempts as ever fertile rage
> In action could beget to grace the stage. (1-20)

The fact that Ford had to write such an introduction shows how cold the Caroline audience was to the dead history play genre. The Prologue is also important because it gives evidence to the duality of the theme of Truth. Truth is mentioned three times in the Prologue: first the personal kind (8), second as a synonym for 'factual' (16) and finally in the last two lines of the Prologue "on these two rests the fate / of worthy expectation: Truth and State." (25-26) Truth here contains both meanings and sums up the dual nature of the whole play.

II

To be called a history play, Perkin Warbeck must follow the historical outline of events. But a slavish devotion to historical fact, when taken too far, is a severe handicap to an author. In Ford's case the task would have been impossible without a total reversal in

his presentation of Warbeck and a re-adjustment of the character of Henry VII. His source historians, Gainsford and Bacon, both had a low opinion of Warbeck. To Gainsford he was a fool and near idiot. Bacon more kindly opined:

> Nay himself, with long and continual counterfeiting, and with oft telling a lie, was turned by habit almost into the thing he seemed to be; and from a liar to a believer.[9]

Nevertheless, Bacon's Warbeck is still a pathetic creature, abused by wiser heads for their political gain. Ford's portrayal owes very little to Gainsford, while Bacon's contribution to Ford in this respect is extremely problematical. Certainly the political aspect of Ford's Warbeck is in line with the historian's portrait: he is singularily inept. Unlike the historians, however, Ford makes Warbeck a hero. With very little, if any, historical evidence to support him, Ford compels us to admire him by enhancing his personal presence. Only his political ineptitude prevents us from admiring him as a public figure.

In a lesser way Ford also had to change the character of Henry VII. The historians gave him unqualified praise as a king, but Bacon in particular accused him of avarice and short-sightedness. Ford modifies Henry VII by eliminating these defects. The order of events, especially the Cornish rebellion, is handled in such a way as to increase Henry's apparent fore-sightedness to near the point of omniscience. Henry's concern for money is shown as being prudent and wise, not miserly. But lest Henry become too attractive a figure and dim Warbeck, Ford reduces him on the personal level. It is significant that only twice, both early in the play do we glimpse positive feelings in Henry. The rest

of the time he is cold, smug and gloating. For instance, he keeps Lambert Simnel as his falconer because the thought amuses him. Henry is as unappetizing on the private level as Warbeck is on the political. The result is not mutual cancellation but mutual enhancement; through their weak qualities they each point out the other's strengths. Neither Henry nor Warbeck is a villain.

Two great intrinsically related problems remain. Who did Ford believe Warbeck to be? Is Warbeck insane? Gainsford dismisses Warbeck's claims out of hand; Bacon also disbelieves them, although he suggests the possibility that he was an illegitimate son of Edward IV. Given that his two sources absolutely claim Warbeck to be an impostor, it seems improbable Ford would believe he really was Richard, Duke of York. Nevertheless, the mystery about Warbeck's origins is never satisfactorily resolved in the play. We hear Henry's version of his identity from Lambert Simnel:

> Your pedigree is published; you are known
> For Osbeck's son of Tournay, a loose runagate,
> A landloper. Your father was a Jew,
> Turned Christian merely to repair his miseries. (V, iii, 23-26)

But earlier in the play (II,i) Warbeck makes a public avowal that he is Richard Plantagenet. Lambert Simnel's testimony is weakened by his feeble personality and Warbeck's stoic defiance. The issue cannot be resolved because Warbeck never confesses. He makes neither a public confession nor a private one. When Frion insinuates that Warbeck is merely playing a role, saying

> You grow too wild in passion; if you will
> Appear a prince indeed, confine your will
> To moderation, (IV, ii, 20-22)

Warbeck responds in anger and indignation.

> What a saucy rudeness
> Prompts this distrust! If, if I will appear!
> Appear a prince! Death throttle such deceits
> Even in their birth of utterance; cursed cozenage
> Of trust! Ye make me mad; 'twere best, it seems,
> That I should turn impostor to myself,
> Be mine own counterfeit, belie the truth
> Of my dear mother's womb, the sacred bed
> Of a prince murdered and a living baffled! (IV, ii, 22-30)

We have only external evidence to decide who Warbeck is since he never reveals his inner thoughts in a soliloquy. This lack may seem significant, but, as critics have long noted,[10] the absence of soliloquy is usual in Ford and hence the significance for Warbeck is reduced.

Warbeck's sanity depends on his identity. If Warbeck is Richard Plantagenet, then all is well; but if he is not, then why does he say and believe so consistently that he is? Several explanations are offered throughout the play. To Lambert Simnel he is simply mad. He remarks "He's past / recovery; a Bedlam cannot cure him." (V, iii, 75-76) To Henry's followers he is possessed:

> Oxford Sirrah, leave off your juggling, and tie up
> The devil that ranges in your tongue.
> Urswick Thus witches,
> Possessed, even to their deaths deluded, say
> They have been wolves and dogs and sailed in egg-shells
> Over the sea and rid on fiery dragons,
> Passed in the air more than a thousand miles
> All in a night; the enemy of mankind
> Is powerful but false, and falsehood confident.
> (V, iii, 103-110)

Henry at first believes that Warbeck is merely acting. He comments "O, let him range / The player's on the stage still, 'tis his part; / A' does but act." (V, ii, 67-69) But after having listened to Warbeck he changes his diagnosis to

> The custom, sure, of being styled a king
> Hath fastened in his thought that he is such. (V, ii, 132-133)

Henry reaches the Baconian hypothesis that Warbeck is deluded.

Certainly, if Warbeck is an impostor, his sanity is questionable. But the explanations offered by Henry and his followers are not acceptable because of their extreme bias. From their point of view he must be mad. The audience, however, does not perceive him as insane. If he is mad, he is not mad in the same sense that Meleander is in The Lover's Melancholy or Penthea in The Broken Heart. Indeed, except for his insistence that he is Richard, Duke of York, he does not act mad at all. The audience is then left in the same quandary they were in over his birth. Ford simply does not commit himself to a position. This is not tantamount to implying that Warbeck is the Duke of York. Allowing the possibility that he was is not the same as believing he was. Ford deliberately keeps Warbeck ambiguous because he does not wish to contradict flatly the judgement of history, and he desires two valid claimants to the throne for his dramatic and thematic purposes. Thus Ford treats Warbeck as a king. In the end, the audience may decide who Warbeck is, but the issue over his parentage turns out to be a red herring. Whether Warbeck is the son of Edward IV or the son of John Warbeck of Tournay, he is certainly politically incompetent and thus has no practical right to the throne.

The two forms of kingship, de iure and de facto, are at the very center of the political controversy. Do birth and divine right outweigh practical ability as a king's most important attribute? Perkin Warbeck suggests that Ford rejects this answer. A good king must be an

efficient administrator; all other qualities are secondary. His prime concern is the health and safety of the state and he must, as Henry, use every means to protect it. There is no room for sentimentality. For Ford the Machiavellean king is superior.

Ford is treading on dangerous ground here, for he is perilously close to denying the concept of primogeniture and the theory of the divine right of kings, issues of hot current interest in Ford's time. Warbeck relies for success solely on it. He proclaims

> A thousand blessings guard our lawful arms!
> A thousand horrors pierce our enemies' souls.'
> Pale fear unedge their weapons' sharpest points,
> And when they draw their arrows to the head,
> Numbness shall strike their sinews; such advantage
> Hath majesty in its pursuit of justice ....
> O divinity
> Of royal birth! how it strikes dumb the tongues
> Whose prodigality of breath is bribed
> By trains to greatness! (IV, v, 47-59)

But Warbeck's ill-equipped army of Cornish peasants is no match for Henry's well-trained and well-armed force. The practical contest is decided before it begins: Henry will win any encounter because of the reality of his power. However, Ford does not deny the validity of divine appointment, for the successful Henry also claims it several times. For example

> A guard of angels and the holy prayers
> Of loyal subjects are a sure defence
> Against all force and counsel of intrusion. (I, i, 73-75)

The important thing is that he does not rely on it. Henry backs up <u>de iure</u> kingship with strong, practical <u>de facto</u> kingship. He realizes that <u>de iure</u> kingship can help to increase the stability of a regime, but that it must not be the sole support.

Somewhere between Henry and Warbeck is King James IV of Scotland. Critics[11] have claimed that James' conversion to Henry's techniques proves Henry to be the center of the play and that his opinions must be accepted as irrefutable. I find this difficult to accept. Warbeck's personality is so attractive that James' dismissal seems more betrayal than prudence. Indeed, James is the least likeable of the three kings. Ford carefully contrasts the three: all three are usurpers, Henry usurped the throne of Richard III, James that of his father, Warbeck attempts to replace Henry; all three call themselves kings. At this point, the comparisons between all three do not continue, as Henry and Warbeck are near total opposites. But James is contrasted unfavourably to both Henry and Warbeck. Like Henry, James is autocratic; unlike Henry he enforces an unwise political marriage on his cousin. Like Henry, James knows that force is often needed to win, but unlike Henry he is disorganized, a spendthrift and unable military leader.

James also lacks Warbeck's qualities of constancy and magnaminity. James proves to be inconstant -- at first he welcomes Warbeck then later peremptorily dismisses him. The manner of this dismissal also casts a shadow over James, for it shows him to be a hypocrite. Henry and Warbeck are consistent in their behaviour. James wants both worlds yet has neither. Immediately before summoning Warbeck to dismiss him, James has one of the play's few soliloquies in which we see his true feelings over Warbeck's dismissal.

> A league with Ferdinand, a marriage
> With English Margaret, a free release
> From restitution for the late affronts,

> Cessation from hostility! and all
> For Warbeck not delivered but dismissed!
> We could not wish it better. (IV, iii, 56-61)

The self-interest is evident. Warbeck poses a problem and now James has the means of getting rid of him without appearing to compromise his honour. He turns to Warbeck and pompously tells him how much he has striven on his behalf, but that now

> obedience to the mother church,
> A father's care upon his country's weal,
> The dignity of state, directs our wisdom
> To seal an oath of peace through Christendom,
> To which we are sworn already. (IV, iii, 73-77)

Warbeck accepts his dismissal graciously; the audience, however, realizes the duplicity in James and despises him for it. Katherine Gordon in Act V rejects Scotland and James in the lines

> Yet the king who gave me
> Hath sent me with my husband from his presence,
> Delivered us suspected to his nation,
> Rendered us spectacles to time and pity.
> And is it fit I should return to such
> As only listen after our descent
> From happiness enjoyed to misery
> Expected, though uncertain? Never, never! (V, i, 26-33)

The audience acclaims her good sense and with her dismisses him. James is false. He is a false statesman, a false friend and above all he is false to himself. Thus this miserable king is victorious in nothing.

In many ways Perkin Warbeck is about society, individuals and appearances. Characters often mask their true intents or personalities behind the words they use; other characters encourage them to do so. Henry appears fore-sighted; James compassionate; Warbeck regal. The theme even runs over into that of kingship. We hear much, from all sides, as to what a king is. Kings should be compassionate, just,

careful with their finances, able to speak well and handsome in appearance. We also hear a great deal about how kings and subjects relate to one another. Henry sardonically says

> King Perkin will in progress ride
> Through all his large dominions; let us meet him
> And tender homage; ha, sirs? Liegemen ought
> To pay their fealty. (IV, iv, 36-39)

James declaims

> The right of kings, my lords, extends not only
> To the safe conservation of their own,
> But also to the aid of such allies
> As change of time and state hath oftentimes
> Hurled down from careful crowns. (II, i, 18-22)

Surrey explains

> In affairs
> Of princes, subjects cannot traffic rights
> Inherent to the crown. (IV, i, 47-49)

Huntley bitterly expostulates

> Kings are earthly gods, there is no meddling
> With their anointed bodies; for their actions,
> They only are accountable to heaven. (III, ii, 57-59)

Warbeck echoes with

> Princes are but men
> Distinguished by the fineness of their frailty,
> Yet not so gross in beauty of the mind,
> For there's a fire more sacred purifies
> The dross of mixture. Herein stands the odds:
> Subjects are men on earth, kings men and gods. (IV, v, 59-64)

The whole issue, of course, is confused by there being two claimants to the throne, each of whom insists the other is a treasonous subject. Who then is king and who subject if the definition of monarchy is largely theoretical? This is precisely the problem John A'Water muddles through. He says

> For / my own part, I believe it is true, if I be not deceived,

> that kings must be kings and subjects subjects. But which is which - you shall pardon me for that. (V, ii, 113-116)

The only resolution to the problem is that history decides who is king, in this case Henry VII. But at moments in the play Ford presents Warbeck as a king and indeed makes him one, although not a secular one. Throughout the performance the audience is pulled between two kings: history's and our heart's.

The moral framework of the play is that of fate and providence. Being a history play, where the actions and outcome are predetermined before it begins, such a providential view is understandable. References to fate are numerous. The most notable effect this has is the tendency of characters to resign themselves to fate. There is little struggle against providence, for, as Katherine says, "Being driven / By fate, it were in vain to strive with heaven." (V, i, 113-114) And so it is that acceptance, with its sister virtues of patience, fortitude and duty, is the key to Warbeck's glory.

The fifth act brings the fate of the two heroes together. Here both triumph. Henry maintains what is most dear to him -- political supremacy. Warbeck maintains his self-truth even in imprisonment, torture and death. The contrast is at its height in scene ii where the two characters meet. It is a study in personality and in kingship. Both Henry and Warbeck are admirable in their own way, Henry for his pragmatic statesmanship, Warbeck for his undauntedness. Yet both are pathetic in the qualities they lack, compassion for Henry, a sense of reality for Warbeck. The contrast leaves a longing in the audience, a division of loyalties, between the man who acts most like a king and

the man who functions most like a king. Here Truth and appearances are intervolved. The result is confused sympathies in the audience at the play's conclusion.

III

Ford's treatment of the story of Perkin Warbeck is very different from the treatment given by Gainsford and Bacon. The historians were hostile toward Warbeck and did their best to disparage his claims and his character. Ford, on the other hand, draws a sympathetic Warbeck and remains steadfastly ambiguous concerning the validity of his claims to the throne. Nevertheless, Ford followed his sources closely, often incorporating whole phrases into his work. How then did he manage to turn about the whole tone of the story? He distorted, sometimes slightly, sometimes markedly, the historical details as found in his sources.

There are several historical distortions in the play and they all greatly influence our impressions of the characters. The distortions fall into three categories: historical events whose chronology have been re-arranged or telescoped; characters who are not mentioned or given personalities in the sources; events which did not happen. The general intent of the distortions is to increase the audience's sympathies for one of the characters, and occasionally to reduce our sympathies for another.

The first category involves Ford's handling of six historical events: the two Cornish rebellions, the two Scottish invasions, the meeting of Henry and the Spanish ambassador Hialas, and the last

events in Warbeck's life. In history the first Scottish invasion and the first Cornish rebellion were more or less simultaneous. Ford treats the Cornish rebellion as if it preceded the Scottish invasion by a great interval of time while it actually happened shortly afterwards. Ford similarly plays with chronology in the visit of Henry and Hialas. It really occured after the first Scottish invasion; Ford, however, places it before. Placing the Cornish rebellion before the Scottish court even contemplates war shows the audience Henry's mastery on the battlefield. Antedating the encounter between Hialas and Henry demonstrates how deft he is on the political battlefield. The result is that the audience knows, even before they begin, that the Scottish invasions, streamlined by Ford into one event to avoid repetition, will fail. Ford handles these events to bolster our admiration for Henry.

Act V, scene iii also telescopes time, but this time the focus is on Warbeck. The last events in his life, his escape from imprisonment at Westminster and his being put into the stocks, his second escape attempt and his execution are chronologically about a year and a half apart. Ford, however, conflates the stocks episode and the execution, and only refers to the escape attempts. Again, this streamlines the pace, and heightens the pathos as we see Warbeck move directly from imprisonment to execution. Ford's historical distortions heighten the dramatic tension.

Many of the lesser characters have little individuality, especially the followers of Henry VII who are really just weaker extensions of the wily Tudor. Warbeck's followers have the buffoonish

characters assigned to them by the sources. All of these characters appear in the sources more or less as Ford portrays them. However, Ford adds three characters -- Huntley, Katherine and Daliell -- to the play. Huntley and Katherine are historical figures, but the historians merely mention the fact that Huntley is the Earl of Huntley and that Katherine, his daughter and kinswoman to the Scottish king, married Warbeck "whom in all fortunes she entirely loved; adding the virtues of a wife to the virtues of her sex."[12] There is nothing comparable to the indepth characterizations of Ford. Added to these two is Daliell, an outright fictitious figure. Together these form a neat social circle.

Why does Ford so painstakingly develop these characters? Katherine, as Warbeck's wife, must be included in the play, but Huntley could be no more than a bit part and Daliell is unnecessary to the narrative. Why then does Ford develop these characters? Through these people he develops the personal side of Warbeck and creates the admiration we feel for him. Katherine is primarily responsible for this phenomenon. Through her love and devotion for Warbeck she turns his defeat into victory. Huntley and Daliell, the former a bitter malcontent who helplessly disapproves of Warbeck and of his daughter's marriage, the latter a disappointed suitor for the hand of Katherine, add depth to Katherine's marriage by reminding the audience of what might have been. Daliell's devoted attendance upon Katherine increases our estimation of her as she never wavers, even in her worst misfortunes, from constancy to Warbeck. Her devotion to the husband who caused her so much grief is thus the more unexpected and moving. The

grudging respect Huntley accords Warbeck in the last scene --

> I impart a farewell
> Of many pity; what your life has passed through,
> The dangers of your end will make apparent.
> And I can add, for comfort to your sufferance,
> No cordial but the wonder of your frailty,
> Which keeps so firm a station. (V, iii, 169-174) --

is the crowning touch in the growing admiration they generate for Warbeck. Without this trio Warbeck could not have been made a hero.[13]

The third category of historical distortion, the inclusion of events which either do not occur in the sources or are significantly distorted, has by far the largest group of incidents and it is significant that the majority of these distortions occur in the fifth act. The general aim of these distortions is to change history so that a character can have a theatrical effect very different from the historical reality. Normally the distortions improve a character's position, but occasionaly they diminish it. There are ten such distortions throughout the play: Stanley marks Clifford's face (II, ii); James initiates and enforces marriage between Warbeck and Katherine (II, iii); Warbeck's followers, Heron, Skelton, Astley and John A'Water are with Warbeck in Scotland; Henry has foreknowledge that Warbeck will move on Exeter (IV, iv); Henry and Warbeck meet face to face (V, ii); Warbeck refuses to confess that he is an impostor (V, iii); Warbeck meets Lambert Simnel (V, iii); Katherine visits Warbeck in the stocks (V, iii); Katherine vows never to remarry (V, iii); Heron, Skelton and Astley are executed (V, iii).

The first of these incidents, that of Stanley marking his betrayer's face before he is led off to execution, is the most curious

because it is a detail not found in Bacon or Gainsford -- indeed it has not been traced to any source, connected or unconnected, with Warbeck or Henry VII. The incident is even more puzzling because it does not directly influence our impressions of either Henry or Warbeck. It seems to be an isolated tidbit of stagecraft that Ford could not pass up. Nevertheless it does heighten the sense of the unnatural strains that betrayal causes in human relationships, and prevents Stanley's bitterness from being directed toward Henry.

The second incident, that of James' forcing Katherine to marry Warbeck, is an alteration of the historians. Both Gainsford and Bacon said that James assented to the marriage, but he did not initiate it. By having James carry it out, Ford shows him to be an unwise and unjust tyrant. Compared to James both Henry and Warbeck are admirable.

According to the historians, Warbeck's followers John A'Water, John Heron, Richard Skelton and John Astley did not join him until the Cornish invasion of 1497, a considerable time after his first appearance in Scotland. Ford, however, chose to have them with Warbeck from the beginning. Because of their buffoonish behaviour and lack of intelligence, these counsellors, whom the Machiavellian Frion describes as "this abject scum of mankind! / Muddy-brained peasants!" (II, iii, 183-184) make it unavoidably obvious to the audience from the end of Act II that Warbeck has no chance of gaining the throne or of keeping it. These characters do not, however, taint our admiration of Warbeck the man, as they are never allowed to act like idiots while Warbeck is on stage.

The next incident involves Henry and greatly enhances his

character as an efficient administrator. Ford manages the flow of information to Henry in such a way that to his followers he seems omniscient. The most striking example of this is in Act IV, scene iv when Henry receives information that Warbeck is headed toward Exeter, and orders his bewildered soldiers to head for the plains of Salisbury where at the moment all is at peace. Henry did move his army to Salisbury to cut off Warbeck's advance, but his followers were aware of why.

In Act V, scene ii Warbeck and Henry confront one another. This meeting is of dubious authenticity. Gainsford mentions that Warbeck was interrogated by Henry; Bacon explicitly states that the two never encountered one another:

> Perkin was brought into the King's court, but not to the King's presence; though the King, to satisfy his curiosity, saw him sometimes out of a window, or in passage.[14]

At any rate it could not have happened as Ford pictures it, with Warbeck remaining steadfast in his convictions. It is necessary for Ford's purpose that the two meet face to face. In this scene Henry glories in his political triumph and the way is cleared for Warbeck to dominate and triumph in the final scene.

The last scene contains exactly half of the historical distortions in the play. The most important one is that Warbeck never admits he is an impostor, which he did at Taunton, Exeter, in the stocks and before his execution. Of course, if he did in the play he would instantly lose the admiration the audience feels for him. It is imperative that he die nobly, and this means defying Henry to the death by maintaining he is the true heir to the throne, for him to

preserve his status as hero and for the play to conclude as a tragedy.

The other distortions come out of Warbeck's obstinacy and increase the pathos of his situation. He must scorn the temptation of being offered pardon and existence in exchange for confession. He must say farewell to his devoted wife and friends. He must see that his oldest companions are to be executed with him because of him and he must overcome the fear of death itself. Warbeck manages magnificently The pity we feel for him is carefully generated by Ford. As far as historians tell, Warbeck never met the earlier Pretender to the throne, Lambert Simnel. Nor is there any evidence that Katherine saw him in the stocks or before his execution. Also, according to Bacon, only John A'Water, the erstwhile mayor of Cork, was executed with Warbeck; the rest were left untouched. One final inaccuracy is Katherine's vow never to remarry:

> By this sweet pledge of both our souls, I swear
> To die a faithful widow to thy bed -
> Not to be forced or won. O, never, never! (V, iii, 151-153)

Not only did she remarry, but she remarried thrice. Her vow of constancy here adds to the scene's pathos and it must be remembered that the distortions are not meant to be recalled when viewing the play. They are Ford's way of altering the pathetic historical facts about Warbeck into a play with tragic stature.

IV

The play opens in darkness. The empty English throne dominates the stage. When Henry and his court enter, the tension is already at crisis level. It is an unusual opening for Ford. His other plays open

quietly with conversations between two characters. Here six characters are on stage in state: Henry VII, the Bishop of Durham, the Lord Chamberlain Sir William Stanley, the Earls of Oxford and Surrey, and Lord Daubeney. In addition there is a guard. The magnificence of the opening reveals Ford's feel for the spectacular and visual.

The opening lines increase the tension even more. Henry starts the play with the vision of himself being haunted:

> Still to be haunted, still to be pursued,
> Still to be frighted with false apparitions
> Of pageant majesty and new-coined greatness,
> As if we were a mockery-king in state,
> Only ordained to lavish sweat and blood
> In scorn and laughter to the ghosts of York,
> Is all below our merits. (I, i, 1-7)

The supernatural theme of these lines is carried on through the scene. There are 'fresh spirits' conjured by the 'spells of York', as well as 'fires without heat', 'a woman-monster' who delves up 'devilish polities' and has a 'prodigal birth', and 'idols'. The effect is to create an atmosphere of overwhelming suspense and conflict. Warbeck is not simply a person; he is a demonic disease which has infested England and which the physician-king must root out. The tension exhibited in the opening scene is one of the sickness' symptoms.

The first scene also gives the audience the historical background. We hear of the generations of the Wars of the Roses, of Edward IV, of the murder of the Young Princes by Richard III, of Richard's defeat. We learn that England has had a chance for peace, for

> Nor doth the house of York decay in honours,
> Though Lancaster doth reposses his right.
> For Edward's daughter is king Henry's queen -
> A blessed union, and a lasting blessing
> For this poor panting island, if some shreds,

> Some useless remnant of the house of York,
> Grudge not at this content. (I, i, 36-42)

We learn that Margaret of Burgundy has fostered two agents to bring destruction on England and that Henry has already defeated the elder, Lambert Simnel. But now the younger, Perkin Warbeck, has declared himself the true king. Henry is beset by treason (another symptom of England's disease), for, as he realizes,

> Foreign attempts against a state and kingdom
> Are seldom without some great friends at home. (I, i, 83-84)

Ironically, Henry says this in the presence of an active traitor, Sir William Stanley. The unnatural atmosphere of intrigue at the English court is potently presented.

During this scene the audience begins to form its opinion about Warbeck -- presumably not a favourable one. We, like the historians, see Warbeck as the puppet of Margaret of Burgundy and of the French king, and as a weakling to be despised. The language used to describe him is appropriately derogative. He is called 'a cub', 'a gewgaw', 'a colossic statue', 'a smoke of straw', 'a whelp', a

> Jolly gentleman! more fit to be a swabber
> To the Flemish after a drunken surfeit. (I, i, 125-126)

Our immediate reaction to Warbeck is contempt and derision.

On the other hand, Henry generates positive reactions. He is a beleagured, yet strong, king. He is too remote a figure to be really human, but the occasional glimpse of his sensitivity is afforded us. To his Chamberlain he says "Stanley, we know thou lovest us, and thy heart / Is figured on thy tongue ..." (I,i, 101-102) We learn at once of Henry's prowess as a king. He acts as the physician-king, guarding

the health of his kingdom.

> the rent face
> And bleeding wounds of England's slaughtered people
> Have been by us, as by the best physician,
> At last both throughly cured and set in safety... (I, i, 9-12)

He is aware of the problems facing him: treason and rebellion. He is politic, having been able to remove Warbeck from France through treaty and diplomacy. He is aggressive, a hunter, and speaks in hunting metaphors. For example

> How closely we have hunted
> This cub, since he unlodged, from hole to hole ...
> They're all retired to Flanders, to the dam
> That nursed this eager whelp, Margaret of Burgundy.
> But we will hunt him there too, we will hunt him,
> Hunt him to death even in the beldam's closet,
> Though the archduke were his buckler. (I,i, 103-123)

Even as early as the first scene we are confident that Henry is superior. When Urswick arrives with the unknown good news, the audience, knowing that it is Clifford's information, is reassured in their belief. Yet we feel a twinge of sorrow for the man when we hear him address his court, in the presence of the traitor, as "True, best, fast friends". (I,i, 140). Irony and tension dominate the play's opening.

The second scene totally reverses the mood of the first. The relaxed calm of Scotland is in striking contrast to the tense intrigue of England. The scene begins with a quiet conversation. We see at once the domestic harmony that exists at present in Scotland. Huntley and Dalliell, full of mutual admiration, discuss the possiblity of a marriage between Dalliell and Katherine, the daughter of Huntley. Their characters are established. Huntley is gruff, honest and conscious of

honour; Daliell is noble, constant and poor. When Katherine enters, a potentially disruptive relationship is formed between father-daughter-suitor. Katherine is compelled to choose between her father and her suitor. Huntley explains to her

> Thou stand'st between a father and a suitor,
> Both striving for an interest in thy heart.
> He courts thee for affection, I for duty... (I, ii, 95-97)

The situation remains peaceful because of the natures of the three. Huntley has so much respect for Daliell and he loves his daughter so dearly that he will not use his position as father to force the issue in his favour. Likewise Daliell, out of his admiration for Huntley, will not force the issue in his favour. Katherine is allowed to decide on her own feelings and she refuses Daliell in such a polite way that the three remain friends. Here we see civilized behaviour at its most urbane.

Katherine's decision to not marry Daliell establishes her character -- she values duty above all else. She says

> My worthiest lord and father, the indulgence
> Of your sweet composition thus commands
> The lowest of obedience ....
> By so much more I am engaged to tender
> The duty of a daughter. For respects
> Of birth, degrees of title, and advancement,
> I nor admire nor slight them; all my studies
> Shall ever aim at this perfection only,
> To live and die so that you may not blush
> In any course of mine to own me yours. (I, ii, 126-139)

Already the way is prepared for the Katherine who will go to Warbeck in the stocks. She is immediately loved by the audience.

The effect of this scene is to show a society where things are civil and are resolved by debate, not force. It is a relief from the

unnatural strain of the previous scene. Thus when the Earl of Crawford enters with the news that

> A secretary from a duke of York,
> The second son to the late English Edward,
> Concealed I know not where these fourteen years,
> Craves audience from our master: and 'tis said
> The duke himself is following to the court, (I,ii, 178-182)

we sense the increase in anxiety. We have seen the destruction he wrought in England and now we fear he will also destroy the idyllic Scotland. After seeing the domestic harmony of Scotland we dislike the threatening Warbeck even more. We also begin to realize the terrible cost of war in human happiness as we compare the normalcy of Scotland to the tenseness of England.

The next scene, with its return to England and strain, reinforces our hostility toward Warbeck. Once again an aura of the supernatural surrounds him. Sir Robert Clifford, who is about to inform against him, is exhorted to

> Remember not the witchcraft or the magic,
> The charms and incantations, which the sorceress
> Of Burgundy hath cast upon your reason! (I, iii, 12-14)

Furthermore Warbeck is called an 'airy apparition' and a 'wild comet'. We hear of the disastrous Kent invasion. We learn that he has

> a confused rabble of lost bankrupts
> For counsellors: first Heron, a broken mercer,
> Then John A'Water sometimes mayor of Cork,
> Skelton a tailor, and a scrivener
> Called Astley. (I, iii, 56-60)

We are also introduced to Warbeck's sole capable advisor, Frion. He is 'a subtle villain', 'French both in heart and actions', and 'a pestilent adder' who will "hiss out poison / As dang'rous as infectious." (I, iii, 67-68) The audience loses even more sympathy for Warbeck.

The confession scene elaborates on the disease metaphor built up around Warbeck and increases even more the contempt the audience feels for him. Warbeck is a corruptive influence. The traitor Clifford appears 'leprous in his treacheries', and his honour has become 'infected' because of Warbeck. When Clifford names those who have conspired against Henry, we see how badly diseased the state has become. The inclusion of the dean of St. Paul's among the traitors provokes Henry to exclaim "Churchmen are turned devils." (I, iii, 80)

The list of traitors demonstrates public betrayal of Henry, but Warbeck's perversion has also invaded Henry and his private circle. Not only are citizens turned to treason, but friends as well. Clifford tells Henry that his closest friend, Sir William Stanley, is a prominent member of the conspiracy. Stanley's betrayal deeply affects Henry and through the personal anguish it causes, we glimpse the human Henry. He cries out for light, and the lines describe his pale white face looming in the shadows. He calls out

> Urswick, the light!
> View well my face, sirs, is there blood left in it? ...
> Alter, lord bishop?
> Why, Clifford stabbed me, or I dreamed a' stabbed me. (I, iii, 87-90)

Shock, disbelief and pain are all evident on his features. The news stuns the anguished Henry, For Stanley was

> My chamberlain, my counsellor, the love,
> The pleasure of my court, my bosom friend,
> The charge and the controlment of my person,
> The keys and secrets of my treasury,
> The all of all I am! I am unhappy ....
> 'twas only he
> Who having rescued me in Bosworth Field
> From Richard's bloody sword, snatched from his head
> The kingly crown, and placed it first on mine.
> He never failed me; what have I deserved

To lose this good man's heart, or he his own? (I, iii, 105-119)

The audience responds that Henry has done nothing to deserve such betrayal. We are amazed and sorrowful to see Henry virtually paralyzed by grief and correspondingly the audience is hostile toward the one responsible for such anguish: Perkin Warbeck. Unlike the churchmen, however, who look askance at Henry's passion, we understand and sympathize with it. Moreover, Henry does not wallow in grief. Instead he accepts the admonishments of his advisors and takes action: Stanley is committed to the Tower; Clifford is ordered to speak further the next day. We admire Henry's ability to put personal problems aside so that he can take preventitive measures for the state's security. The news of the Cornish rebellion thus dismays us further. Henry is overloaded with care. When he dismisses all thought of his problems --

> Talk no more;
> Such are not worthy of my thoughts tonight.
> To bed; and if I cannot sleep, I'll wake.
> When counsels fail, and there's in man no trust,
> Even then an arm from heaven fights for the just, (I, iii, 134-138)

we can see that he is still brooding over his betrayal. Personal hurt and the realization that he can trust no one cause insomnia, the curse of kings. We feel for Henry VII as we do for Henry V on the eve of Agincourt, and our resentment against Warbeck grows as we see how deeply he has hurt Henry.

When the next act opens with Warbeck's imminent arrival in Scotland, our fears and foreboding for that country increase. The initial reactions of the Scottish ladies tell us how they expect him to appear. The Countess hints that he is a counterfeit. Katherine tells us that Huntley disapproves:

My father
Hath a weak stomach to the business ...
But that the king must not be crossed. (II, i, 6-8)

More is told about Warbeck's followers. They are tradesmen, and most of them are bankrupt. We also gain our first impression of King James IV. He is willful and foolish. First he invites the troublemaker Warbeck to his kingdom, second he intends to entertain him with 'grace more than ordinary', and third he has overrided the objections of his advisors. When he first appears on stage he declaims on the rights of kings in typical Stuart fashion:

The right of kings, my lords, extends not only
To the safe conservation of their own,
But also to the aid of such allies
As change of time and state hath oftentimes
Hurled down from careful crowns, to undergo
An exercise of sufferance in both fortunes. (II, i, 18-23)

James fails to realize, however, that the 'safe conservation' of his own is hazarded by his support of Warbeck and that therefore his actions are foolish. James wishes to support Warbeck to boost his own appearance. He feels that

compassion
Is one rich jewel that shines in our crown,
And we will have it shine there. (II, i, 32-34)

James wishes to appear to be the benevolent king, yet is heedless of its catastrophic consequences.

In the elaborate ceremony that follows, Perkin Warbeck is presented to the audience for the first time. The audience is quite prepared to scorn him and anticipate him to be weak and ludicrous. It is a rude surprise, then, that Warbeck is an extremely attractive figure. He dominates the stage verbally, physically and emotionally.

His first speech is an uninterrupted forty lines, followed shortly after by a further seventeen. James is so impressed by Warbeck's rhetoric that he exclaims

> He must be more than subject who can utter
> The language of a king, and such is thine. (II, i, 103-104)

The Countess of Crawford remarks on Warbeck's impressive physical appearance that "I have not seen a gentleman / Of a more brave aspect or goodlier carriage." (II,i, 115-116) Katherine, whom we have come to love, responds immediately to Warbeck on the emotional level. She is 'passionate' and feels "Beshrew me, but his words have touched me home / As if his cause concerned me." (II, I, 118-119) Nothing is allowed to detract from Warbeck's impressive stature. Huntley and Daliell say not a word in protest and Warbeck's own followers remain silent. The only reminder of the possibility that Warbeck might not be what he seems comes from the sympathetic Katherine: "I should pity him / If a' should prove another than he seems." (II,i,119-120) But to the audience's ear this now seems remote.

The shock of Warbeck's attractive appearance leaves the audience perturbed and uncomfortable. It forces us to reassess our opinion of Warbeck and of Henry. By delaying the appearance of Warbeck to the beginning of Act II, Ford allows us to get to know Henry and to see what devastating effect Warbeck has had on England. If Warbeck had been on stage from the very beginning, his charisma would have captured the audience's favour and Henry would have always appeared stodgy and unsympathetic. The delay lets us see Henry at his most advantageous emotionally through Stanley before Warbeck's personality overwhelms

his. The audience is left uncertain as to how they should respond. Both Henry and Warbeck become ambiguous figures. We can no longer completely trust Henry to tell the truth; yet neither can we forget the pain and suffering Warbeck has caused. From this point onward, the two central characters have to vie for the approval of the audience.

To counter the immediate popularity of Warbeck, Ford returns the action to England. We are reminded of Henry's grief. He pleads with the Bishop of Durham that mercy be shown to Stanley. He wants to offer pardon but cannot, because of the duties of statesmanship: he must be firm in his own defence first. Durham points out the serious repercussions which would follow on Stanley's pardon:

> You may, you may;
> And so persuade your subjects that the title
> Of York is better, nay, more just and lawful
> Than yours of Lancaster; so Stanley holds:
> Which if it be not treason in the highest,
> Then we are traitors all, perjured and false,
> Who have took oath to Henry and the justice
> Of Henry's title - Oxford, Surrey, Daubeney,
> With all your other peers of state and church,
> Forsworn, and Stanley true alone to heaven
> And England's lawful heir. (II, ii, 14-24)

Durham recognizes the tenuous nature of 'Truth' in politics and how much it depends on appearances. One group is false, either Henry's or Warbeck's. The two cannot co-exist. Which is which, however, depends on one's point of view and on who controls the situation. In this situation, appearance and not the absolute truth matters.

Although his duty to the state precludes mercy for Stanley, Henry wins our admiration by the expression of friendship for him. He realizes that he could deny no request of Stanley and so discreetly absents himself to avoid the temptation, commending his last favours

to Stanley. We agree with Henry's followers that

> upon my life he would have pardoned
> The traitor, had a' seen him.
> 'Tis a king
> Composed of gentleness. (II, ii, 48-50)

Stanley's entrance slightly alters the situation. As a condemned man and shortly to die, even though a traitor, he excites our pity. There is a great potential for bitterness toward Henry. Ford averts this by Henry's discreet absence and by Stanley's own attitude. Stanley says he will pray for Henry and he calls on God to preserve the king. He accepts his death resignedly saying "Subjects deserve their deaths whose kings are just." (II, ii, 109) There is a possibility that this line is meant to be taken ironically, that Stanley feels his death to be undeserved; yet any bitterness we might feel toward Henry through this is rerouted to the more immediate and visible cause of Stanley's death: the doubly false Clifford. We dislike Clifford so intensely in this scene that he makes the treasonous Stanley likeable. Clifford provokes such animosity because he is worse than Stanley. He has been false to both his king, in following Warbeck, and to Warbeck, in betraying him. That Stanley is doomed by such a man arouses our pity. His anger and our resentment have been safely diverted away from Henry to the detestable Clifford. When Henry tersely dismisses Clifford, we are pleased and admire his loyalty to his lost friend in virtually exiling the cause of his death.

With the exit of Clifford, an abrupt change occurs. Henry's phrase "Die all our griefs with Stanley!" (II, ii, 123) is all too true, for we never again see Henry express any emotion. He has learned

to be all duty to the state, a condition in which sentimentality is a hindrance. His martial prowess becomes manifest. We learn that the English army is large and well-prepared. We also see how foresighted a commander he is: without any provable provocation from Scotland, on discovering that Warbeck is there, he realizes that

> The Scot is young and forward, we must look for
> A sudden storm to England from the North:
> Which to withstand, Durham shall post to Norham
> To fortify the castle and secure
> The frontiers against an invasion there. (II, ii, 152-156)

Before the Scots even consider war, Henry has taken precautions against it and strengthened the very place where, as the audience knows, the Scots will invade. A stroke of luck, a shrewd guess, heaven's care or secret intelligence from Scotland, this manoeuvre makes Henry look omniscient and invincible.

The change back to Scotland brings with it a surprising twist: the Scots now comment on Warbeck in supernatural and derogatory terms. Warbeck is said to use the 'witchcraft of persuasion'. He has 'charmed' the king. He is a 'young Phaeton', a 'straggler', a 'dukeling mushroom', and "A Youth, / But no Plantagenet, by'r lady, yet, / By red rose or by white." (II, iii, 74-76) Had these terms come from the English, as they did in the past, we would be inclined to disregard them as biased, since the English misled us as to what Warbeck was like. Coming from the Scottish, however, the derogatory attitude has more authority.

Nevertheless, the scene also pressures the audience to favour Warbeck for it stresses his personal charm and magnetism, especially with women. He "courts the ladies, / As if his strength of language chained attention / By power of prerogative." (II, iii, 6-8) Already

Ford has begun to slant Warbeck away from the political toward his role as the King of hearts. What is beneficial for Warbeck, however, is detrimental to James. Warbeck's role as lover exists because James contrives a marriage between him and Katherine Gordon. There is no mistake that the Scottish court perceives the marriage as disastrous. Crawford claims he was 'madded' by James' proposal; Daliell cries "Bless the lady / From such a ruin!" (II, iii, 14-15) Huntley fears the marriage so much that he pleads with James to stop it.

James, however, dismisses all objections. The tyrant, he silences his court with "Do not / Argue against our will" (II, iii, 21-22) and later adds "No more disputes; he is not / Our friend who contradicts us." (II, iii, 68-69) The audience reacts negatively to this. It is a politically unwise marriage, for, as Huntley points out "Some of thy subjects' hearts, / King James, will bleed for this." (II, iii, 66-67) The marriage means inevitable war with England, but James apparently feels the price is worth it, for he retorts "Then shall their bloods / Be nobly spent." (II, iii, 67-68) James' position on the marriage affirms our first impression that he is foolish and irresponsible. The resentment that goes to James, however, does not extend to Warbeck, even though he is the one who actually marries Katherine. This is because Katherine and Warbeck are obviously very much in love. A second sort of monarchy is created, that of the heart. Warbeck says to Katherine

> Acknowledge me but sovereign of this kingdom,
> Your heart, fair princess, and the hand of providence
> Shall crown you queen of me and my best fortunes. (II, iii, 81-83)

So the redeeming love story is established.

Thundering immediately after comes the foreboding information for the audience that Warbeck is partially as Henry has described him. For the first time, in the absence of Warbeck, his followers speak. Frion is first and he misleads the audience's expectations by his intelligence. Frion is a capable counsellor. He begins

> Now, worthy gentlemen, have I not followed
> My undertakings with success? Here's entrance
> Into a certainty above a hope. (II, iii, 166-168)

But as soon as Warbeck's other followers speak, they betray their lack of finesse and the audience immediately feels that they severely limit Warbeck's chances for success. Heron, the bankrupt merchant, speaks first. He is indicative of the group's opinion and mentality.

> Hopes are but hopes; I was ever confident, when I
> traded but in remnants, that my stars had reserved me
> to the title of a viscount at least: honour is honour,
> though cut out of any stuffs. (II, iii, 109-112)

Frion treats the others with contempt, ironically telling them

> You are all read in mysteries of state,
> And quick of apprehension, deep in judgement,
> Active in resolution; and 'tis pity
> Such counsel should lie buried in obscurity. (II, iii, 121-125)

He privately thinks of them as "this abject scum of mankind! / Muddy brained peasants." (II, iii, 182-183) The audience has to agree with Frion, even though Frion himself is hardly likeable. Warbeck's followers are the first proof that he is politically inept, as, of all his counsellors, only one is capable of advising him. They do not damage Warbeck personally because he is not visually associated with their antics. When they cavort like fools, he is always offstage.

The next scene moves the plot forward. It ends the Cornish rebellion, leaving the way open for Henry to deal exclusively with

Scotland. It also shows Henry in action. He is an exemplary military commander; financially he is pragmatic, knowing that "money gives soul to action." (III, i, 29) We even see his political canniness as he schemes to separate Warbeck and James. He confides to Urswick

> I have a charm in secret that shall loose
> The witchcraft wherewith young King James is bound
> And free it at my pleasure without bloodshed. (III, i, 33-35)

Coming immediately after the low antics of Warbeck's followers, this scene further diminishes Warbeck's credibility as a public figure.

The scene also gives an example of Henry's mercy when he allows the majority of the Cornish rebels to go free. This is a prudent move. He only punishes the ringleaders. Further severity would damage his position. Henry has won a battle, but it must appear to the people that for their king

> Here is no victory, nor shall our people
> Conceive that we can triumph in their falls.
> Alas, poor souls! Let such as are escaped
> Steal to the country back without pursuit.
> There's not a drop of blood spilt but hath drawn
> As much of mine. (III, i, 80-85)

The audience realizes this is mere posturing. Henry seems a merciful king here since he can lose nothing by it; he can afford to be merciful. Yet the compassion Henry expresses here forms a striking contrast to his earlier genuine plea for mercy on Stanley's behalf. Also, Henry does not withdraw his demands for taxes, the cause of the rebellion.

The next scene (III, ii) reminds us of the first Scottish scene. Once again Huntley and Daliell converse. But there is a very basic difference: the social circle has been broken through Katherine's

marriage, and Scotland no longer is in a state of domestic harmony. Huntley is gloomy and bitter; Daliell is crushed by his lost hopes. Scotland is chaotic. Huntley describes it as

> Is not this fine, I trow, to see the gambols,
> To hear the jigs, observe the frisks, b'enchanted
> With the rare discord of bells, pipes and tabors,
> Hotch-potch of Scotch and Irish twingle-twangles,
> Like to so many quiristers of Bedlam,
> Trolling a catch? (III, ii, 2-7)

The Bedlam image is carried over to the masque where four Scottish antics and four wild Irish perform. Warbeck has caused all this confusion, but we transfer the responsibility to James who initiated Warbeck's arrival and marriage.

The masque makes the audience uncomfortable for another reason. The previous scene showed Henry in action; the beginning of this scene has little constructive action in it. Only after the masque and celebrations do James and Warbeck prepare for war. The change then is abrupt. James says "Enough / of merriments. Crawford, how far's our army / Upon the march?" (III, ii, 114-116) Despite the sudden warlike activity, it is still obvious that James and Warbeck prefer to play at kingship through its pastimes than to work at it. The irresponsibility of putting pleasure before business is inexcusable. It is another demonstration of how unkinglike James and Warbeck are.

To negate any criticism we may have of Warbeck the man because of his political irresponsibility, Ford shows us the happy couple together. This is the only time in the whole play that Warbeck and Katherine are alone on stage. Immediately we see how tenderly they treat one another and how devoted they are. Ford uses poetic

language in Warbeck to induce our sympathy for the couple, as in

> Now, dearest, ere sweet sleep shall seal those eyes,
> Love's precious tapers, give me leave to use
> A parting ceremony; for tomorrow
> It would be sacrilege to intrude upon
> The temple of thy peace. (III, ii, 139-143)

We also learn more of Katherine. She is a realist, for when Warbeck claims he will prove Henry Tudor to be the counterfeit she responds "Pray do not use / That word; it carries fate in it". (III,ii, 171-172) Whether this fear is her unvoiced doubts as to Warbeck's identity, or a reluctance to tempt fate, it clearly shows us that she loves Warbeck the man and not the possibility of becoming England's queen. So long as Katherine loves Warbeck we can forgive him anything, indeed he is exalted. This is the apex of Warbeck's mortal career.

In contrast, the next scene begins to show the unpleasant aspects of Henry's nature. Up to now he has been totally admirable as the adroit political mastermind, the efficient military commander. But II, iii shows us how Henry manages to be these things. He must become amoral. He bribes Hialas and plots to keep his conference with him a secret. For the first time we see intrigue at work and, compared to the openness of the relationship between Warbeck and Katherine, it is not a pretty picture. Once again Henry speaks of himself in a hunting metaphor --

> King Ferdinand is not so much a fox
> But that a cunning huntsman may in time
> Fall on the scent, (III, iii, 39-41)

but this time it is much more deadly now that we know the quarry, Warbeck, and have seen the hunter at work.

A seemingly irrelevant piece of information is given the

audience in this scene. We learn that King Ferdinand

> Swore that the marriage 'twixt the lady Catherine
> His daughter and the prince of Wales your son
> Should never be consummated as long
> As any earl of Warwick lived in England,
> Except by new creation. (III, iii, 54-58)

The information becomes crucial in the last scene for our final understanding of Henry's character. Here it puts Warbeck in context next to a larger and more difficult intrigue: the Spanish marriage. The exchange between Urswick and Henry --

> Hen. What was't
> A' muttered in the earnest of his wisdom?
> A' spoke not to be heard; 'twas about -
> Urs. Warbeck:
> How if King Henry were but sure of subjects,
> Such a wild runagate might soon be caged,
> No great ado withstanding.
> Hen. Nay, nay; something
> About my son prince Arthur's match! (III, iii, 44-52)

dismisses Warbeck as a problem. His political significance pales next to the negotiations for a state marriage. Ford mentions the Spanish marriage and the problem posed for Henry by the Earl of Warwick in the same framework as Warbeck as preparation for the intertwining of their dooms in the final scene.

When the scene reverts to Warbeck again, it is on the battle-field before Norham castle. It seems a waste of lives and effort after hearing of Henry's preparations for both the event of war or peace. It is the beginning of the decline of Warbeck's fortunes and he here appears at his most unfavourable. His voice becomes shrill, his manner pathetic. He begs James "O sir, lend / No ear to this traducer of my honour!" (III, iv, 36-37) Later he adds hysterically "Can you study / While such a devil raves? O sir!" (III, iv, 49-50) He is 'passionate'

and 'effeminately dolent'. He pleads for mercy where it does not deserve to be granted. Warbeck obviously does not belong on the battlefield.

An incident mentioned by all the sources is Warbeck's plea to James to stop the pillaging of Northumbria. The historians treat the affair with puzzled contempt. Gainsford calls it "a certaine kind of ridiculous mercy and foolish compassion."[15] Bacon gives it as an example of Warbeck's acting ability. Ford handles the incident with a double vision. One the one hand he clearly makes it a genuine and spontaneous plea. The wording suggests that Warbeck actually weeps on stage. It is far different from Henry's cool and calculated 'compassion' of III, ii. The genuineness of the plea is admirable, but from a pragmatic viewpoint it is stupid. Warbeck stands to lose too much by it; a show of force, however bloody, is necessary to prove that he is capable and serious about winning the throne. He is on a battlefield and there the practical is the most important. There is no room for the sentimental or the squeamish.

A change also occurs in the character of James. His manner toward Warbeck becomes cold and suspicious. He orders the pillage of the neighbouring countryside, and when Warbeck pleads to James to "Spare, spare, my dear, dear England" (III, iv, 67) he snaps back that Warbeck is ridiculous. Later he interjects that the Cornish rebelled against Henry because of taxes and not for Warbeck and insinuates Warbeck is a fraud, calling him to his face "duke of York, for such thou sayest thou art." (III, iv, 97) Some critics see this change in attitude as evidence for Henry's wholesome influence over James, but

this is not so. Although James becomes more politic, the change paradoxically makes him more unlikeable because of the harsh attitude he adopts toward Warbeck. As for any wholesome influence, it cannot have been very deep or permanent. James' challenge to Surrey to personal combat is just as foolish and impractical as Warbeck's plea for mercy. It is a fairy-tale gesture, out of place in the practical world and we later learn Surrey declines it. Warbeck's eager desire to assume the challenge shows the more the impracticality of the gesture and underscores these two men's inability to function as Machiavellian princes.

The beginning of act IV serves to move the plot forward. It ends the war and brings Durham to the Scottish camp to put Henry's plan into action. It also shows the reaction of the English camp to James' proposal and points out why it is an impossible display. To James' offer of the prize being an end to the war or Berwick castle, Surrey replies

> But Berwick, say,
> Is none of mine to part with. In affairs
> Of princes, subjects cannot traffic rights
> Inherent to the crown. My life is mine,
> That I dare freely hazard. (IV, i, 46-50)

The gesture is admirable between two individuals, but not two forces of state.

The following scene shows Warbeck in hardly more favourable light than his previous appearance. He is trapped, clearly out-maneuvered by Henry. He seems unable to take positive action. Instead he calls on fantastic forces to protect him. It is Frion who plans their next move. Warbeck is at his lowest here. His only generous moment is when he expresses concern for Katherine. Overall he appears unbalanced,

overly depressed at one moment, too exhilirated the next.[16] Frion's advice,

> You grow too wild in passion; if you will
> Appear a prince indeed, confine your will
> To moderation, (IV, ii, 20-22)

sparks a rage in Warbeck. When Frion sensibly ignores his ravings and turns to depart, Warbeck shrilly cries out after him "Sir, sir take heed! / Gold, and the promise of promotion, rarely / Fail in temptation." (IV, ii, 32-34) This extremely uncharacteristic utterance of Warbeck's demonstrates to what depths he has sunk. The suspicion and the acknowledgement of the practical power money and position carry sound strange in the romantic hero. The audience is disturbed lest the likeable young man be corrupted by the ways of the world. This single expression, however, is the only time Warbeck shows any inclination to use Machiavellian tactics. Also, we later learn for good measure that his suspicions of Frion were well-founded.

Act IV, ii moves the plot forward; Warbeck and his counsellors decide to move to Cornwall. The deliberations of the advisors allow room for some comic relief as it entails another exchange between Frion, John A'Water, Heron, Astley and Skelton. The overconfidence of Warbeck's followers to the magnitude of the effort needed in their task is expressed in Skelton's comic speech:

> 'Tis but going to sea and leaping shore, cut ten or twelve thousand unnecessary throats, fire seven or eight towns, take half a dozen cities, get into the market-place, crown him Richard the Fourth, and the business is finished. (IV, ii, 60-64)

After showing how confined Warbeck is by Henry's policies and how distracted Warbeck has become, the comic superconfident babbling of

his counsellors is pathetic.

The end to Warbeck's Scottish sojourn comes in the following scene. The sight of James with Durham and Hialas on either side of him is a visible demonstration of how deep Henry's claws are sunk in Scotland. Pressure is brought to bear on James. Political pressure from the European monarchs, and religious pressure from Rome is too much for James to resist as

> nothing wants
> For settling peace through Christendom but love
> Between the British monarchs, James and Henry. (IV, iii, 2-4)

'Love' between the two kings can only be achieved through Warbeck's dismissal. In a calculated move, Henry coaxes James by tantalizingly proposing a marriage between James and his daughter Margaret. This enforced, politically astute, match is vastly different from the unwise marriage of Warbeck and Katherine. James succumbs to the pressure and in doing so earns the audience's distaste. James dismisses Warbeck because of his duty to the Church and State; the very same reasons he should not have entertained him in the first place. James makes fine speeches, and Henry's cronies allow him to maintain the fiction that Warbeck's life has not been bartered for peace, but these do not cover up the fact that James is glad to get rid of Warbeck. In his soliloquy he shows not a speck of remorse for Warbeck's predicament:

> A league with Ferdinand, a marriage
> With English Margaret, a free release
> From restitution for the late affronts,
> Cessation from hostility! and all
> For Warbeck not delivered, but dismissed!
> We could not wish it better. (IV, iii, 56-61)

The tone, especially the last line, is one of relief. James will get

something for nothing and his compassionate reputation will not be tainted.

The Warbeck who appears for his dismissal is a far cry from the upset, raving Warbeck of the previous scene. He has calmed down and accepts the turn of events graciously. He also allows James the appearance of benevolence and does not reprove him for his obvious desertion. The stage is set for Warbeck's transference into a stoic hero. He is in control of himself. He gives prudent orders that their arrival in Cornwall be as quiet as possible; he boosts his followers' morale; he expresses tender concern for Katherine's welfare. This Warbeck is worthy of Katherine's love and constancy, and she stays with him accompanied by her faithful attendant Jane.

Warbeck also demonstrates a mature realization of the near impossible position he is in and prepares us for the practical-minded Frion's desertion. He tells Frion

> Wise men know how to soothe
> Adversity, not serve it; thou hast waited
> Too long on expectation; never yet
> Was any nation read of so besotted
> In reason as to adore the setting sun. (IV, iii, 136-140)

The bitterness and resignation seen in comparing himself to the setting sun[17] does not overwhelm his self-confidence. He is resolved to face adversity and to not give up.

The entrance of Huntley and Daliell serves to remind the audience how much Katherine's devotion to her husband costs her in private happiness. The tearful farewells result in Daliell's vow to accompany Katherine. This action is both a sign of respect for Katherine's moral and public stature and a vivid and constant

suggestion of what happiness she might have enjoyed. Daliell's presence will make her final commitment to Warbeck all the more meaningful and powerful.

The next scene brings Henry again on stage. Almost the sole purpose of this scene is the need to keep Henry in the viewer's mind. He has not appeared on stage for four scenes. The basic characteristics of Henry are again gone over: he is prudent financially; he appears foresighted due to the efficiency of his intelligence corps; he again speaks in the hunting metaphor. Nearly the only change is the gleeful, jovial posture he adopts in the scene as shown when he suggests to his followers

> Let us meet him (Warbeck)
> And tender homage; ha, sirs? Liegemen ought
> To pay their fealty. (IV, iv, 37-39)

But this smugness has already been glimpsed in his treatment of Lambert Simnel in the first scene, and it is understandable as Henry's plans are working smoothly. Ford wants the audience to have a clear picture of what Henry is like before the confrontation between him and Warbeck which will follow shortly. The scene also moves the plot. We learn of Frion's defection, although we knew it to be inevitable, and Henry's forces are moved to Salisbury to end the military conflict.

Since we already know that Henry has moved his army to Salisbury, Warbeck's arrival in Cornwall and his assuming the title of Richard IV as well as his plans to march on Exeter, are all false hopes. Warbeck's bouyancy and his follower's overconfidence that 'all's cocksure' are pathetic. On the other hand Katherine's resigned disposition being,

> Confirmed in health:
> By which I may the better undergo
> The roughest fare of change; but I shall learn
> Patience to hope, since silence courts affliction
> For comforts, (IV, v, 12-16)

and the dogged loyalty of Daliell and Jane to her, prepare us for Warbeck's defeat. A final impressive public speech as king gives him a final moment of earthly glory so that his fall may be all the more apparent, and so that his eventual triumph may be the greater.

With the end of the story near, the dramatist's task becomes more difficult. Act V begins with the definite conclusion to the political struggle. We hear that Warbeck has been defeated. It is the manner of this defeat which causes problems for Ford. Historically, Warbeck abandoned his camp without giving battle and this is a fact which Ford cannot change; thus Warbeck's behaviour needs to be explained. Cowardice would nullify at once his heroic stature, making the final scenes unbelievable. The explanation Ford gives, unfortunately, is a weak one. Daliell tells Katherine

> Impute it not to faintness or to weakness
> Of noble courage, lady, but foresight;
> For by some secret friend he had intelligence
> Of being bought and sold by his base followers. (V, i, 65-68)

Daliell's report has often been inferred to imply that 'faintness' and 'weakness of noble courage' really were the reasons for Warbeck's flight. Fortunately, Ford does not dwell on the matter and moves rapidly on to Katherine's fate.

We see Katherine taken by Henry's forces, and the gallantry with which Daliell defends her. For a brief moment we wonder how she will be treated. We are relieved when it becomes apparent that she is

to be entertained with all honour. Cruel treatment of her would be damaging to Henry (and historically untrue). But the fine words of civility -- 'gracious entertainment', 'excellentest lady', 'invites 'ee, Princess', and 'service' -- do not cloud the fact for Katherine that 'king Henry's pleasure' is the same as a command and that she is a prisoner. Nevertheless, appearances are important to maintain in a civil environment and Katherine allows Oxford the pretence, saying "Pray use / Your own phrase as you list; to your protection / Both I and mine submit." (V, i, 100-102) Yet in the word 'submit' she acknowledges her true status.

As the play moves into the final scenes, the emphasis is more and more on the tragic; thus Warbeck more and more dominates our attention. Henry cannot be denied his moment of victory, however, and with his celebration the penultimate scene opens. Henry acknowledges that "henceforth / Your king may reign in quiet." (V, ii, 7) The action quickly moves on to the confrontation between Henry and Warbeck. That Ford would bring his two heroes together is inevitable. It is the chance for the audience to contrast the merits of the two together. Ford treats both men with favour. Henry is portrayed as cool and rational. When Daubeney introduces Warbeck as "Perkin, the Christian world's strange wonder," (V, ii, 36) Henry replies without a hint of the superstition he exhibited in the first scene of the play. He says

> We observe no wonder; I behold, 'tis true,
> An ornament of nature, fine and polished,
> A handsome youth indeed, but not admire him. (V, ii, 37-39)

More flattering touches are added to his character. He is religious, rebuking Daubeney when he thinks he infringed 'the liberty of houses

sacred'. Moreover, he is not cruel. Instead, he casts himself in the role of father confessor as in "Turn now thine eyes, / Young man, upon thyself, and thy past actions" (V, ii, 48-49) and tries to encourage Warbeck to confess. When this fails, he does not resort to violence, although it is obliquely threatened; rather he treats Warbeck and his party with surprising restraint, ordering that

> It is our pleasure no uncivil outrage,
> Taunts or abuse be suffered to their persons;
> They shall meet fairer laws than they deserve. (V, ii, 123-125)

Henry acts with prudence. He wishes to 'cure' Warbeck of his delusion and so he assumes the guise of the physician-king. He thinks that "Time may restore their wits, whom vain ambition / Hath many years distracted" (V, ii, 126-127) and later says "we shall teach the lad another language." (V, ii, 134) Henry has no desire to be cruel; indeed it would aid his appearance if Warbeck were to consent to being another Lambert Simnel, but his duty to the state forbids him to grant mercy to a recalcitrant Warbeck. He expresses willingness to be merciful as in "Yet we could temper mercy with extremity, / Being not too far provoked," (V, ii, 137-138) but this all depends on Warbeck.

Henry claims the political victory in this scene, but it is Warbeck who wins the confrontation. He remains unflappable while his behaviour goads Henry into a display of anger. His physical appearance must be a shock to the audience. The last time we saw him he had put on the guise of a king; now he is one who has been hunted down, beleagured, as Henry was. In the same way, his spirit is unbroken. He still speaks in poetically charged language and maintains his dignity by actually comparing himself to Henry. He tells of

Bosworth field;
Where, at an instant, to the world's amazement,
A morn to Richmond and a night to Richard
Appeared at once. The tale is soon applied:
Fate, which crowned these attempts when least assured,
Might have befriended others like resolved. (V, ii, 69-74)

Moreover, Warbeck displays an admirable lack of fear for his own doom while he asks pardon for his confederates. He tells Henry

I expect
No less than what severity calls justice,
And politicians safety; let such beg
As feed on alms. But if there can be mercy
In a protested enemy, then may it
Descend to these poor creatures, whose engagements
To th' bettering of their fortunes have incurred
A loss of all; to them, if any charity
Flow from some noble orator, in death
I owe the fee of thankfulness. (V, ii, 90-99)

The result is a stalemate. Both Henry and Warbeck believe that they are in the right. Henry does not waver from his belief that Warbeck is a fraud and Warbeck maintains his belief that he is the Duke of York. The question in the audience's mind is: will either man back down? How will Warbeck conduct himself when faced with death? Will Warbeck profess to be an impostor so that he may live? Will Henry unwisely grant an unrepentant Warbeck mercy?

The answers are delayed for a little while. Warbeck is ordered removed to the Tower; Katherine Gordon is brought to Henry's presence. Here Henry appears as the gracious host. His generosity is overwhelming. He calls her 'cousin', promises to protect her, grants her an allowance of £100, claims that she will live at court with the queen as her chief companion. But this is as far as his personal affection (attraction?) for Katherine goes. Katherine twice loyally attempts to hear news of her husband, but Henry ignores the attempts and

deliberately changes the subject. Already we have the clue that Henry will not let personal feelings influence his decision on Warbeck. If Henry begins to experience internal conflict over Warbeck's fate, he merely blocks it out. Warbeck is a problem of the state and Henry will deal with him just like that. This is a cold, but necessary, approach in a statesman. Warbeck's fate thus rests solely on his own actions.

The staging of the last scene is an eerie repetition of the first. "Enter Constable and Officers, [Perkin] Warbeck, Urswick, and Lambert Simnel like a falconer. A pair of stocks ... Warbeck is put in the stocks" read the stage directions. The empty stocks dominate the vacant stage just as the empty throne dominated it at the start of the play. Warbeck is escorted to the stocks, as Henry was to the throne. The repetition is significant as both props lead to glory. The throne led Henry to earthly political glory; the stocks will be the means by which Warbeck will achieve his glory.

The last scene belongs entirely to Warbeck. What we do learn about Henry is not pleasant. We hear that the Earl of Warwick is to be executed along with Warbeck. Our memories flash back to the seemingly unimportant tidbit of news earlier: that the Earl of Warwick stands in Henry's way. Henry thus takes prudence to its logical conclusion. He is going to kill two birds with one stone. Although Warbeck describes himself as "prologue / But to his (Warwick's) tragedy" (V, iii, 191), our sympathy is only for Warbeck. We never see the ill-fated Earl and at best can only sympathize with him in an abstract sense. On the other hand, we see Warbeck suffer ignominy, we see the pitiful change in his physical condition and we watch him be led off to execution. It is

Warbeck who draws out our sorrow.

It is very clear from the beginning of the scene that Warbeck's obstinacy in refusing to confess he is an impostor is the direct cause of his death, and that even at this late stage Henry is prepared to grant a repentant Warbeck mercy. The logical question to ask is why does Warbeck not confess? Ford explains why Warbeck chooses death through the character of Lambert Simnel. Lambert Simnel, the earlier Pretender, urges Warbeck to confess, showing himself as a prime example of Henry's mercy. He has his life, a roof over his head and three square meals a day. Yet, as the scornful Warbeck replies, life for Simnel is just "Bread and a slavish ease, with some assurance / From the base beadle's whip." (V, iii, 61-62) This is not life, but mere existence. As Warbeck well knows, mercy from Henry means an existence such as this which he must inevitably reject. Instead he accepts the 'martyrdom of majesty'.

The pyschological reasoning behind Warbeck's decision was much earlier expressed by Ford in his prose work A Line of Life (1620). In it he distinguishes the two types of 'life' which Warbeck has to choose between.

> To live, and to live well, are distinct in themselves so peculiarly as is the actor and the action. All men covet the former, as if it were the total and sovereign felicity of a human condition; and some few pursue the latter, because it gives an eternity to their blessedness. The difference between these two is, life, desired for the only benefit of living, fears to die; for such men that so live, when they die, both die finally and die all. But a good life aims at another mark; for such men as endeavour to live well, live with an expectation of death; and they, when they die, die to live, and live forever.[18]

Warbeck's choice is thus not madness, but the path to glory and honour.

Warbeck encourages his followers with the promise that "illustrious mention / Shall blaze our names, and style us Kings oe'r Death." (V, iii, 206-207) Ironically this prophecy is fulfilled by Ford's play. To the worldly and practical-minded Simnel and Urswick, however, such 'reasoning' is incomprehensible, to them physical existence in any form is preferable to death. Their point of view makes them believe Warbeck to be mad or possessed. But for Ford and us, Warbeck's decision is perfectly true to his unworldly and impractical nature. His decision to accept death rather than life is the 'Strange Truth' of the title.

The greatest moment of pathos is the entrance of Katherine. Husband and wife form a striking contrast, the one wretched; the other young and beautiful. The temptation she presents Warbeck is greater than Lambert Simnel's, for he represented only the termination of existence; she represents the loss of love. Nevertheless, their defiance of Henry expressed in their fortitude and loyalty, coupled with their physical frailty seen in Warbeck's confinement and Katherine's fainting, win our hearts. Their renewal of vows of love on the edge of death is the crowning touch to Warbeck's role as the King of Hearts. He says

> Spite of tyranny,
> We reign in our affections, blessed woman!
> Read in my destiny the wrack of honour;
> Point out, in my contempt of death, to memory
> Some miserable happiness: since herein,
> Even when I fell, I stood enthroned a monarch
> Of one chaste wife's troth, pure and uncorrupted. (V, iii, 121-129)

Once again we see how separate are the worlds represented by Henry and Warbeck. Henry's followers are aghast at Katherine's actions. The use of the virtues loyalty and duty are here alien to their concept of

life. Huntley, however, understands and approves. He says to Katherine

> I glory in thy constancy;
> And must not say I wish that I had missed
> Some partage in these trials of a patience. (V, iii, 163-165)

As the play moves into its final moments, Warbeck achieves victory. To the practical-minded it is a hollow one -- a 'triumph over tyranny', a triumph over human frailties, a triumph over death -- because he must die. Yet it is what Warbeck values most dear.

When Warbeck leaves the stage to his execution, the audience is exhausted. Like Huntley we "have / Not thoughts left; 'tis sufficient in such cases / Just laws ought to proceed." (V, iii, 209-211) Henry comes on stage to restore order. As at the beginning so at the very end of the play he takes on the part of the physician-king. He sums up the state's moral in

> from hence
> We gather this fit use: that public states,
> As our particular bodies, taste most good
> In health, when purged of corrupted blood. (V, iii, 216-219)

It has sometimes been suggested that Henry's words are too pat and unconvincing and that no catharsis is created. But our intellects know that an unrepentant Warbeck is a danger to the stability of the state and that Henry had no choice but to execute him. Our hearts, however, cannot accept Warbeck's fate. The cessation of the resultant tension, through the drama's end, creates relief.

Notes

[1]On Jan. 11, 1630/31 Herbert recorded "I did refuse to allow a play of Messinger's because itt did contain dangerous matter, as the deposing of Sebastian King of Portugal by Philip the Second, and ther being a peace sworen twixte the Kings of England and Spayne."

[2]The Broken Heart (L633), The Fancies Chaste and Noble (1638), The Lady's Trial (1639).

[3]Alfred Harbage, "The Mystery of Perkin Warbeck", Studies in the English Renaissance Drama in Memory of Karl Julius Holzknecht, (1959), 125-141.

[4]Peter Ure, ed., Perkin Warbeck in the Introduction to the Revels Plays (London, 1968), pp. xxxii-xxxv.

[5]There are 27 speaking characters and at least 4 others. Some minor parts could be doubled up. The stage time has been estimated by the number of lines, 2479, and by allowing time for the processions and masque.

[6]John Ford, Perkin Warbeck edited by Peter Ure (London, 1968), ll 23-26. All further references to Ford's play are from this edition and will be noted after the quote in brackets.

[7]Tucker Orbison, The Tragic Vision of John Ford (Salzburg, 1974), pp. 151-152.

[8]Irving Ribner, pp. 314-320.

[9]Francic Bacon, The History of the Reign of King Henry VII (Cambridge, 1892), p. 111.

[10]see for instance H. J. Oliver, The Problem of John Ford (Carlton, 1955), p. 103.

[11]see for instance Peter Ure, p. lxxii.

[12]Bacon, p. 167.

[13]Compare the similar effect produced in Richard II by the Queen, Bushy and Green.

[14] Bacon, p. 169.

[15] Thomas Gainsford, True and Wonderful History of Perkin Warbeck in Appendix I of Peter Ure's edition of Perkin Warbeck, p. 163.

[16] Compare to the portrayal of Richard II in Act II, scene ii of Richard II.

[17] Compare to the use of sun imagery in Richard II, especially III, iii 62-67 and III, iii, 178-180.

[18] John Ford, "A Line of Life", The Shakespeare Society, IXX (1843), reprinted by the Kraus Reprint Co., (1966), p. 45.

CHAPTER TWO: MARY SHELLEY'S THE FORTUNES OF PERKIN WARBECK

I

Mary Shelley wrote her fourth novel, The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck: A Romance, between 1828 and January of 1830.[1] It was published by Henry Colburn in 1830. Mary received a check for £150 (which she had difficulty in cashing) due to the efforts of her father, William Godwin, to whom she turned over the profits. Mary had a strong financial motivation in writing the novel, as she was always in need of money after Shelley's death, but there is no evidence that she wrote it hurriedly. She did meticulous background research. She read all the historical material she could find, including Bacon, Leland, Hume and Philipe de Comines.[2] She sent for topographic plates of the places her novel included so that she might describe their geography accurately.[3] She read the history of the regions she wrote about, enlisting the aid of her father to discover the names, dates, and ranks of the characters in the story.[4] She even wrote to Sir Walter Scott, asking his aid in the Scottish scenes.[5] She revised the story with the same diligence she had written it, cutting the original length from five volumes to three.[6] The result was a novel encompassing the countries of England, Burgundy, Spain, Ireland and Scotland, set in the years 1485 to 1499.

John Ford occupies a special place in a source study of Mary Shelley's novel. Ford was a popular writer in the Shelley circle. Shelley himself thought so highly of him that in the Preface to The

Revolt of Islam he favourably compares him to Shakespeare:

> all (writers) resemble each other, and differ from every other in their several classes. In this view of things, Ford can no more be called the imitator of Shakespeare than Shakespeare the imitator of Ford. There were perhaps few other points of resemblance between these two men than that which the universal and inevitable influence of their age produced.[7]

Mary Shelley knew Ford's Perkin Warbeck and used Gifford's 1827 edition as a source when writing her novel.[8] Four quotes appear as separate chapter headings to chapters XI and XIV of volume two and chapters I and VI of volume three. The quotes are respectively:

> Cousin of York, thus once more we embrace thee;
> Welcome to James of Scotland! for thy safety,
> Know, such as love thee not shall never wrong thee.
> Come, we will taste a while our court delights,
> Dream hence afflictions past, and then proceed
> To high attempts of honour. (II, i, 108-113)

> But these are chimes for funerals, my business
> Attends on fortune of a sprightlier triumph;
> For love and majesty are reconciled
> And vow to crown thee empress of the West. (III, ii, 159-162)

> I am your wife,
> No human power can or shall divorce
> My faith from duty. (IV, iii, 101-103)

> 'Tis but going to sea and leaping ashore, cut ten or twelve unnecessary throats, fire seven or eight towns, take half a dozen cities, get into the market place, crown him Richard the Fourth, and the business is finished. (IV, ii, 60-64)

Ford's influence is of consequence. His heroic portrayal of Warbeck certainly encouraged Mary Shelley in her conception of him, and gave her an established method to follow.

The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck was not the first historical novel Mary Shelley had written. Her three volume history, Valperga, set in mediaeval Italy, had enjoyed a moderate success. Mary doubtless wrote another historical novel because it seemed, from her own

experience and the success of Sir Walter, to be a profitable genre. The second novel, however, proved to be somewhat of a disappointment. She had received £450 for Valperga; Godwin had had to haggle with Henry Colburn for £150.[9] It did not sell well either, but it did beat out a rival Perkin Warbeck novel, Perkin Warbeck; or the Court of James the Fourth of Scotland. An Historical Romance, by Alexander Campbell, published in the same year.

Explaining her interest in the subject Mary Shelley wrote in the preface

> The story of Perkin Warbeck was first suggested to me as a subject for historical detail. On studying it, I became aware of the romance which his story contains, while, at the same time, I felt that it would be impossible for any narration, that should be confined to the incorporation of facts related by our old Chroniclers, to do it justice. (v)

She tended to base her stories on personal experience. Frankenstein is often seen as a portrait of Shelley. Matilde, the novelette never published in her lifetime, was self-acknowledged to be an autobiography of the terrible year 1819. The two main characters of Valperga, Castruccio and Euthanasia, have long been identified as types of Byron and Shelley. The Last Man is often interpreted as an account of the Shelleys' Italian exile. The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck is no exception to the general trend. Critics have long suggested that the character of Hernan de Faro, the handsome Moorish mariner, is based on the rakish Edward Trelawny.[10] The autobiographical element may go even deeper. The whole Warbeck story, or at least Mary Shelley's redaction -- a young man of good birth who is forced into exile, rejected by his peers, surrounded by a handful of friends, and vilified by his numerous

enemies, married to a loving and devoted wife and dying tragically young -- is familiar material. This is surely Shelley's life, with Shelley cast as Perkin Warbeck and Mary as Katherine Gordon.

Muriel Spark[11] was the first to suggest that the story's conclusion was in reality Mary Shelley's apology to the world for her life after Shelley's death. In the novel, years after Warbeck's death, when Katherine Gordon has settled into life and marriage at the English court, she is confronted by Edmund Plantagenet, one of Warbeck's dearest friends, who reproaches her as Trelawny did Mary:

> Yours is another existence, Lady; you need the adulation of the crowd - the luxury of palaces; you purchase these, even by communing with the murderer of him who deserved a dearer recompense at your hands. (III, 346-347)

For the final seven and a half pages Katherine justifies her actions. For example:

> Must my living heart be stone, because that dear form is dust, which was the medium of my communication with his spirit? Where I see suffering, there I must bring my mite for its relief. We are not deities to bestow in impassive benevolence. We give -, because we love - .... I must love and be loved. I must feel that my dear and chosen friends are happier through me. When I have wandered out of myself in my endeavour to shed pleasure around, I must again return laden with the gathered sweets on which I feed and live. Permit this to be, unblamed - permit a heart whose sufferings have been, and are, so many and so bitter to reap what joy it can from the strong necessity it feels to be sympathized with - to love. (III, 352-354)

This is Mary Shelley's unspoken plea to her own contemporaries to understand her very different lifestyle in the years after her husband's death.

The technical faults of the novel are many. The novel is overlong, despite having been cut from the original. The story line is episodic, with too many loose ends. Moreover, the pace is often inter-

rupted while Mary expounds on some tangential point, her favourites being long descriptions of Nature, explanatory notes on the practices of the Middle Ages, accounts of the voyages of the New World explorers, the nature of Love and the nature of Woman. The story is also unduly repetitive in descriptions of character. For example, even after we have long known that Frion is a guileful, proud conniver, Mary Shelley continues to give long pyschological descriptions leading to the identical conclusion. But there are also virtues in the novel's method. There are several moving passages and some characters, Robert Clifford in particular, are well depicted. Overall the novel is uneven in quality -- sometimes excellent, sometimes sentimental trash!

II

Critics have not been kind to The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck. It has been called "a barely readable fiction"[12], "not a readable novel"[13], and "essentially a lifeless novel"[14]. The critics find greatest fault with the technical flaws, but the liberties Mary Shelley took with the historical details also arouses ire in some of them.

It must be admitted that the most remarkable aspect of the entire novel is its nearly complete refusal to accept the judgement of history. The actual physical events are there -- the Kent invasion, the siege of Waterford, the execution of William Stanley -- but they are in a form so changed that the unknowing reader would never suppose that historians used them to demonstrate Warbeck's supposed low character. The most singular of the historical distortions is in Mary Shelley's insistence that the historical Warbeck really was Richard Plantagenet,

the younger son of Edward IV, the Duke of York and the rightful king of England. In the preface she writes

> It is not singular that I should entertain a belief that Perkin was, in reality, the lost Duke of York. For, in spite of Hume, and the later historians who have followed in his path, no person who has at all studied the subject but arrives at the same conclusion. Records exist in the Tower, some well known, others with which those who have access to those interesting papers alone are acquainted, which put the question almost beyond a doubt. (I, v-vi)

What records she refers to, historians have no idea. But her Warbeck is to be undeniably of noble birth and thus cannot be shown in any act or thought which is not.

Mary Shelley follows the chronology of events faithfully, only altering it once when she conflates the two Scottish invasions into one, following Ford's example. The historical distortions that occur are in two major categories: characters and description of events. Both categories are subdivided into two parts. The characters in the novel are split between minor historical figures mentioned in the sources to whom Mary Shelley gives prominence and personalities, and characters who are purely fictional. Likewise, the incidents which occur in the novel are split between factual events and events invented by Mary. The minor historical figures in the story are many. It would be a tedious and not very rewarding task to list them all. Among the more important are: Lord Lovel, the Earl of Lincoln, Lady Brampton, Elizabeth Woodville, Lord Fitzwater, Margaret of Burgundy, Sir George Neville, the Earl of Desmond, the Prior of Kilmainham, Jane Shore and Sir Patrick Hamilton. The interesting thing to notice is that the great majority of these characters are connected with Warbeck. They

are part of Mary Shelley's apparatus to prove that he is noble and sympathetic by surrounding him with noble and sympathetic people.

Historically, Lord Lovel and the Earl of Linclon could not have known Perkin Warbeck as they both died at the Battle of Stoke in Lambert Simnel's ill-fated insurrection of 1487. Lady Brampton was the wife of an ardent Yorkist who at one time had Warbeck in his service. Elizabeth Woodville never saw her sons again after they were committed to the Tower under Richard III in 1483. She gave credence to the report they were both dead. Most characters, with the exception of Margaret of Burgundy, receive little more than passing mention in the sources, and those who held political power, such as the Earl of Desmond, are supposed to have used Warbeck for their own gain.

Margaret of Burgundy is an unusual case, for the early sources definitely assign to her the nature of a witch. Bacon mentions that Henry's followers nicknamed her 'Juno' in reference to the malice the goddess Juno bore to Aeneas.[15] Mary Shelley reverses this description:

> The Lady Margaret, sister of Edward the Fourth of England, and wife of Charles the Rash of Burgundy, was a woman distinguished by her wisdom and her goodness .... [a] sage and intrepid counsellor ... [who] entirely loved and tenderly brought them [her husband's grandchildren] up, attending to their affairs with maternal solicitude, and governing the countries subject to them with wisdom and justice. (I, 130-131)

It is not that Mary could not conceive of a conniving woman -- in the Scottish scenes the mistress of James IV is instrumental in separating James and Warbeck -- rather she wished nothing to reflect poorly on Warbeck, including his true friends.

There are a few minor historical figures belonging to Henry's camp who play a role in the novel. Jane Kennedy (mistress of James IV),

the Bishop of Durham, the cleric Urswick, Lord Bothwell and Sir John Digby are perhaps the most outstanding. These characters, with their scheming, violent minds, reflect on their master Henry and prove his ignobility in the same way Warbeck's friends prove him to be a worthy prince.

Of more vital interest to Mary Shelley are the three non-historical figures who are part of Warbeck's circle: Edmund Plantagenet, Monina de Faro and Hernan de Faro. Edmund is the illegitimate son of Richard III, and at first he overshadows Warbeck when a child. It is he who first guides Warbeck, who first teaches him the art of war. He is his steadfast comrade-in-arms and it is he who confronts Katherine at the very end. Edmund is motivated by devotion to his cousin and a desire to expiate his father's crime. Everything he does and feels can be traced to these two factors.

Like Edmund, Monina is devoted to Warbeck her foster-brother. She serves as the romantic interest in the pre-Scotland chapters; indeed Warbeck falls in love with her, but does not express his love because of the great gulf between their stations. She easily gives way to Katherine Gordon. It is Monina who takes upon herself the dangerous task of eliciting support for Warbeck in England. Again, like Edmund, everything she feels and does is centered on Warbeck. Both Edmund and Monina have little identity apart from Warbeck and it is fitting that neither survives him. Edmund reveals Monina's death:

> Her gentle soul ... has flown to him for whom she lived and died .... In the churchyard of a convent, placed high among the foldings of those lovely hills which overlook Lisbon, (he) was shown a humble tomb, half defaced; her dear sacred name is carved upon it, and half the date, the 14--. which

> showed that she died before the century began, in which we now live. She could not have survived our Prince many months; probably she died before him, nor ever knew the worst pang of all, the ignominy linked with his beloved memory. (III, 344-345)

The change in Edmund is more subtle. He nearly dies from a wound received in battle. In a spiritual sense he does die. His entire physical appearance changes so that Katherine does not recognize him. He even tells her:

> Fancy not that I am Plantagenet; for all that was of worth in him you name, died when the White Rose scattered its leaves upon the unworthy earth. (III, 343)

His entire existence is altered. Before, he had been a soldier, at the end he is a gardener in Henry's employ; once he had been outgoing and sociable, at the end reclusive; earlier he had been optimistic and willing to struggle against the inevitable, at the end he says of himself

> I was made poor by the death-blow of my hopes; and my chief labour is to tame my heart to resignation to the will of God. (III, 345)

Edmund Plantagenet is effectively dead.

Hernan de Faro, Warbeck's foster father, also dies at the end of the novel, but he is not like Edmund and Monina. Instead he is a device, sometimes clumsily employed, which Mary Shelley uses to rescue Warbeck or Monina from an impossible situation. He always appears suddenly and just when most needed, like a deus ex machina. He and his exotic appearance do add glamour to the novel, but it is no more than a superficial shine.

The distortion of historical events is an important method for Mary Shelley in her portrayal of Warbeck. The distortions fall into two types: events which have no historical basis and events which happened

in fact but which have been much altered. Curiously, the two categories themselves occur in separate parts of the novel. The first category occurs exclusively in the first half of the book, the second in the second half. Because so little is known about Warbeck's early life, especially in the case of the writer who believes him to be Richard Plantagenet, it is inevitable that incidents will need to be invented. Many of the distortions are just filler, meant to explain where Warbeck was and what he did for the eight years between his removal from the Tower and his re-emergence in Ireland. Warbeck's near-capture by Frion and his rescue by Robert Clifford is a good example. It contributes little more than an exciting adventure. If it were not for the fact that it introduces the character of Robert Clifford, it could be deleted with no loss.

But there are three incidents in the first category which are much more than filler: Warbeck's participation in the Granada wars, his attempt to rescue Sir William Stanley in the Tower, and his attendance in the lists at the Surrey wedding feast. Granada begins to shape the adult Warbeck. In a society where war was common it is a necessity for Warbeck to demonstrate successful martial ability. This is the dominant reason for the Granda chapters. He learns the art of war at Granada, and more important he is successful for the only unqualified time in the novel. The issue at stake is honour, for

> Those were the days when every noble-born youth carved honour for himself with his sword; when passes at arms were resorted to whenever real wars did not put weapons in their hands, and men exposed their breasts to sharpbiting steel in wanton sport. (III, 183)

Military ability means honour without which Warbeck could not be a

hero. In addition Warbeck is shown to have courage, another necessary characteristic for a hero, and piety, as he fights for a Christian cause. The events in Spain also have a technical purpose. As a result of the wars, Warbeck's home is destroyed and along with it all proof of Warbeck's identity -- leaving the way clear for Henry's misrepresentation of the facts.

The attempted rescue of Sir William Stanley also stresses Warbeck's courage. In addition it reveals his concept of friendship and how deeply he feels responsible for his followers. The scene easily lends itself to sympathetic sentimentality. When Warbeck realizes he has sought refuge in the very room he was held prisoner as a child, the memories flood back on him and the reader can sense his vunerability.

The strain of sentimentality is carried over to the wedding feast. As a child Warbeck had been married to Anne Mowbray, the daughter of the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk. This family now puts on the wedding. The episode gives Warbeck the chance to compete on an equal footing with his English peers, and to show off his skill and bravery. Naturally enough he triumphs on the field.

> Richard gloried in the recollection of his Spanish combats, and the love he bore for martial exercises, which made him, so boyish in figure, emulate the strong acts of men. Fortune had varied; but, when at noon the pastime of that day ended, the Prince remained victor in the field. (II, 141)

More important, however, the incident poses the first moral problem Warbeck must resolve in himself. Up to this moment, nothing existed which could possibly have suggested to Warbeck that he was not doing the right thing. Here Surrey makes an eloquently impassioned defence of his recent support of the new regime. He explains

> My lord, I love not Tudor, but I love my country: and now that I see plenty and peace reign over this fair isle, even though Lancaster be their unworthy viceregent, shall I cast forth these friends of man, to bring back the deadly horrors of unholy civil war? By the God that made me, I cannot! (II, 147)

Warbeck replies that his honour and his right push him on to the conflict, but the confrontation marks the beginning of the moral awareness that grows in him and develops him into a full human being. Surrey's hatred of war moves him to sadness, but it cannot, as yet, move him to abandon his quest.

Having demonstrated to the reader that honour is the highest virtue attainable, Mary Shelley now has to manage the remaining events in Warbeck's life so as never to compromise his courage or personal honour. The remaining historical distortions are designed to accomplish this task. Instead of staying on board ship and abandoning his followers on the shores of Kent, Warbeck leads his small band of followers to safety and is the last to seek escape to the sea.

> Before in the van, Richard now hung back to secure the retreat of those behind. Audley urged him to embark; but he moved slowly towards the beach, now calling his men to form and gather round him, now marking the motions of those behind, ready to ride back to their aid. At length Peachy's troops poured through the defile; the plain was covered by flying Yorkists: it only remained for him to assemble as many as he could, to protect and ensure the embarkation of all ... A few minutes brought Richard to the sands: he guarded the embarkation of his diminished numbers; nor, till Peachy's troop was within bowshot, and the last straggler that arrived was in the last boat, did he throw himself from his horse and leap in. (II, 170-171)

The episode, of course, shows Warbeck's leadership abilities and his own personal bravery. It also demonstrates how zealously Warbeck responds to the personal responsibility he feels for the men who risk their lives for him. Mary's Warbeck is worthy of his followers'

loyalty and respect. Yet the historical records show that Warbeck ignominously fled the scene at this point.

The siege of Waterford in the third volume is similarily distorted. There again the historical incident was a disaster for Warbeck, who slunk away from the scene. Mary Shelley could not change the fact that the siege of Waterford was raised, but she could use it as another example of Warbeck's courage and martial prowess. In the midst of battle

> Here Richard's presence was enough to restore victory to his standard - flushed, panting, yet firm in his seat, his hand true and dangerous in its blows, there was something superhuman in his strength and courage, yet more fearful than his sharp sword. (III, 39)

Bad luck and not cowardice causes Warbeck's failure. The incident is a military defeat yet a personal victory.

Mary Shelley slightly distorts history when, after having fled to sanctuary at Beaulieu, Warbeck is shown as giving himself up to Henry's forces. The distortion concerns why Warbeck left sanctuary. Historians accredited it to despair and desperation -- Warbeck realized there was no hope and just gave up. In the novel, Warbeck decides that it is his duty to his followers to surrender so that they may not suffer revenge at Henry's hands and so that he can regain honour in the eyes of all men. Even before he reaches Beaulieu,

> Darkest thoughts crossed his mind; loss of honour, desertion of friends, the fate of his poor men .... For an interval he gave himself up to a tumult of miserable ideas, till from the grim troop some assumed a milder aspect, some a brighter hue; and, after long and painful consideration, he arranged such a plan as promised at least to vindicate his own name, and to save the lives of his adherents. (III, 152)

Unfortunately it is a wasted gesture. Henry gains a bloodless victory at Taunton and allows the rebels to return home. Warbeck thus sacrifices his

freedom for nothing, for Henry scorns any acknowledgement of his enemy's nobility. As Mary Shelley expressed it

> Thus duped, even by his own generous proud spirit, the Duke of York became a prisoner - delivering up his sword, and yielding himself an easy prey to his glad victor. (III, 191)

Although disastrous for Warbeck's career, the gesture itself is born out of the same spirit of responsibility and honour which is central to his character. Combined with the stoic behaviour he displays under duress, it compels our admiration. The waste excites our pity.

Warbeck successfully escaped from imprisonment once and reached as far as the monastery at Shene. In the novel, he has a whole set of fantastic adventures in this interval, concluding in a final confrontation with his old nemesis, Sir Robert Clifford. These adventures are invented to break the monotony of his last years. An interesting change from history is the death of Clifford. The historical Clifford long survived Warbeck and lived a comfortable, if not politically respectable, life. But for Mary Shelley, the false Clifford could not be allowed to survive the noble Warbeck. His crimes demand a just and fitting end. Nevertheless, even in his dying efforts, Clifford manages to spoil Warbeck's hopes for freedom.

The final change from history occurs when, on the eve of his execution, Katherine and Elizabeth of York (Henry's queen, Warbeck's sister) secretly visit Warbeck. It is a touching scene, tactfully handled, and quite necessary to conclude the love story. It is a farewell scene basically and brings the reader's sympathy for Warbeck and Katherine to its climax.

Some details which differ from the historical accounts are

derived from Ford's play. Details such as Frion's character and defection, Katherine's character and her going to Warbeck in the stocks, the foolish natures of Heron and Skelton come from Ford. But there are many deliberate reversals of Ford especially in characterization. John A'Water and Astley are not pictured as fools; instead they are good, honest, hardworking advisors. Perhaps the most surprising change is in the character of Huntley. Rather than being the gruff father who dearly loves his daughter and fears for her happiness, Huntley becomes subject to darker forces. He is ambitious.

> The Earl of Huntley was a man of plain, straightforward, resolved ambition. His head was warm, his heart cold, his purpose one - to advance his house, and himself as the head of it, to as high a situation as the position of subject would permit. (II, 227)

Huntley agrees to the marriage of Katherine and Warbeck because of the prestige and power the match will have for his household when Warbeck becomes king. Reversing Ford's account, Mary Shelley has Huntley willing to enforce the marriage and James, although it is his plan to have the two marry, insisting that Katherine give her consent freely.

> The King, knowing the noble's despotic character, required one condition also on his part, that he should first announce the intended union to the lady, and that it should not have place without her free and entire consent. (II, 235)

The chivalric James is thus kept free of all taint.

III

One of the least satisfying aspects of the novel is the simplistic nature of the narrative. Most characters are static, their natures established at the beginning and unvarying throughout. The events themselves have to carry the interest. Mary Shelley attempts to

give a few characters complexity, but for all but one the result is mere gloss.

James IV is a good example. Mary Shelley introduces her concept of him in the preface.

> James the Fourth of Scotland was a man of great talent and discernment: he was proud; attached, as a Scot, to the prejudices of birth; of punctilious honour. (I, vii)

Instead of being the vain, arrogant, foolish king Ford creates, Mary Shelley's James is an exemplary king -- wise, just and beloved of his people. In an effort to deepen his character Mary gives him a guilt-ridden conscience.

> His father's death, to which he had been an unwilling accessory, weighed like parricide on his conscience. To expiate it, in the spirit of those times, he wore perpetually an iron girdle, augmenting the weight each year, as habit or encreasing strength lighted the former one. (II, 185)

But this trait is imposed on his character, not developed, nor does it play any significant role in the unfolding of the narrative.

A similar case is Frion. Essentially Mary Shelley gives him the same character as Ford's, the only difference being that her Frion is even more cunning and conniving. The complexity in his character comes from his shifting of allegiances. At first he is Henry's tool, later Warbeck's advisor, and still later a sort of freelance spy. Yet he too is not developed but presented -- prepackaged so to speak. The first time he appears the reader is told everything about him.

> What Frion loved beyond all other things was power and craft .... he looked not the man Caesar would have feared, except that his person was rather inclined to leanness, but he was active and well versed in martial exercises, though better in clerkly accomplishments .... he had stores of science and knowledge within, which he seldom displayed, or, when necessary, let appear with all the modesty of one who deemed such acquire-

> ments were of little worth - useful sometimes, but fitter for a servitor than his lord. No words could describe his wiliness, his power of being all things to all men, his flattery, his knowledge of human nature, his unparalleled artifice, which if it could be described, would not have been the perfect thing it was: it was not silken, it was not glossy, but it wound its way unerringly. Could it fail - the rage and vengeance to follow were as certain as dire, for next to love of power, vanity ruled this man; all he did was right and good, other pursuits contemptible and useless. (I, 149-152)

Frion never changes from this established pattern; he shifts because of his vanity.

Henry and Warbeck must be considered together. This is because their two natures are indicative of the overly simplistic, black-and-white approach Mary Shelley assumes. They are total opposites to the point of being complementary. Henry is ignoble, mean, avaricious, unkind to his wife, and cold-hearted. The first description of him -- "When mercy knocks at his heart, suspicion and avarice give her a rough reception." (I, 4) -- says it all. Warbeck, on the other hand, is noble, kind, generous and warm-hearted. There is none of the delicate counter-balancing of sympathies found in Ford. No two men could be more different. Henry is avaricious, gloating over the wealth he will gain by Stanley's execution --

> In addition, he (Stanley) was rich booty - which weighed heavily against him, so that, when Bishop Fox remarked on the villany and extent of his treason, Henry, off his guard, exclaimed - "I am glad of it; the worse the better; none can speak of mercy now, and confiscation is assured." (II, 84)

But Warbeck is generous. Even when he is in danger and fleeing for safety, at the sight of

> a poor fellow, who looked as if he had slept beneath heaven's roof, and had not wherewithal to break his fast, true to the kindly instincts of his nature, Richard felt at his girdle for his purse. (III, 237)

Henry hates his wife -- Warbeck loves his. Henry never shows mercy -- Warbeck does too often. Henry has favourites -- Warbeck friends. Henry is suspicious -- Warbeck open. Henry relies for success on a network of spies and assassins -- Warbeck is helped by the generosity and esteem of the idealised women in the novel.

> in every adversity, women had been his resource and support; their energies, their undying devotion and enthusiasm, were the armour and weapons with which he had defended himself from an attacked fortune. (III, 223-224)

The reader never shifts his sympathies between these two men. Henry is bad -- Warbeck good. There is nothing to admire in Henry; nothing to censure in Warbeck.

It is not until the third volume that either character develops any degree of complexity. When Henry meets Katherine Gordon, he becomes infatuated with her. It is due to Katherine's influence that Henry treats Warbeck so lightly in the first months of his imprisonment. But his true nature quickly reasserts itself.

> For some few days Henry had been so inspired; but love, an exotic in his heart, degenerated from being a fair, fragrant flower, into a wild poisonous weed. Love, whose essence is the excess of sympathy, and consequently of self-abandonment and generosity, when it alights on an unworthy soil, appears there at first in all its native bloom, a very wonder even to the heart in which it has taken root. The cold, selfish, narrow-hearted Richmond was lulled to some slight forgetfulness of self, when first he was fascinated by Katherine, and he decked himself with ill-assorted virtues to merit her approbation. This lasted but a brief interval; the uncongenial clime in which the new plant grew, impregnated it with its own poison. Envy, arrogance, base desire to crush the fallen were his natural propensities; and, when love refused to minister to these, it changed to something like hate in his bosom; it excited his desire to have power over her, if not for her good, then for her bane. (III, 265-266)

Unfortunately, although we see Henry go through these stages, we are

well aware far in advance that there is no real inner conflict. Mary Shelley continually reminds one of Henry's base nature. He is the cardboard figure of the tyrant.

Warbeck also faces an inner struggle but, although Mary Shelley handles this one better, it too is unconvincingly drawn. Early in the third book he realizes that he has no chance of gaining the throne. He discovers that love is of more worth and of more importance than ambition and so gives up his dreams of the crown for Katherine and love. He makes plans to live in exile in Spain. This growth to self-awareness is finely managed, but there is a fundamental problem in its resolution. For Warbeck, honour is still more dear than love. He devises a plan to redeem his honour before his retirement by capturing at least one city and thus forcing Henry to admit his right. Only then

> his word redeemed, his honour avenged, he looked forward to his dear reward: not a sceptre - that was a plaything fit for Henry's hand; but to a life of peace of love; a very eternity of sober, waking bliss, to be passed with her he idolized, in the sunny clime of his regretted Spain. (III, 96-97)

The whole episode is unsatisfactory as it forces the reader to believe that Warbeck is willing to sacrifice three thousand men to his honour. This contradicts earlier characterisations of the Warbeck who shudders at the carnage in Northumbria and demands that it end. It is simply unconvincing. The dilemma is resolved by history and by sleight of hand on Mary Shelley's part -- there never is a battle, the three thousand are not slaughtered for honour; instead Warbeck is taken prisoner and the way prepared for his martyrdom. The whole plan and the intention behind it cease to be central to the characterisation. Nevertheless it lurks in the back of the reader's mind. The struggle between love and

honour is a clumsy and unbelievable mechanism which strains against everything the reader has been told of Warbeck's nature.

The only genuinely complex character in the novel is Sir Robert Clifford. He is one of the story's villains, but unlike Henry he is not all evil. As Warbeck himself implies "Perhaps (he is) rather weak than guilty; erring but not wicked." (II, 71) Clifford is a figure whose roots are in the Gothic romance. Guilt-ridden, tormented by his passions, he is the Byronic hero-villain doomed to damnation. We first see him as a page in the service of Lord Fitzwater.

> He seemed conversant in the world's least holy ways, vain, reckless, and selfish; yet the coarser lines drawn by self-indulgence and youthful sensuality, were redeemed in part by the merry twinkling of his eye, and the ready laugh that played upon his lips. (I, 167)

Here, although a Lancastrian, he helps the young Warbeck escape from the Lancastrians because of their childhood friendship. He explains

> My grandfather was slain by Queen Margaret's side, and stained the Red Rose with a blood-red die, falling in its cause. Your father and his brothers did many a Clifford much wrong, and woe and mourning possessed my house till the time of Lancaster was restored. I cannot grieve therefore for the exaltation of the Earl of Richmond; yet I will not passively see my play-mate mewed up in a cage, nor put in danger of having his head laid on that ungentle pillow in Tower Yard. (I, 177)

Later on he joins Warbeck's party out of infatuation for Monina. He is, however, always haunted by the knowledge he has betrayed his house's Lancastrian allegiance. When he realizes that Monina and Warbeck love one another, his infatuation drives him to envy and hatred. He betrays the Yorkists to Henry. When his treachery is discovered by Warbeck, he is thrown into turmoil. He feels remorse, yet his hate is more powerful.

> For his greater punishment, there clung to this unfortunate man a sense of what he ought to and might have been, and a

> burning consciousness of what he was. Hitherto he had fancied that he loved honour, and had been withheld, as by a hair, from overstepping the demarcation between the merely reprehensible and the disgraceful. The good had blamed him; the reckless wondered at his proficiency in their own bad lessons; but hitherto he had lifted his head haughtily among them, and challenged any man to accuse him of worse, than greater daring, in a career all travelled at a slower and more timed pace.
>
> But that time was gone by. He was now tainted by leprous treachery; his hands were stained by the blood of his deceived confederates; honour disowned him for her son; men looked askance on him as belonging to a Pariah race. (II, 81-82)

Despised by Henry, Clifford works tirelessly to destroy Warbeck, the object of his hate, and to possess Monina, the object of his lust. He steadily degenerates. He foils all plans made for an English uprising. In Scotland he assumes a disguise and tries to assassinate Warbeck. Later he attempts to kidnap him to deliver him over to Henry. It is he who helps devise the ruse that tricks Warbeck into abandoning his camp at Taunton. He ambushes him and captures him. There, seemingly victorious, he is still tormented.

> Clifford was triumphant; he possessed Monina's beloved - the cause of his disgrace, bound, a prisoner and wounded. Why then did pain distort his features, and passion flush his brow? No triumph laughed in his eye, or sat upon his lip. He hated the prince; but he hated and despised himself. He played a dastardly and a villain's part; and shame awaited even success. The notoriety and infamy that attended on him (exaggerated as those things usually are, in his own eyes), made him to fear to meet in the neighbouring villages or towns, any noble cavalier. (III, 137-138)

Rebuked by Warbeck, he flees from the knowledge that Warbeck recognized him as the midnight assassin. He appears yet again, during Warbeck's escape, this time aiding the Yorkists - for a price. He devises a plan to spirit Warbeck out of England. But when the Yorkists, unwilling to trust him, attempt to smuggle Warbeck out on their own, he intervenes, ruins Warbeck's hopes for escape and himself accidentally drowns.

> There he lay, bold Robin Clifford, the dauntless, wily boy, hunted through life by his own fell passions, envy, cupidity, and libertinism; they had tracked him to this death. (III, 267)

The reader feels more pity for Clifford than disgust. He at least possesses a conscience.

Clifford is a villain of the novel. He is the direct cause of many of Warbeck's misfortunes. Henry VII and Frion are also villains. The novel is full of intrigue, deception and betrayal. Ambition is the keyword for action. Counterpoised to ambition is love. Warbeck must choose between the two. Mary Shelley had already treated the same theme in her other historical novel Valperga. The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck reverses the development seen in Valperga. In Valperga Prince Castruccio undergoes a steady course of degeneration from a good man to a power-hungry tyrant. He allows himself to be corrupted by power and becomes inhuman. As a young man he marries his childhood sweetheart, Euthanasia. As Castruccio degenerates, his love gradually turns to hate. He orders the destruction of Euthanasia's beloved castle, Valperga. When he learns Euthanasia has been involved in a plot against him, he sends her into exile on a boat which sinks in a storm. At the end of the novel Castruccio is left empty of feeling, devoured by his ambition. Castruccio reminds the reader of a combination of Henry VII and Clifford. Warbeck undergoes the exact opposite transformation. He turns from ambition in which he was trained --

> From his early childhood he had been nurtured in the idea that it was his first, chief duty to regain his kingdom; his friends lived for that single object; all other occupation was regarded as impertinent or trifling. On the table of his ductile boyish mind, that sole intent was deeply engraved by every hand or circumstance. (III, 182-183)

to the awareness of love and his wife. The process Castruccio undergoes empties his life while the reverse Warbeck goes through fulfills him.

IV

The milieu in which the story is set is the transitional period between the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern era. Historians often conveniently divide the two at the death of Richard III.[16] This is the point where the story begins. Mary Shelley was aware of this division and it is reflected in the novel. There are three worldviews presented: the past through Warbeck, the present (including Mary Shelley's own time) through Henry, and the future through the Cornish rebels. The greater contrast is between the past and present. She distinguishes between the past and present attitudes in comments such as this:

> We must remember that this was the age of chivalry; the spirit of Edward the Third and the princely Dukes of Burgundy yet survived. Louis the Eleventh in France had done much to quench it; it burnt bright again under the auspices of his son. Henry the Seventh was its bitter enemy; but we are still at the beginning of his reign, while war and arms were unextinguished by his cold, avaricious policy. (II, 187)

The historian may disagree with Mary Shelley's overly simplistic analysis of the Middle Ages and the early modern age. Literary critics who use historical analysis will likely reject her deprecation of Henry VII. To many, the mediaeval period is reactionary and unprogressive, while the Renaissance is liberal and constructive. Such a historical approach to the novel is disastrous. Mary Shelley was not a historian and her concerns were not those of the historian. To her, Warbeck is not attempting to restore a stagnant reactionary society; rather he represents a romanticized mediaeval past where knights and ladies share the

common bond of chivalry. On the other hand, Henry VII established the ills of early nineteenth century society: social injustice, poverty hunger and inequality.

Late in the novel Warbeck joins forces with the Cornish rebels. These rebels represent the revolutionary spirit of the future, where the working classes rise up to demand justice.

> The peasantry, scattered and dependant on the nobles, were tranquil, but artificers, such as the miners of Cornwall, who met in numbers, and could ask each other, "why, while there is plenty in the land, should we and our children starve? Why pay our hard earnings into the regal coffers?" and still increasing in boldness, demand at last, "Why should these men govern us?
> 'We are many - they are few!' (III, 98-99)

The refrain from Shelley's "The Mask of Anarchy" vividly illustrates the radical view Mary picked up from Shelley for the future. It has been suggested that Warbeck's joining with such radicalism is a hopeless alliance: nostalgia for a reactionary past and hope for a revolutionary future. Nothing could be farther from the truth. It may be true that for historians such a combination is incongruous; but for Mary Shelley the past and future together are not disharmonious. The inner strength of both chivalry and radicalism is the same: the recognition that men must be free and individual. Accordingly, the two main exemplars of chivalry, Warbeck and James, have a natural rapport with the common people.

The past and future are opposed to the present. The difference between the two opposing forces is their attitudes toward man and his individuality.

> A commercial spirit had sprung up during his (Henry's) reign, partly arising from the progress of civilization, and partly

> from so large a portion of the ancient nobility having perished in the civil wars. The spirit of chivalry, which isolates man, had given place to that of trade, which unites them in bodies. (III, 99)

Commercialism dehumanizes men, while chivalry and radicalism fulfill them.

V

The novel begins in 1485 with the aftermath of the Battle of Bosworth Field. Mary Shelley quickly relates the necessary background material. The reader hears of the Wars of the Roses, of Edward IV, of Richard III's usurpation of Edward V, of the attainder of the Duke of Clarence and the confinement of his son. As the story progresses, the reader learns how Warbeck was removed from the Tower and spirited off to Flanders under an assumed name. He sees the marriage of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York. He hears of the Lambert Simnel rebellion and the battle of Stoke, and learns of the imprisonment of Elizabeth Woodville and the failing hopes of the Yorkist party. Very well handled is the atmosphere of the times -- the blind hatred the White and Red Roses feel for one another which has caused generations of suffering in England.

There is a drawback to starting the story so early. It takes a long time and a roundabout fashion to get to the story of Perkin Warbeck. It is not until page 45 that he even appears and he does not command attention until page 147. Beginning the novel in 1485, although it lets Mary Shelley describe the times, means Warbeck is only eleven years old. He could not be physically or mentally developed enough to pose a realistic threat to Henry. Because he is a child, the focus must remain on others for a long time, namely the Earl of Lincoln, Lord Lovel,

Edmund Plantagenet, Lady Brampton and Elizabeth Woodville. Conveniently enough, when Warbeck achieves a measure of maturity, these five drop out. The Earl of Lincoln and Lord Lovel are killed in battle; Elizabeth Woodville is imprisoned in a convent. Only Lady Brampton and Edmund remain in the story, both set firmly subservient to Warbeck in prominence and emotion.

Although still a child, the character of Warbeck is defined quickly. He is generous, sensitive and confident of his right. He impresses all who meet him. Henry is also characterized from the very beginning. The first words spoken of him are

> "I knew the Earl when a mere youth, Sir Humphrey Stafford," said the foremost rider, "and heard more of him when I visited Brittany at the time of King Louis' death, two years ago. When mercy knocks at his heart, suspicion and avarice give her a rough reception." (I, 4)

Later, when Henry himself appears in the action, Mary Shelley introduces him with a detailed outline of his character.

> Henry the Seventh was a man of strong sense and sound understanding. He was prudent, resolute, and valiant; on the other hand, he was totally devoid of generosity, and was actuated all his life by base and bad passions. At first the ruling feeling of his heart was hatred of the House of York - nor did he wholly give himself up to the avarice that blotted his latter years, till the extinction of that unhappy family satisfied his revenge, so that for want of fuel the flame died away. Most of his relatives and friends had perished in the field or on the scaffold by the hands of the Yorkists - his own existence had been in jeopardy during their exalation; and the continuance of his reign, and even of his life, depended on their utter overthrow. Henry had a mind commesurate to the execution of his plans: he had a talent for seizing, as if instinctively, on all the bearings of a question before him; and a ready perception of the means by which he might obviate difficulties and multiply facilities, was the most prominent part of his character. He never aimed at too much, and felt instantaneously when he had arrived at the enough. More of cruelty would have roused England against him; less would have given greater hopes to the partizans of his secreted rival. He had that exact portion of callousness of heart which enabled him to extricate himself in

the admirable manner he did from all his embarrassments. (I, 50-51)

Neither Warbeck nor Henry change from these early patterns established for them.

The introductory section of the novel also works in the theme of war and its horrific effects. There is a genuine abhorrence of war throughout the novel. War, and the misery and bitterness it brings, has caused England's current woes. People's hate is founded along sectarian lines and it seems that relief will only come through the total exhaustion of one party. Many characters balk at the thought of further violence. Lincoln replies to the urgent demands of Lady Brampton to declare Warbeck king in London

> "it is in our power to deluge the streets of London with blood; to bring massacre among its citizens, and worse disaster on its wives and maidens. I would not buy an eternal crown for myself - I will not strive to place that of England on my kinsman's head - at this cost. We have had over-much of war: I have seen too many of the noble, young, and gallant, fall by the sword. Brute force has had its day; now let us try what policy can do. (I, 41)

Already the background is laid for the Warbeck who will turn from the claims of his right to the needs of the human heart.

The story proper begins midway through the first volume when Warbeck, now fourteen, becomes the focus of the action. The first incident in his story is his near capture by Henry's agent Frion in Flanders. He is rescued by the young Clifford. Aside from introducing Frion and Clifford, this section develops further the reader's compassion for Warbeck. He

> had shot up in height beyond his years, beautiful in his boyhood, and of greater promise for the future. His clear blue laughing eyes - his clustering auburn hair - his cheeks, whose rosy hue contrasted with the milk-white of his brow - his tall and slender but agile person, would have introduced him to notice among a

> crowd of strangers. His very youthful voice was attuned to sweetness. (I, 147)

Mary Shelley often describes Warbeck as an animal. For example:

> The boy was wild as a bird, and so gave to the lure; but, like a bird, he might away without warning, and speed back to his nest ere his wings were well limed. (I, 163)

Later on his character is compared to a bird (190), a hare (193), the quarry (198), and once again a bird (200). The animal imagery is meant to emphasize Warbeck's innocence and relative powerlessness. But it has deadlier associations as well. In each of the cases the animal reference is in the context of the hunt. The imagery clearly demonstrates how vulnerable Warbeck's position and life are with Henry the hunter.

The section concludes with the sudden appearance of Hernan de Faro. Not only does he ensure the escape from Frion will be successful, but his resolve to take his family to his native Spain moves the action to the world in which Warbeck achieves maturity: the Moorish wars of Andalusia and Granada. Spain introduces Edmund and Monina to Warbeck's private circle. Warbeck's physical growth, seen in his developing expertise in warfare, and his emotional growth, seen in his developing love for Monina, transcend Warbeck into manhood and the start of his future career.

Spain also brings close to Warbeck the novel's greatest paradox. On the one hand there is the general loathing of war. Hernan de Faro says

> I cannot behold the dark, blood-stained advances of the invader. I will go - go where man destroys not his brother, where the wild winds and waves are the armies we combat. In a year or two every sword will be sheathed; the peace of conquest will reign over Andalusia. One other voyage; and I return. (I, 210)

The murder of Warbeck's foster mother brings home to the group that

"this was the result of Moorish wars - death and misery." (I, 220) Yet there is a celebration of the pomp and glory of war. 'Warlike enthusiasm' grows in both Warbeck and Edmund. They attract notice on the battlefield. Warbeck learns to pick and choose among the most worthy and valorous opponents. The result is an uneasy alliance, fraught with paradox, which nothing but the resigned acceptance of all characters prevents from destroying the unity of the novel. Warbeck himself responds to both sides equally. He is proud of his martial prowess, but is grief-stricken when faced with personal loss. The roots of his feelings of responsibility for his men are laid back in Spain.

Hernan de Faro suddenly appears again and the story shifts to a new locale: northern Europe. The story is now up to the time of Warbeck's known career; but rather than having him embroiled in European intrigue, Mary Shelley still invents incidents for him. He does visit briefly Ireland, France and Burgundy, but the interest lies in the story-line not the intrigue. Still there are signals that Warbeck's position will depend on the schemes of others. The Prior of Kilmainham

> exchanged with pain a puppet subject to his will, for a man (prince or pretender) who had objects and a state of his own to maintain. (I, 295)

Henry forces Warbeck out of France through treaty. Clues are already dropped that intrigue will become more and more decisive in Warbeck's career and doom.

New characters are introduced and an old one reappears: John A'Water, the Earl of Desmond, the Prior of Kilmainham and Frion. A minor figure who appears in Meiler Trangmar. He is living proof of the devastation the Wars of the Roses produced. Trangmar

> had been a favourite page of Henry the Sixth, he had waited on his son, Edward, Prince of Wales ... he had idolized the heroic and unhappy Queen Margaret ... Meiler Trangmar felt every success of (the Yorkists) as a poisoned arrow in his flesh - he hated them, as a mother may hate the tiger, whose tusks are red with the life-blood of her first-born - he hated them, not with the measured aversion of a warlike foe, but the dark frantic vehemence of a wild beast deprived of its young. He had been the father of three sons; the first had died at Prince Edward's feet, ere he was taken prisoner; another lost his head on the scaffold; the third ... attempted the life of the King - was seized - tortured to discover his accomplices: he was tortured, and the father heard his cries beneath the dread instrument, to which death came as a sweet release. (I, 248-249)

Henry uses Trangmar in an assassination attempt on Warbeck. The incident draws out the specific qualities which make up nobility in Warbeck. He has great rapport with the common people (257). He has courage and leadership in times of danger; in a bad storm he takes control of the ship (261). He has pity for all men, even his enemies; when Trangmar, attempting to murder him, falls overboard Warbeck "horrorstruck, would have leapt in to save his enemy; but the time was gone." (270). He has respect for the lives and property of others; he refuses to seize control of the Lancastrian ship because he tells them he

> will not make lawless acts the stepping stones to my throne .... I myself will persuade your captain to do me all the service I require. (272)

Furthermore, he is pious.

> The Duke of York entered the church - his soul was filled with pious gratitude for his escape from the dangers of the sea, and the craft of his enemies; and, as he knelt, he made a vow to his sainted Patroness, the Virgin, to erect a church on the height which first met his eyes as he approached the shore, and to endow a foundation of Franciscans - partly, because of all monkish orders they chiefly venerate her name, partly to atone for his involuntary crime in the death of Meiler Trangmar who wore that habit. (279-280)

This does not make Warbeck any more complex, it merely fills out the

details of what the reader already knows.

The emphasis is removed from Warbeck for a time so that Mary Shelley can work in the plot of Sir William Stanley. Monina goes in disguise to England, visits the dying Elizabeth Woodville and on her advice begs Stanley to let her visit the Queen. Stanley thus becomes involved by implication with the Yorkist conspiracy.

Stanley is not the only character Monina brings into the story. She encounters Clifford. Clifford becomes more and more emotionally entangled by Monina while she expends her energies on creating support for Warbeck in England. From the beginning, it is a disastrous lust. Monina's sole concern is Warbeck; Clifford feels he has been bewitched. Moreover, he cannot lose the feeling he is being disloyal to his ancestors. When Monina praises him for his support of York, Clifford responds internally with a shudder.

> These words grated somewhat on the ear of a man who had hitherto worn the Red Rose in his cap, and whose ancestors had died for Lancaster. (II, 4)

Nevertheless, Clifford becomes instrumental in the conspiracy, inducing others to join and organizing a party of conspirators. He does this because of his confused feelings for Monina.

> Clifford often flattered himself that when she spoke to him her expressions were more significant, her voice sweeter. He did not love - no, no - his heart could not entertain the effeminate devotion; but if she loved him, could saints in heaven reap higher glory? Prompted by vanity, and by an unvoiced impulse, he watched, hung over her, fed upon her words, and felt that in pleasing her he was for the present repaid for the zeal he manifested for the Duke her friend. (II, 13)

Soon, however, the goodness wears thin; Clifford's base nature asserts itself. Monina's devotion to Warbeck goads Clifford into jealousy. He

determines to gain his revenge.

> a base resolve of lowering the high-hearted York to his own degrading level arose in his breast: it was all chaos in there as yet; but the element, which so lately yielded to a regular master-wind of ambition, was tossed in wild and hideous waves by - we will not call the passion love - by jealousy, envy and growing hate. (II, 27)

Clifford becomes Warbeck's most vehement and deadly foe. It is interesting that personal feelings of self-contempt and envy are the cause, and not the political animosity of the times.

Clifford is sent to Burgundy as part of a delegation the Yorkists in England send to Warbeck. In Burgundy he worms his way into Warbeck's affections, yet all the time suffers anguish. Enticed by promises of reward, he wavers between the two parties, held back back a remaining sense of honour. He

> was amazed, vacillating, terrified. He knew that Henry was far from idle; he was aware that some of the loudest speakers in Richard's favour in Brussels were his hirelings, whom he would not betray, because he half felt himself one among them, though he could not quite prevail on himself to join their ranks. He believed that the King was in eager expectation of his decision in his favour; that nothing could be done till he said the word; he proposed conditions; wished to conceal some names; exempt others from punishment. Messengers passed continually between himself and Bishop Morton, Henry's chief counsellor and friend, and yet he could not determine to be altogether a traitor. (II, 48)

Henry, on the other hand, has no qualms. He is busy at work at his machinations, organizing his network of spies and agents. The reader never sees Henry close up for any extended time until the final volume. This is because he is hardly more than a caricature of a tyrant -- suspicious, cruel and avaricious -- and could not stand up to prolonged scrutiny. His wily plans succeed and he breaks the Yorkist conspiracy.

Clifford undergoes more torment. He becomes involved in another

scheme to abduct Warbeck, but is foiled by the reappearance of Hernan de Faro. Discovered to be a traitor, Clifford is pardoned by Warbeck. This proves to be a mistake. Clifford cannot believe that Warbeck will take no action against him and resolves to betray everything to Henry. He flees to England. On the coast of Burgundy he encounters Monina who now despises him. He tries to abduct her and is only prevented by the timely intervention of de Faro. He manages to reach England before Monina and there incriminates Sir William Stanley.

> At Henry's feet, kneeling before a King who used him as a too, but who hated him as the abettor of his rival, and despised him as the betrayer of his friend, Clifford spoke the fatal word which doomed the confiding Stanley to instant death, himself tc the horrors of conscious guilt, or, what as yet was more bitter to the worldling, relentless outlawry from the society and speech of all, however depraved, who yet termed themselves men of honour. (II, 82-83)

In some respects Stanley's death is Warbeck's fault. He is too generous and not practical-minded enough. His companion, Sir George Neville "somewhat angrily remarked upon the Prince's ill-timed lenity, and spoke bitterly of all the ill Clifford, thus let loose, might do in England." (II, 75) Warbeck's nobility is a severe handicap to his practical competence as a ruler. It is a 'flaw' which recurs throughout his story and ultimately dooms him. But it does not diminish him as a hero. Pragmatism is not a virtue of chivalry.

Henry, on the other hand, has no such handicap. He is totally devoid of generosity. He sentences Stanley to death even though it was Stanley who put him on the throne. He is also devoid of gratitude. Although Clifford's information reveals the traitor to Henry,

> Clifford was dismissed with cold thanks, with promise of pardon and reward, and a haughty command neither to obtrude himself

> again into the royal prescence, nor to depart from London without special leave. (II, 83)

Henry has no redeeming human qualities.

At this point Warbeck begins to change. Up to now he has been little more than a child and has taken a back place to more aggressive figures. Suddenly, fearful for the safety of his beloved Monina, he becomes a dominant figure. He insists on going to England undercover to rouse support for his cause, against the wishes of his friends. From this point onward, Warbeck participates in the action as an adult; he gradually becomes more and more independent and in control of his personal destiny. Ironically, external pressures more and more begin to determine his public career and eventual fate.

Warbeck's first idea for independent action is the attempted rescue of William Stanley from the Tower. This noble gesture, doomed to fail because of history, is a carefree extravaganza. It does little to advance the plot or theme; its chief aim is to delight. The incidents in the escapade -- Warbeck sneaking inside the Tower, discovering himself in his old prison-chamber, unexpectedly finding himself in the presence of the Earl of Warwick, meeting with Stanley, reuniting with Monina, nearly being caught by the Lieutenant of the Tower, being rescued by the Earl of Desmond, later encountering a gypsy band, and finding refuge with Jane Shore -- are handled with brevity and wit. But it is not until later in the novel that some parts become important to the shape of the novel. The near mad ravings of Jane Shore on lust influence Warbeck's attitude to James of Scotland and his mistress which helps to separate the two men. The timid shy Warwick here highlights the new aggressiveness

of Warbeck. Their meeting in the Tower is a reminder to the reader that their fates are intertwined.

The next event is a more mature endeavour and has ramifications for the story and characters. Warbeck participates in the lists held at a wedding in the Surrey family. The episode demonstrates the nobility of Warbeck. The mere sight of him is enough to convince Surrey and the dowager duchess of his truth. The Surrey escapade, however, is most important because it is the first challenge given to Warbeck about the correctness of his actions. Surrey's eloquent plea that the stability of the state must take precedent over personal pride and honour can only be rejected by Warbeck on the grounds of his right.

> "By my fay!" he cried, "thou wouldst teach me to turn spinster, my lord: but oh, cousin Howard! did you know what it is to be an exiled man, dependant on the bounty of others; though your patrimony were but a shepherd's hut on a wild nameless common, you would think it well done to waste life to dispossess the usurper of your right." (II,147-148)

Such reasoning is typical of Warbeck. Mooning over his 'right' is his dominant trait. But does the reader agree with his argument? His condition is a sympathetic one, but so is Surrey's and the majority of readers would ultimately side with the one who proposes peace rather than war. Mary Shelley must have been troubled by the dilemma this presented Warbeck and the reader. Through the character of Frion she offers a justification of his actions.

> When he saw Richard's clear spirit clouded by Lord Surrey, he demonstrated that England could not suffer through him; for that in the battle it was a struggle between partizans ready to lay down their lives in their respective cases so that for their own sakes

> and pleasures, he ought to call on them to make the sacrifice. As to the ruin and misery of the land - he bade him mark the exactions of Henry; the penury of the peasant, drained to his last stiver - this was real wretchedness; devastating the country, and leaving it barren, as if sown with salt. Fertility and plenty would speedily efface the light wound he must inflict - nay, England would be restored to youth, and laugh through all her shores and plains when grasping Tudor was exchanged for the munificent Plantagenet. (II,151)

But Mary undercuts this justification. Frion is an unsavory character. As she herself says "his medium... was one sugared and drugged to please." (II,150-51) Can the reader trust Frion's interpretation? It is a problem which Mary Shelley does not care to resolve and she moves quickly onto the next episode. The reader is left to make his own judgement.

The next incident completely reverses history. Warbeck is in Kent preparing for the Kent invasion. The historians said he was on the Continent at the courts of Margaret of Burgundy and Maximilian of Austria. The change allows Clifford to re-enter the story. He undermines all Frion's efforts and threatens to betray Warbeck to Henry. He has not already done so because of his violent passions for Warbeck and Monina.

> He hated Richard, and loved Monina; his desire to satisfy both these sentiments suggested a project on which he now acted... his offer was simply this: that the Duchess of Burgundy should pay him a thousand golden crowns; that the Spanish maiden Monina should assent to wed him; and that they should seek together the golden isles of the western ocean, leaving the Old World for York to ruffle in. (II,153-54)

Monina refuses and thus sparks a rage in Clifford. He threatens instant betrayal but it proves too late. The invasion fleet arrives off Kent

and before Clifford can inform Henry's authorities, Warbeck and his party have reached the coast, fought their way to the ships and escaped to Ireland.

Aside from action and intrigue the incident is important because it introduces a new character: Astley, a poor scrivener. He is the same historical Astley who appears in Ford, but their natures are very different. Ford's Astley was a bumbling fool; Mary Shelley's is a hardworking, dedicated, enthusiastic man of the utmost integrity. The difference between the two viewpoints reflects the black and white nature of Mary Shelley's novel. Good characters are thoroughly good, often unbelievably so.

In Ireland Warbeck is advised to accept the support of the Scottish king. His decision to go to Scotland brings with it a not very surprising turn of events: the departure of Monina. Because Katherine Gordon, Warbeck's future wife, will appear very shortly on his arrival in Scotland, Monina is no longer needed as a love-interest or feminine point of view. Indeed, she would be an unnecessary block and embarrassment for Warbeck in the upcoming deep love which will soon develop between Warbeck and Katherine. And so Monina departs with her father on the Adalid to the New World and the scene shifts to Scotland.

Mary Shelley first launches into a lengthy introduction to the savage world of Scotland and its capricious king, James IV. From the beginning there are ominous hints that Warbeck's sojourn in Scotland will not be a successful one. James, for all his nobility and grace, has a weakness for women, especially Jane Kennedy. His court contains

spies in Henry's employ. It is the acknowledged intent of the Scots to use Warbeck for their own gain. James and the Scots

> disdained the ignoble arts of peace. England formed the lists where they desired to display their courage; war with England was a word to animate every heart to dreadful joy: in the end it caused the destruction of him and all his chivalry in Flodden Field; now it made him zealous to upraise a disinherited Prince; so that under the idea of restoring the rightful sovereign to the English throne, he might have fair pretext for invading the neighbour kingdom. (II, 187-188)

When Warbeck appears at the Scottish court he immediately impresses the Scots. He and James become fast friends. It seems as if their closeness will be effective guard against the gathering external pressures. Yet trouble is already present. Frion feels displaced and foments discord among the English. Warbeck's enemies at the Scottish council create difficulties for him --

> Some of the counsellors were for making hard conditions with the young Duke, saying, that half a kingdom were gift enough to a Prince Lackland: a golden oppurtunity was this, they averred, to slice away a bonny county or two from wide England; he whom they gifted with the rest could hardly say them nay. But James was indignant at the base proposal, and felt mortified and vexed when obliged to concede in part, and to make conditions which he thought hard with his guest. (II, 216)

Despite the brewing danger, Warbeck still looks secure. He meets Katherine Gordon. They fall in love. Monina's absence allows him to cultivate a friendship with Katherine without overt conflict. James plans for the two to marry, out of a feeling to prove his respect and friendship for Warbeck. Ironically, this gesture which ensures Warbeck's personal happiness helps drive the two men apart. Testing Warbeck's feelings for Katherine, James inadvertently describes his libertine desires for Jane Kennedy. Warbeck's reaction is vehemently negative. He remembers the pathetic Jane Shore too clearly to approve. Henceforth

James and Warbeck are emotionally distanced.

> From that hour James less coveted the Prince's society. He began a little to fear him: not the less did he love and esteem him; and more, far more did he deem him worthy of the honour, the happiness he intended to bestow upon him. (II, 225)

The separation is further strengthened by Katherine's disapproval of James' mistress. However, the separation stems out of personal and emotional reasons and not, as the historians and Ford maintain, astute political maneuvering on Henry's part.

The growing alienation between James and Warbeck also has dire political consequences for Warbeck. Without his constant personal contact with James, he becomes much more vulnerable to attacks by his Scottish enemies. His effort to have James review his relationship with Jane Kennedy also earns him the animosity of that lady who joins with the pro-Henrician forces. Thus, while Scotland brings Warbeck personal fulfillment, it also starts his political decline.

When James arranges the marriage of Katherine and Warbeck, he arouses no resentment in the reader under Mary's handling, for it is a generous offer proportionate to Warbeck's nobility. Furthermore, James, and not Huntley, safeguards against possible enforcement of the marriage against Katherine's will. It also seems a politically wise idea. There is no evidence at this stage that he will not be successful. All in all James handles the situation with prudence. Huntley says

> "But what Scottish lady would your Grace bestow on him whose rank were a match for royalty? There is no Princess of the Stuarts."
>
> "And were there," asked James quickly, "would it beseem us to bestow our sister on a King Lackland?"
>
> "Or would your majesty wait till he were King of England, when France, Burgundy and Spain would compete with you? ... he becomes its sovereign: then it were a pride and glory for us,

> for him a tie to bind him forever, did he place his diadem on the head of a Scottish damsel." (II, 232-233)

James' acumen arouses the reader's praise, not censure.

James springs the news on Warbeck. It is a surprise, an uncomfortable one for Warbeck who modestly feels himself unworthy of her love till he can offer her security. Warbeck, selfless up to the last moment,

> when he saw the Princess, summoned all his discernment to read content or dissatisfaction in her eyes; if any of the latter should appear, even there he would renounce his hopes. All was calm, celestially serene. Nay, something almost of exultation struggled through the placid expression of her features. (II, 250-251)

Up to this point Katherine has been a remote figure. Ideal woman, she has symbolized perfection and virture. From now on she begins to assume a more human shape, yet still idealized. She ensures happiness for Warbeck and transforms his circle of friends into a paradise. (254)

But trouble lies ahead. The Tudor party and Jane Kennedy unite to overpower Warbeck. Frion, feeling rejected, joins their ranks so he can betray them and regain his position. Meanwhile, things seem advantageous for Warbeck. He has found true personal fulfillment and it seems that his political fortunes are on the upswing: news reaches the Scottish court of the Cornish rebellion.

Amidst this news the reader learns of the re-appearance of Monina in Cornwall. It is now safe for her to return. She and Warbeck do not yet meet. Warbeck has earned the kingship of the heart and become "the sole monarch of Katherine". (268) Monina is now loved as a sister; she is no longer a threatening love-conflict. Indeed she welcomes the news of his marriage because it recognizes

his proper status.

The war begins shortly. Mary Shelley disdains to treat solely of the war and adds intrigue. The machinations of the pro-Henry party come to a head. The wretched Clifford, disguised as Wiatt, returns and attempts to assassinate Warbeck at night. Lord Bothwell, a participant in the plot, is apprehended and pardoned by Warbeck. This is another example of reckless mercy. Born out of his nobility, it glorifies his character, not faults it.

The intrigue is only a minor tumult compared to the inner struggle the Scottish invasion brings Warbeck. Admist the growing realization that his political position in Scotland is waning, he begins to recognize the conflict of his actions.

> The pride of a son of England rose in his breast, when he beheld the haughty Scot caracol in arrogant triumph on her soil. What was he? What had he done? He was born king and father of this realm: because he was despoiled of his high rights, was he to abjure his natural duty to her, as a child? Yet here he was an invader; not arming one divison of her sons against the other, but girt with foreigners, aided by the ancient ravagers of her smiling villages and plenteous harvests. (II, 296)

The conflict grows into open struggle with the news that the Cornish rebellion has been crushed and that James has ordered the English countryside to be ravaged. Warbeck is forced to see the consequences of his ambition. The authorial voice rejects Warbeck's 'right' as a valid justification.

> Richard would have stood erect and challenged the world to accuse him - God and his right was his defence. His right! Oh, narrow and selfish was that sentiment that could see, in any right appertaining to one man the excuse for the misery of thousands. (II, 299)

The horror and misery of war deeply affect the English party. Warbeck

is made to realize he has lost to Henry through his own ambition.

> Where were the troops of friends Richard had hoped would hail him? Where were the ancient Yorkists? Gone to augment the army which Surrey was bringing against the Scot; attached to these ill-omened allies how could the Prince hope to be met by his partizans? He had lost them all; the first North Briton who crossed the Tweed trampled on and destroyed for ever the fallen White Rose. (II, 301-302)

The reaction of the English party is vehement. They take the only logical and loyal course for an Englishman: they turn on the Scots, forcing them to spare the English countryside. Then Warbeck rushes to James to demand an end to the carnage.

Warbeck's plea to James is not a weak act, but an admirable one, a clear demonstration of his empathy for the common people. James, however, does not react in his favour. The reader gets the distinct impression that guilt-feelings on James' part are responsible. When Warbeck bursts in on James, he is meeting with the Spanish ambassador D'Ayala (Ford's Hialas) discussing terms with Henry. James' harsh response is at least in part covering up his own apparent betrayal of Warbeck. A retreat is ordered. James attempts to mollify Warbeck's feelings, but Warbeck is too hurt and confused to respond. Instead he writes to Katherine pleading his case.

> I fondly thought that mine was no vulgar ambition. I desired the good of others; the raising up and prosperity of my country. I saw my father's realm sold to a huckster - his subjects the victims of low-souled avarice. What more apparent duty than to redeem his crown from Jew-hearted Tudor, and to set the bright jewels, pure and sparkling as when they graced his brow, on the head of his only son? Even now I think the day will come when I shall repair the losses of this sad hour. (II, 316)

Warbeck is almost ready to give up ambition for love, but not quite. Duty and honour force him to maintain his course. He feels

> I am richer than Tudor, and but that thy husband must leave no questioned name, I would sign a bond with Fate - let him take England, give me Katherine. But a Prince may not palter with the holy seal God affixes to him - nor one espoused to thee be less than King. (II, 317)

It is the belief which will cost him his life.

The end comes quickly for Warbeck's career in Scotland.

> Richard's northern star was set, and but for this fair star he had been left darkling. When the English general in his turn crossed the Tweed, and ravaged Scotland, he was looked on by its inhabitants as the cause of their disasters; and, but that some loving friends were still true to him, he had been deserted in the land which so lately was a temple of refuge to him. (II, 319)

James is forced to give in to Henry. Warbeck must leave Scotland. But James feels so much remorse for his forced action that the reader does not recriminate him. The anger is directed only at Henry and his allies.

For a moment things seem in good form for Warbeck. The Prior of Kilmainham reappears with assurances of support in Ireland. A message from the English army arrives offering to fight on Warbeck's behalf once he has thrown off Scottish support. But Huntley reveals the latter plan to be an artifice of Frion to deliver Warbeck up to Henry. The exposed Frion is about to be hanged, but once again Warbeck is merciful. It is seconded by Katherine which dissipates the foolishness of the deed. It proves to have dire consequences, however. Frion lives to plot against him with vehemence.

The political intrigue becomes second to the developing love between Warbeck and Katherine. Katherine insists on sharing Warbeck's trials with him. She vows to accompany him. She becomes Warbeck's emotional support. But she is still a remote figure - too selfless and pure, too devoted to be real. Her function in this part of the novel is

to guide Warbeck to the self-knowledge that love is more important than power. She and Nature achieve this. On the voyage to Ireland

> Richard, marked for misery and defeat, acknowledged that power which sentiment possesses to exalt us - to convince us that our minds, endowed with a soaring restless aspiration, can find no repose on earth except in love. (III, 25)

Mary Shelley spoils the effect by handling the scene in a sickeningly romanticized fashion.

Ireland brings the return of John A'Water. It also marks the definite end of Warbeck's political viability. The Irish plot to use him to gain independence from England, knowing that "this springal, valourous though he be, can never upset Tudor's throne in London." (III, 30) Warbeck remains optimistic, but the realistic Katherine knows and prepares the reader for the fact that Warbeck will fail. Regarding the siege of Waterford,

> Katherine, accustomed to the sight of armies, and to the companionship of chiefs and rulers, detected at once the small chance there was, that these men could bring to terms a strongly fortified city; but resignation supplied the place of hope; she believed that Richard would be spared; and, but for his own sake, she cared little whether a remote home in Ireland, or a palace in England received them. (III, 34-35)

Warbeck himself slowly begins to accept the inevitable. He remarks to Edmund

> "Cousin, I must have some part of my inheritance: my kingdom I shall never gain - glory - a deathless name - oh, must not these belong to him who possesses Katherine? The proud Scots, who looked askance at my nuptials, shall avow at least that she wedded no craven-hearted loon." (III, 39)

But he still wavers between love and ambition. He still feels he has a final chance. When Hernan de Faro appears and rescues Warbeck from the siege of Waterford, he brings the news that Monina is in Cornwall,

beginning the final stage of his career full of optimism. Katherine, however, presents the reader with reality, although tempered with sentimentality.

> Circumstances had an exactly contrary effect on Katherine. The continual change of schemes convinced her of the futility of all. She felt that, if the first appearance of the Duke of York, acknowledged and upheld by various sovereigns and dear highborn relatives, had not animated the party of the White Rose in his favour, it was not now, after many defeats and humiliations on his side, and after triumphs and arrogant assumptions on that of his enemy, that brilliant success could be expected. This conviction must soom become general among the Yorkists, Richard would learn the sad lesson, but she was there to deprive it of its sting; to prove to him, that tranquility and Katherine were of more worth than struggles, even if they proved successful, for vain power. (III, 59)

The reader knows there is no hope for Warbeck.

Despite Monina's enthusiasm, it becomes painfully obvious in Cornwall that the rebellion is doomed to fail. The rebel army is ill-equipped and leaderless. Heron and Skelton, who are introduced here, are as low as they were in Ford, in proportion to Warbeck's diminished status. Mary Shelley counterbalances the gloom with humour in the antics of the Cornish rebels and with a love which seems to be developing between Edmund and Monina (but never goes anywhere). As the story moves to the time where the military action is finished, love begins to play an all dominant role.

There are hints that Warbeck is coming to a decision. He refuses to wait for re-enforcements from Ireland. He makes the cryptic remark

> I have a secret purpose, I confess, in all I do. To accomplish it - and I do believe it to be a just one - I must strike one blow; no fail. Tudor is yet unprepared; Exeter vacant of garrison; with stout hearts for the work, I trust to be able to seize that city. There the wars of York shall end ... Will you help me so far, dear friends - so far hazard life - not to conquer a kingdom for Richard, but to redeem his honour? (III, 83-84)

The culmination comes in the confrontation between Katherine and Warbeck. Katherine

> saw the bare reality; some three thousand poor peasants and mechanics, whose swords were more apt to cut themselves than strike the enemy, were arrayed against the whole power and majesty of England. (III, 85-86)

She pleads with Warbeck that the cares and pomp of power and ambition are not as valuable as the personal happiness and fulfillment to be found in love. In doing so she works through the essence of the theme of the novel: Love's superiority over Ambition. She crowns Warbeck as a King of hearts, saying "our best kingdom is each other's hearts; our dearest power that which each, without let or envy, exercises over the other." (III, 89) Yet Warbeck has already reached his decision: he will give up his attempts to gain the crown but first must regain his honour. Warbeck's acceptance of the superiority of the heart marks the thematic climax of the novel. Unfortunately, the historical action is not yet complete, and so he goes to Exeter, then Taunton, and ultimately to the hangman's scaffold. Warbeck's honour destroys his physical existence, yet fulfills him as a romantic hero. The reader, nevertheless, wonders with Katherine if it is worth it.

The story turns briefly to Henry and re-iterates his cruelty. When the action turns back to Warbeck it is before Exeter. Edmund is wounded; Warbeck realizes Exeter is too strong to take; he orders his men to go on to Taunton. Meanwhile, Frion and Clifford reappear and prepare a trap to ruin Warbeck.

At Taunton Warbeck faces a crisis. He becomes more mature. He must decide what to do completely on his own. He

> had not one noble-born partizan near him: not one of his ancient counsellors, to whom he had been used to defer, remained; he was absolutely alone; the sense of right and justice in his own heart was all he possessed, to be a beacon-light in this awful hour, when thousands depended upon his word - yet had he power to save? (III, 124-125)

Warbeck's feelings of responsibility for his followers' welfare come to the point where he knows he cannot go through with his plans to attack Taunton.

> His resolve to encounter his foe, bringing the unarmed against these iron-suited warriors, grew in his eyes into pre-meditated murder. (III, 123)

He accepts the incongruity of his actions, but still does not give up on his resolve to vindicate his honour. Thus, when Clifford's and Frion's plan takes action and news is sent to Warbeck that German mercenaries await him, Warbeck jumps at the chance to bolster his forces and so hopefully to force Henry to credit his honour. He leaves his camp, not out of cowardice or despair, but on a mission to ensure his nobility and the safety of his men.

Unfortunately, it is useless. The mercenaries were a false story to get Warbeck alone. He and his followers are ambushed and taken prisoner by Clifford. The time Warbeck needs to work on Clifford's conscience so that they can escape, uses up the precious time he needed to return to his camp. They become lost in the woods, are nearly captured and finally seek sanctuary at Beaulieu. Warbeck plans to give himself up for the lives of his men to redeem his honour. He is thwarted by ill luck and sickness. By the time he recovers from his fever Henry has pardoned the rebels. Warbeck's gesture, made without knowing the circumstances, is thus worthless.

An important change begins when Mary Shelley turns her focus to Katherine. Katherine, once the remote goddess-like figure, begins to take over the center of the story. It is a logical move on Mary Shelley's part. With two more years left in the story where Warbeck is usually incapacitated in an aggressive role, she needs an alternate central sympathetic figure. Unfortunately, Katherine herself is an uninteresting, stiff character. Even more than Warbeck she is a static figure laden with every virtue of womanhood, devoid of every vice. She is unable to experience internal conflict. Moreover, Katherine severely undermines Warbeck. When Warbeck gives his freedom up voluntarily, hoping to save the lives of his men and to prove he is not a coward, actions which the reader applauds for their nobility, but realizes are futile, Katherine suffers because of him. The reader sees her taken prisoner, sees her at the English court with Elizabeth, sees her entreating Henry for Warbeck's person. The reader watches as she slowly comes to realize how cruel and vicious Henry is. We sympathize with Warbeck, but we sympathize more with Katherine. Because of Katherine the reader tends to look upon Warbeck's actions as foolish and self-indulgent -- attitudes hardly conducive to convincing the reader of his heroic stature.

Momentarily, the focus reverts to Warbeck. He escapes confinement, re-unites with Monina, nearly manages to escape England on the Adalid, but is prevented at the last moment by the malice of Clifford. The two clash, struggle and fall overboard. Clifford drowns -- the wages of sin is death -- Warbeck survives only to be taken prisoner again at Shene. The interest in the episode is three-fold. There is Clifford. We

see the final convolution of his loyalties and the pathetic, though fitting, end of this man who in his life drowned in a sea of vice. There is the celebration of freedom and liberty in Warbeck's feelings. There is the sadness of farewell. As Warbeck and Monina embark for the Adalid in hopeful security,

> At that moment of triumph, something like sadness invaded Richard: he had quitted the land for which his friends had bled, and he had suffered, - forever: he had left his Katherine there, where all was arrayed against him for his destruction. This was safety: but it was the overthrow of every childish dream, every youthful vision; it put the seal of ineffectual nothingness on his every manhood's act. (III, 249)

Combined together, the three elements make up some of the best chapters in the novel.

In the next chapters Katherine reasserts her dominance. A clear example of the change is Mary Shelley's handling of the stocks episode. It is Katherine who fights her way to Warbeck. The scene and action are described from her point of view. She controls the tone; when Warbeck appears willing to declare himself an impostor, she encourages him to remain steadfast. Warbeck is ill and passive by necessity; she is aggressive. It is Katherine, and not Warbeck, who dominates this scene.

After this, Katherine still remains in the center. We hear that Warbeck has been sent to the Tower, but first we see Katherine's grief. Katherine arranges for Edmund to seek out support in Scotland. The result is overdone sentimentality.

The story returns to Warbeck. In the Tower he meets again his cousin the Earl of Warwick. We already know Henry's ulterior motive in not executing Warbeck for his escape attempt. Warbeck

> was not to die- but rather to pine out a miserable existence -

> or had the safe monarch any other scheme? The high-spirited Prince was to be cooped up within the Tower - there, where the Earl of Warwick wasted his life. Did he imagine that the resolved and ardent soul of Richard would, on its revival, communicate a part of its energy to the son of Clarence, and that ere long they would be enveloped in one ruin? (III, 272)

The remaining story is quickly told. Warbeck and Warwick meet, plan an escape, are betrayed by their co-conspirators and condemned to death. The interesting thing is the turnaround in Warbeck. Before he was the optimist, disregarding the reality of his situation. Now Warwick assumes that role and Warbeck becomes the realist, knowing very well that their plan is liable to fail. He persists because death and hope are preferable to a mere vegetable existence. In addition, Warbeck takes on the role of parent.

> There was a caressing sweetness in Warwick's voice and manner; an ignorant, indolent confiding enthusiasm, so unlike quick-witted Clifford, or any of Duke Richard's former friends, that he felt a new emotion towards him - hitherto he had been the protected, served and waited on, of his associates, now he played the protector and the guardian. (III, 298)

After their plot is discovered, there is only one possible way left for Warbeck to develop. He turns to religion and prepares for death.

> There was but one refuge from this battle of youth and life with the grim skeleton. With a strong effort he endeavoured to turn his attention from earth, its victor woes and still more tyrant joys, to the heaven where alone his future lay. The struggle was difficult, but he effected it; prayer brought resignation, calm; so when his soul, still linked to his mortal frame, and slave to its instincts, again returned to earth, it was with milder wishes and subdued regrets. (III, 313)

Except for his final defiance of Henry at his trial, where he asserts his truth, Warbeck's life is complete. His victory is self-constancy, his crown love.

The last scenes are in Katherine's point of view. Henry is seen

as being as cruel as ever, masking his evil intentions with state care, mercy and justice. He tells Katherine

> "if I consent, for the welfare of my kingdom, to sacrifice the Queen's nearest relative, you also must resign yourself to a necessity from which there is no appeal. Hereafter you will perceive that you gain instead of losing, by an act of justice which you passionately call cruelty: it is mercy, heaven's mercy doubtless, that breaks the link between a royal princess and a baseborn impostor." (III, 319-320)

Later Mary Shelley imposes her own interpretation of events and motive.

> It became known that the Princes were to be arraigned for treason: first the unhappy, misnamed Perkin was tried, by the common courts, in Westminster Hall. When a despot gives up the execution of his revenge to the course of law, it is only **because** he wishes to get rid of **passing** the sentence of death upon his single authority, and to make the dread voice of mis-named justice, and its executors, the abettors of his crime. (III, 321)

Katherine commands our attention. The touching farewell scene, when Katherine and Elizabeth visit Warbeck the eve before his execution, excites our pity. Mary Shelley goes one better than Ford, as she has two beautiful young women part from him. In recognition that Katherine is the survivor of the story, the focus remains on her and not Warbeck. When the ladies depart, the scene goes with them. The heavy prison door shuts on Warbeck's doom. The reader is left to imagine the actual execution.

The concluding chapter takes place a few years after Warbeck's death. It has a technical function. It finishes off details. The reader learns of the fates of Edmund Plantagenet, Monina and Hernan de Faro. The chief interest in the conclusion is the emphasis given to Katherine's justification of her life at the English court. In a footnote, Mary Shelley, disturbed by harsh criticism of her own widowed life, excuses the inclusion of this chapter. She writes

> I do not know how far these concluding pages may be deemed superfluous: the character of Lady Katherine Gordon is a favourite of mine, and yet many will be inclined to censure her abode in Henry the Seventh's court, and other acts of her after life. I desired therefore that she should speak for herself, and show how her conduct, subsequent to her husband's death, was in accordance with the devotion and fidelity with which she attended his fortunes during his life. (III, 339, n. 1)

The extent of her self-identification with Katherine is obvious.

The last chapter is noted for its overdone sentimentality. Edmund accuses Katherine of betraying Warbeck's memory. This is the only time she faces any conflict. Katherine defends herself, saying that it is her nature to love. It may be true that the pages drool with sentiment, but in a novel where love is the highest good, only love could pardon her.

Notes

[1] Mary first mentions the novel in a letter to John Murray dated 19 Feb., 1828. See The Letters of Mary W. Shelley vol.1, (Norman, 1944-46)

[2] In a letter to John Murray dated 20 Aug., 1828 she mentions the historians Thomas Leland (The History of Ireland, from the Invasion of Henry II, with a Preliminary Discourse on the Antient State of that Kingdom 1773) and Les Memoires de Philipe de Comines (1524).

[3] In a letter dated Sept. 10, 1828 she asks Murray to send her topographic plates of Andalusia.

[4] Shelley and Mary, IV, p. 1106, C.

[5] In a letter dated 25 May, 1829 Mary wrote Walter Scott, asking for his advice on the court of James IV.

[6] [6] In a letter to the Anglo-Irish antiquarian Thomas Crofton Croker (1798-1851) dated Nov. 4, 1829 she writes "I am afraid that you will think that I have troubled you to very little purpose since there must be so little about Ireland. I had written altogether enough for five vols. and am cutting down to three - so everything is abridged." See Gareth W. Dunleavy's article "Two New Mary Shelley Letters and the 'Irish' Chapters of Perkin Warbeck", Keats-Shelley Journal, XIII (1964), 8.

[7] P. B. Shelley, Poetical Works (Oxford, 1970), p. 35.

[8] In the letter to John Murray of 19 Feb., 1828 she thanks him for a copy of Gifford's 1827 edition of Ford's plays.

[9] In letters dated Jan. 20 and Jan. 25, 1830 Mary complains to Murray that she received a Bill for £150 and not a cheque.

[10] see for instance Safaa El-Shater, The Novels of Mary Shelley (Salzburg, 1977), p. 119.

[11] Muriel Spark, Child of Light (Hadleigh, 1952), p. 175.

[12] Peter Ure, p. xlvii.

[13] Safaa El-Shater, p. 126.

[14]William Walling, Mary Shelley (New York, 1972), p. 104.

[15]Bacon, p. 104.

[16]see Gairdner, p. 257.

CONCLUSION

There are surprisingly few similarities between Ford's play and Mary Shelley's novel, especially considering that the novel used the play as a source. The only sustained borrowings are the character of Katherine Gordon and the emphasis placed on Warbeck's personal life in his relationship with Katherine. The purpose of both of these is the same in both authors: they elevate the character of Perkin Warbeck.

The differences are by far more numerous and of more import. Some of the differences can be attributed to the fact that Ford wrote a drama and Mary Shelley a novel. A play is limited to a reasonable stage-time in length. Ford could only allude to many actions and had to pick and choose the highlights of Warbeck's career. A novel, however, has no limitation to its length. Mary Shelley could and did provide a complete chronological study of Warbeck's life from the age of eleven. Ford has the advantage here as he can manage the shape of events by transposing and omitting material with more freedom than Mary Shelley. This does not mean that she could not have done the same as Ford; rather she did not exercise the same selective process, choosing instead the easier, but often clumsier, method of telling all. The result is that her novel is often bogged down by detail; while Ford's play moves at a swift pace.

Other differences relate to the different genres of the two works. Ford's play is a historical tragedy, Mary Shelley's a historical romance. The romance genre allows the intrusion of typical Gothic

appendages -- wandering bands of gypsies, wild storms, hermits, poverty-stricken peasants, shelters found when most needed -- at the expense of character development. The tragic genre demands strong characterisation and pyschological complexity.

The degree to which they depend on the reader to know something of the historical period and events also separates the two. The difference here is time. Ford's audience was almost contemporary to the action. It was recent history. Mary Shelley's reader, removed by more than three centuries, was much less likely to know anything about the times or the subject. Ford had to contend with an informed audience; Mary Shelley could count on the reader's ignorance. Moreover, a knowledge of historical fact would only confuse the reader of Mary Shelley's novel. The less one knows, the more receptive one will be to the plot's distortions. Ford is different. The opening scenes of the play depend on the audience responding to Warbeck in the negative manner the historians adopted. Although the first scenes are quite able to generate such a response on their own, a foreknowledge of the historians would fill in the background of events alluded to and guarantee the proper frame of mind. Thus the historians are a helpful, but not vital, implement for appreciating the play.

The approaches of the two authors to their material are different. Mary Shelley adopts a simplistic, black-and-white approach. Her novel has heroes and villains, fair ladies and chivalrous knights all, with the exception of Clifford, neatly categorized. The unfortunate consequences of this approach are that it limits character development and reduces suspense. The continual reminders that the noble Warbeck is

doomed to suffer ignominy and death at the hands of the tyrannical Henry VII destroys any uncertainty, even for the completely ignorant reader, as to the story's outcome. Without character development there is no sustaining interest except for the unraveling of the plot. The result is a not very interesting story.

Ford takes an ambivalent stand. No one character is evil enough to be called a villain, but every character possesses disturbing traits. Ford's people are convincing humans, not like the stiff, cardboard caricatures of Mary Shelley. The different handling of the two authors can most clearly be seen in their management of the characters of Henry VII and Perkin Warbeck. Ford's point of view vacillates between Henry and Warbeck. He portrays both men sympathetically -- admiring them for the qualities they have which make them great, yet pitying them for the qualities they lack. The result is that the audience is undecided between the two men and the two separate worlds they represent. What the correct response is, Ford leaves uncertain. The exterior conflict on the stage becomes an interior conflict in the viewer.

The reader of Mary Shelley's novel is never uncertain how to respond to a character or situation. One is expected to sympathize with Warbeck, even in the few times when the authorial voice informs us that he is doing wrong. Conversely, it would be impossible to sympathize with Henry. Not only is he the stereotyped tyrant devoid of all human sensibilities, but also he is so rarely the focus of the story that he seems more of an abstracted spirit of evil than human.

An interesting difference in the characters of the two Warbecks is their own sense of why they have claimed the English throne. A

dominant trait of Mary Shelley's Warbeck is his constant lamenting over his fallen fortunes. It is the sense of need to restore his right (in a specialized meaning of this his honour) which forces him to confront Henry and ultimately kills him. On the other hand, Ford's audience never really gets a grasp of why Warbeck is doing what he is. We are merely presented with the fact that he is doing it. He does not linger over his misfortunes or loss of right. The Duchess of Crawford makes a candid remark when she notes on his first appearance that "his fortunes move not him." (II, i, 117) Of course the speculation that he is after political power or that other people are using him for their own profit, are likely explanations. But we never see evidence of external forces operating Warbeck and political ambitions seem strangely out of tune with his unworldly nature. Again Ford remains steadfastly ambiguous over an issue which could only cloud his main concern.

The heart of Ford's play is the theme of man and society. In it Ford explores the relationship of an individual to the community he lives in. The theme assumes several forms. Through the characters of Warbeck, Henry and James he examines the nature of kingship -- its powers, privileges and responsibilities -- and how the ruler of a nation should relate, ideally and practically, to the people he governs. Likewise, Ford considers how the individual relates to the state. In addition, Ford studies appearances and how they affect our lives and conceptions of society. He is primarily concerned with social and political issues. He takes an impartial stance. The merits and defects of the state he counterpoints to the merits and defects of individualism. Ford could almost be accused of perverse ambivalence. He never makes

explicit his own feelings; rather he presents the issues for the audience's consideration.

Mary Shelley likewise has a central theme: love is superior to ambition. The two themes vividly demonstrate the fundamental gulf between the worlds of the two authors. Mary Shelley's world is private and domestic; Ford's social and political. Unfortunately for Mary Shelley, social concerns intrude into the novel and wreak havoc. Themes such as war, class structure, political pragmatism, and man and society exist in embryonic form. They are there, but not developed into any settled shape. Mary Shelley rejects pragmatism through Henry, encourages radical civil disobedience through the Cornish rebels, yet praises the social stability wrought by Henry. She feels revulsed by war through Hernan de Faro, glorifies war through Warbeck and Edmund, puts personal virtues above the commonwealth, yet deplores the misery that concern for honour can cause others. The reader is totally confused. Ford does a similar thing in presenting both viewpoints, but with an all-important difference: he presents an impartial look at the issues. Mary Shelley judges each issue, yet seems not to have thought out how her judgements inter-relate. Thus the sub-themes clash irreconcilably and severely undermine the story.

The fate of these two works is shown by their critical esteem. John Ford's play is more or less successful -- not often performed, yet given critical approbation. Mary Shelley's novel, however, has sunk into oblivion. The technical merits and flaws of both works are partially responsible for these fates. Ford's play is well-organized, well-handled and sophisticated. Mary Shelley's novel has more things which weaken

than support it. The comparative relevance of the two also helps determine their fates. Perkin Warbeck deals with problems of importance in Ford's day -- kingship and roles of the individual and state. These themes are of enduring interest. Although kings may have little power in our own times, the nature of leadership, whether the leader be a king, a dictator, or a democratically elected head, will always be of crucial interest. Likewise, how the individual relates to society will always be a relevant issue. Thus Ford's play is assured of continued pertinence.

The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck is a different case. It is meant to be light entertainment. It has a main message -- love is supreme -- but it is pat and trite. The sub-themes, which could have been developed and expanded, clash hopelessly. Overall it is a prime example of pulp literature intended for the comfortable and bored middle-class reader. It is interesting enough to be got through; yet so bland that it could have no enduring relevance or success.

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