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"Reshaping History: The Audience's Role in Shakespeare's Richard III"

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"Reshaping History: The Audience's Role in Shakespeare's *Richard III*"

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by

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Introduction

On August 25, 2012, the University of Leicester Archaeological Services found skeletal remains under a parking lot in Greyfriars Leicester. Six months later, on February 4, 2013,[1] these skeletal remains were confirmed beyond reasonable doubt to be that of England's most controversial king, Richard III. This discovery came as a result of Philippa Langley, a member of the Richard III society, approaching the University of Leicester Archaeological Services to conduct an archaeological exploration of the Greyfriars site in March of 2011. The interest in this proposal was sparked by University of Leicester's Tutor David Baldwin's 1986, paper, "King Richard's Grave in Leicester,"[2] in which he suggested that the king's unmarked remains were buried in Leicester. Baldwin denounced previous legends that claimed Richard's body was destroyed by an angry mob after his death and thrown into the Soar river.

King Richard is currently engaged in a posthumous battle. Who owns King Richard's body? Where should Richard III's remains be buried? York or Leicester? Distant relatives of the late king want him to be buried in North Yorkshire, a place they claim he called home. However, the University of Leicester wants the late king to be reinterred at Leicester cathedral.[3] Who will win the battle over Richard's remains? The case is currently under judicial review in London, and a verdict is

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1. John F. Burns, "Bones Under Parking Lot Belonged to Richard III," The New York Times, last modified February
2. "The Discovery of Richard III," University of Leicester, accessed November 28, 2013, http://www.le.ac.uk/richardiii/index.html.
3. Bryony Jones, "Body found under parking lot is King Richard III, scientists prove," CNN, last modified February 5, 2013, accessed November 28, 2013, http://www.cnn.com/2013/02/03/world/europe/richard-iii-search-announcement/.

expected by the end of the year. Richard is promised to have a re-interment that is befitting of a king this time around.

King Richard III died on August 22, 1485 at Bosworth Field in a battle against Henry VII, putting an end to the Plantagenet dynasty and the War of the Roses. Richard was thirty-two at his time of death, and he was the last English king who died in a battle. Despite his short twenty-two month reign over England, Richard III's kingship remains one of the most popular, and he has been the source of many legends. Shakespeare's play, *King Richard III*, is responsible for the popularization of many of the legends concerning the king. However, the discovery of king Richard's skeleton, 527 years after he was buried, offers insight into one of the most popular legends about the king: was Richard really the withered arm, hunchback as Shakespeare describes him in his play? Richard's skeleton shows a defined curvature in his spine; however, his infamous hunchback has now been reclassified as scoliosis, which made his right shoulder noticeably higher than his left, and there are no signs of a withered arm.[4] There are many supporters of Richard III who are angry with Shakespeare for portraying the king as a deformed maniac in his play. Many of these supporters are active members of "The Richard III Society," a group that strives to reclaim Richard's image from the English Bard. Now they can finally do so, at least partially. However, Shakespeare's legend that began over 400 years ago is still the story of the king that is being told today. This is the story that many people accept as the king's true legacy, and king Richard III has become Shakespeare's Richard III over the last four centuries. However, we must now

4. "The Discovery of Richard," University of Leicester.

uncover the real story of Richard III based on the new evidence we have about the king's actual life.

Richard III is the second longest of Shakespeare's plays. If performed in its entirety, which is rarely done, it has a run-time of over three hours,[5] which is second only to Hamlet. The Royal Shakespeare Company cites the year 1592-3 as the play's written date, following the Henry VI trilogy, and the Arden Shakespeare cities the play as being written in 1591.[6] *Richard III* is a difficult play to perform because it has 52 speaking parts, and three mute parts. However, the play was very popular. New editions of the play were published in 1598, 1602, 1605, 1612, 1622, 1629, and 1634.[7] Six quartos of the play appeared before the folio of 1623.[8] One can imagine the play's popularity based on the amount of times that it was reprinted, and also because of the frequent allusions to the work by other authors such as Meres, and John Manningham in his diary.[9] The play was first entered in the Stationers' Register by Andrew Wise on 20 October 1597.[10] There are a lot of discrepancies surrounding when the play was first performed; however, the first notable performance, occurred on November 16, 1633 for Queen Henrietta Maria's birthday.[11]

Colley Cibber's adaptation of the play in the year 1700 became the version of the play that was mostly performed until the nineteenth century.[12] Cibber's version

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5. "Richard in Performance," introduction to *King Richard III*, ed. Antony Hamilton, 2nd ed. (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1981), 66.
6. "Richard in Performance," introduction to *King Richard III*, 61.
7. "Richard in Performance," 61.
8. Roy E. Aycock, "Dual Progression in Richard III," *South Atlantic Bulletin* 38, no. 4 (1973): 75, accessed September 3, 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3197086.
9. "Richard in Performance," introduction to *King Richard III*, 67.
10. "Richard in Performance," 61.
11. William Shakespeare, *Richard III*, ed. John Jowett (n.p.: Oxford University Press, 2008).
12. Cynthia M. SoRelle, "A Stage History of the Tragedy of Richard The Third," McLennan Theatre, accessed November 28, 2013, http://www.mclennan.edu/departments/a&s/dram/dram_notes/richardiii/history.php.

is shorter than Shakespeare's, and his Richard has a greater dominance within the play; he has forty percent of the play's total lines in comparison to the thirty-one percent in Shakespeare's original.[13] Richard III has been a very popular character for actors. Actors appear to pursue this role to mark their debuts in the theatric world. Actors who played Richard III in the nineteenth century include William Frederick Cooke, Edmund Kean, Richard Burbage, Henry Irving, and Frank Benson. Richard III has also experienced a long life on stage with actors such as Alan Bates, Al Pacino, Christopher Plummer, and Denzel Washington in the twentieth century.[14]

Richard III is cited as the first Shakespeare play that was performed in America; the production is dated back to the year 1750 in New York.[15] The twentieth century saw a rise in the performance of the play as the awareness of dictators grew. The watershed moment in the play's theatrical history is the appearance of the 1955 film adaptation, directed by Laurence Olivier, and also starring the actor as Richard III. The play's audience rose from hundreds to millions at the film's, debut. The television premier of the play brought in an estimated 62.5 million viewers, which was greater than the amount of people that had ever seen the play performed in theatres in England.[16] Olivier's Richard became the archetypal Richard to theater-goers.[17]

Despite its popularity, some critics have referred to *Richard III* as a twig on the tree of Shakespeare's histories, and others see the play as a prelude to the

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13. "Richard in Performance," introduction to *King Richard III*, 68.
14. Scott John Colley, "Performing as Gloucester," in *Richard's Himself Again* (n.p.: Greenwood, 1992), 2.
15. Colley, "Performing as Gloucester," in *Richard's Himself Again*, 2.
16. Roger Manvell, Dr, "Shakespeare: from the Open Stage to the Screen," in *Shakespeare and the Film* (New York: Praeger, 1971), 3.
17. Colley, "Performing as Gloucester," in *Richard's Himself Again*, 4.

achievements of the great Shakespeare tragedies to come.[18] However, *Richard III* is also regarded as the best-known Shakespearean history play.[19] The play is considered to be one of the noblest tragedies, and it is also the Shakespearean play that is most reminiscent of Greek tragedies.[20] Shakespeare draws upon multiple genres to help him tell the story of Richard III. There is a Senecan element with the play's lack of a sub-plot, and it's highly organized and formalized structure.[21] He also calls upon the medieval morality drama of his time to represent Richard as the Vice, the Scourge of God, and the Machiavel. Who is Richard III?

Critics have attempted to classify the character Richard III into a genre. Richard is often represented as the Vice because he is the character most representative of evil in the play. Peter Happe and Bernard Spivack identify sixty characteristics of the Vice in their co-authored dissertation *The Vice*, and Richard is citied as having embodied sixteen of said characteristics.[22] According to Happe and Spivack, the Vice has a great relationship with the audience because it laughs for the benefit of the audience to show its triumph over humanity. The Vice attracts the audience's attention and sympathy by embodying its own destructive and anti-authoritarian impulses, and by engaging the audience in a conspiratorial relationship.[23] Richard heavily embodies the characteristics of the Vice throughout the play; he also calls upon the audience throughout the play to help him carry out the plot. In her article, "Richard III," Shakespeare, and History," Susan E. Leas writes,

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18. "Richard in Performance," introduction to *King Richard III*, 97.
19. Susan E. Leas, "'Richard III', Shakespeare, and History," *The English Journal*60, no. 9 (December 1971): 1214, accessed September 10, 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/812772 .
20. "Richard in Performance," introduction to *King Richard III*, 67.
21. "Richard in Performance," 97-98.
22. The Play," introduction to *King Richard III*, ed. Antony Hammond (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1981), 100.
23. "The Play," introduction to *King Richard III*, 100.

"the Richard of Shakespeare's play is, for the most part, a gleeful, inhuman caricature who delights in explaining his villainies to the audience, like Iago or like Vice in the medieval morality plays."[24]

In Elizabethan times, kings were seen as God's representations on earth;[25] however, as a king, Richard was vicious, egocentric, and blasphemous, making him the perfect example of anti-Christ. Richard's anti-Christ characteristics led critics to classify him as the Scourge of God.[26] Shakespeare does not name Richard the scourge of God within the text; however, characters such as Margaret and Richmond makes references of Richard embodying this role. Margaret calls Richard "hell's black intelligencer" (4.4 71) and Richmond calls Richard "God's enemy" (5.3 253).[27] Margaret's and Richmond's references are also supported by Richard's behavior and attitude throughout the play, especially through his choice to prove a villain in his first soliloquy. He decides to embody a characteristic, and he goes through the play playing that role, so much so that he has also been coined "a Machiavel." The Machiavel is an extension of the Vice, its main extension being that the Machiavel has political interest, and it was a well-known figure by 1591.[28] The Machiavel shapes Lawrence Olivier's film. Olivier proudly declares that he can set the murderous Machiavel to school in the renowned film.

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24. 'Richard III', Shakespeare, and History," 1214.
25. Glenn Burgess, "The Divine Rights of Kings Reconsidered," *The English Historical Review* 107, no. 425 (October 1992): 837, accessed November 28, 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/574219.
26. "The Play," introduction to *King Richard III*, 103.
27. introduction to *King Richard III*, 103.
28. introduction to *King Richard III*, 104.

Whether he is the Vice, anti-Christ, or the Machiavel, villainy is at the core of Richard's character. Roy E Aycock calls Richard an artist in villainy in his article "Dual Progression in Richard III." He writes:

> Among the villain-heroes who come immediately to mind-Marlowe's Tamburlaine, Barabas, Guise; Shakespeare's own Aaron, Iago, Edmund; the several in Jacobean drama-none can approach Richard in dedicated, consummate evil. Milton's Satan is Richard's only worthy competitor. And even here Milton's admixture of heroism gives the edge to Richard. Only two redeeming characteristics mar his record for perfect iniquity: a rather touching devotion to his father and his admission near the end of the play to a tortured conscience. [29]

Despite of Richard's evilness, the play is a theatrical success. The play continues to be produced even though the reality of dictators has become more pertinent. Why? Richard's own likeability lends its hand to the play's success, and the audience's positive reception of the character. Richard's attractiveness lies in his ability to make us admire him even though we know his actions are monstrous. He achieves this admiration because of his immense self-confidence, his discernment of character, his command of his temper, his versatility, his courage, and his often forgotten military prowess.[30]

Shakespeare's *Richard III* has three lives: the pre-life, the play itself, and the after life. The play begins with the action already underway, and these actions occur in the pre-life. The pre-life represents the section of the play where Richard begins setting up his plots so that when the actual play begins, he is already in a position of power, and he can watch his actions start falling into place. Richard sets the plot between his brothers, and he also decides to claim the audience and makes us a part

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[29]. "Dual Progression in Richard III," 75.
[30]. "Dual Progression in Richard III," 105-106.

of his personal court in the pre-life. Richard creates his own court with the audience in the pre-life, and he decides that he is the head of the court. He assumes that we are compliant with his leadership, and he proceeds to project his power over us. His power, however, is all in his head. Every time we watch a production of the play we are witnessing the play in its after-life. The telling of *Richard III* from the perspective of directors, writers, and actors represent the after-life. *Richard III* has been adapted for the stage and for film numerous times. Every adaptation represents a member of the audience interpreting the play, and telling his or her version of the story, giving the play an after-life, a life beyond the text.

This project examines Richard's relationship with the audience over three main sections of the play: the first soliloquy, the middle acts, and the final soliloquy. The first soliloquy shows the beginning of his quest for power, the middle acts show his rise to power, and the final soliloquy shows his decline. Throughout these three sections, his relationship with the audience changes. He has a closer relationship with the audience in the beginning, and at the end of the play when he is most vulnerable. Richard's closeness with the audience is shown when he engages with us in soliloquy. In the middle of the play, Richard is distant from the audience, and by the end of the coronation scene, our relationship has to be rebuilt so that we are close again by the end of the play. Richard directs the play, and he casts the audience and the other characters as he sees fit throughout the play.

The project also examines the play's afterlife on film, focusing on two productions starring Ian McKellen and Laurence Olivier. How is the story of Richard III told on film? Who is McKellen's Richard? Who is Olivier's Richard? Films and

productions give us the greatest insight to Richard's legacy with the audience; they show us different interpretations of the character, and they allow us to experience the after-life of the play. Richard proves to be a villain in the text and in the films. His death record cannot be erased or forgiven; however, Richard is not entirely villainous as critics often suggest. Richard experiences a brief moment within the play where he reflects on his actions, and he finally realizes the pain that his killing causes. Richard shows that he has a touch of morality within this moment of recognition, and he claims his own villainy. This moment cannot be ignored because the effect of Richard's death on the audience depends on how much the audience believes Richard's claim that he becomes a villain because he was neglected throughout his life. Richard becomes a victim of his own villainy, he becomes addicted to killing, and by the time he realizes that his fate is damned, it is too late for him to save his own character in the text. However, the audience gets the opportunity to either save or condemn his character when we engage with the play through writing, film, or the stage.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter pursues the question, what is Richard's relationship with the audience? I investigate how Richard forms and sustains a relationship with the audience in his first soliloquy. Like the play, the first soliloquy is also divided into three sections: the present, the past and the future, and Richard uses a different strategy to form a relationship with the audience in each. Richard's first speech is a lyrical portrait of his entire life: The speech reveals his future desires, personality, and it prepares the audience for the way he acts throughout the rest of the play. He traces his story from his birth to the present moment. In the first section, the present part of the speech, Richard mentally claims the audience both physically and emotionally, he makes us a part of his court, and he assumes dominance over the court and us by portraying himself as the leader. In the second section, he tells us of his past struggles of feeling inadequate, and he uses the story of his deformity to tell the audience why he is unfit for courtship, why he deserves our pity, and why he deserves to be our leader. In the soliloquy's third section, he makes us his confidant, he tells us that he is a villain, he explains why, and he shares his villainous plots with us.

Present

Lines 1-13

Richard III starts with extreme urgency. This urgency is a result of a plot having been put into action before the first word of the play is spoken. The quick-paced beginning helps Richard extend his control from the pre-play into the actual play. The audience is immediately thrown into the plot. The first line of the play reads, "Now is the winter of our discontent," (1.1 1). The first word of the play, "now," shows the urgency, and it also tells us that we are speaking about the present. Richard immediately sets himself up as the knowledgeable figure within the play. He shares three pieces of information within the first line. He tells us of the urgency of the time by saying "now;" he reveals his forced relationship with the audience by saying "our," and he tells the audience their feelings by saying "discontent." Richard establishes his control over the audience through these three actions.

Richard projects his leadership onto the audience, who is his imagined court, at the play's inception. He speaks using the royal pronoun; "our" is the possessive form of the royal pronoun "we." Richard paints himself as the king speaking on behalf of the court by using the royal language. He assumes the audience is his supporter, and he takes control of the audience's perspective. Richard casts the audience as a part of his court. He acts as though he is elected by the audience to speak on our behalf. By using "our," Richard represents himself and the audience as one unified body; he forces an attachment onto the audience. Richard decides that his actions are also the audience's actions, and his problems are the audience's

problems. Richard's presumptuous claim of the audience parallels his decision to pursue the crown; Richard executes all of the actions that he thinks are necessary to secure the throne without hesitation or concern about anyone else's well-being.

The unification that Richard projects upon the audience is detrimental because we are live conscious characters outside of the play with free agency. The audience is supposed to be thought of as a separate functioning body. We should have the ability to make our own decisions. However, Richard does not respect this freedom, or account for it in the play; he does not question or second-guess the union. He sees us as being passive characters that are bound to him because he has the power within the play, and he goes through the first four acts of the play under this assumption. He casts us in his play, and he begins to direct our actions and our emotions.

Once Richard sets himself up as the head of the court he creates within the play, he begins to extend his control beyond physically claiming the audience. He also attempts to dictate the audience's emotions. He tells the audience how we are feeling based on how he is feeling, emotionally hijacking the audience and taking away another aspect of our free will. He projects his own feelings upon us when he tells us that "we" are "discontent." If the audience is discontented, it suggests that we will chase after things to make us contented. However, since Richard is projecting his control of our emotions upon us, the only things that we could possibly yearn after, are the things that he himself wants. The audience has not had the time to experience anything within the text thus far. Thus, the discontentment that Richard speaks of is his own that he places upon the audience in an effort to

extend his control. Richard slyly makes the audience responsible for the actions that he carries out in order to fulfill himself by telling the reader that we are collectively discontented. Richard continues to extend his hold upon the audience by emotionally attaching us to him. Once Richard is confident that he has complete control of the audience, he turns his attention to the original court.

Richard wants to be king. He covets the title from his brother. He begins presenting himself as the king of the original court at the play's beginning. He states, "Now is the winter of our discontent / Made glorious summer by this son of York;" (1.1 1-2). Richard begins to extend his authority over the official court. The pronoun "our" establishes Richard as the powerful figure because of royal connotations. Thus, the "this" in the phrase "this son of York" refers back to Richard as being the son of York that puts an end to the court's troubles because he presents himself as the leader. He also presents himself as the protector of his people when he claims that he is responsible for ending the war, and making the days glorious.

The violent diction of the speech helps to evoke Richard as the protector. He states, "all the clouds that lour'd upon our House / In the deep bosom of the ocean buried" (1.1 3-4). Richard draws our attention to the violence that occurred during the war by using the word "buried." Richard speaks of the dark, and dangerous times being in the past. His usage of the word "buried" especially paints him as a protector because he is saying that he "buried" all of the danger that was surrounding his house, implying that his house is now a secured environment because of his actions. Richard's identity as a soldier gives him power, and it helps him to reinforce that he is the leader of the audience, and of the original court. By

the fourth line of the play, Richard shows the audience that he truly believes he has power over the entire world of the play. He is directing the audience's actions and emotions, and he is directing the play. Richard takes king Edward's glory by presenting himself as the king. The setting of the speech makes Richard's claim of being the king believable.

Winning a war was the way to ascend the throne in the Elizabethan times.[31] Thus, Richard enforces the idea of him being the powerful figure in the play when he references himself as being the son that wins the crown. Everything that Richard does is calculated. If the audience sees him as the one who wins the war, then his presentation of himself as the figure in charge is fitting, and his claim of the court is justified because this all would mean that he is the king. Richard also gives the first speech in the play, and thus, he is the first powerful figure that the audience comes across, which helps him to immediately establish his power. Although this is only the second line of the play, Richard has already exerted an immense amount of control over the plot and the audience. A modern audience member without previous knowledge of the play or of the English history on which it draws would think of Richard as the figure in power because of his commanding diction and demeanor. However, an Elizabethan audience would be familiar with the history. Such an audience would detect Richard's discontented desire to be the king from the inception. They would know of the impending death in the play because of Richard's pompous and incorrect presentation of himself as the king, while the king is still alive.

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31. Desmond Seward, introduction to *A Brief History of the Wars of the Roses*(n.p.: Robinson, 2013), 2.

Richard continues to present himself as the leader throughout the first third of the soliloquy. He attempts to solidify his connection with the audience by conjuring images of the house within the speech. In the third line of the play, Richard states, "all the clouds that lour'd upon our House / In the deep bosom of the ocean buried" (1.1 3-4). The phrase "our House" takes on multiple meanings and associations within the text. The first significance of the phrase "our House" points back to the play in itself; *Richard III* is a family play. His family wins the war, and then they return home to their house to rule. There is a family already established at the core of the play. Richard includes the audience into the family that is already established within the play when he speaks to us saying "our House." Thus, Richard's unification of the audience into the House of York presents a complication. Richard already creates a separate court with the audience when he claims us at the beginning. He communicates with us separately from the other characters within the play. The audience gets to be his individual court when it is convenient for him to have a confidant and someone to plan with. Otherwise, he simply views the audience as a part of the original court that only gets to witness his actions an not participate in the pre-planning. When the audience is a part of the house, he can focus on controlling one entire body, versus dividing his attention between the audience and the original court. Richard projects a dual identity onto the audience by also including the audience into the house of York.

Why does Richard project a dual identity onto the audience? Richard's giving of two identities to the audience is another way for him to expand his dominance over us. He himself is a shape-shifter who transforms for power. He is a soldier

during the war that precedes the action of the play, and he transforms into a king at the end of the war because the king has the most power after the war. Richard gets to feel like he is indeed controlling the audience if he passes on some of his qualities to us because then we are seen as descendants of him who are made within his image and posses his qualities. Richard wants to be seen as the father figure within the play. He speaks as head of the household; he is the storyteller, he is the one with the knowledge, and he is the one that brings the audience and the house together. He riles the audience up for one cause: his kingship. He continues to use "our" in the lines that follow in order to strengthen his union with the audience. Although Richard includes the audience into the general court, he still dissociates himself from other characters within the play.

Richard detaches himself from the king when he begins to think that he has a secured relationship with the audience. Richard has to present the king as being incompetent at his job in order to justify his own pursuit of the crown. He states:

> And now, instead of mounting barbed steeds
> To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
> He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber,
> To the lascivious pleasing of a lute (1.1 10 – 13).

Richard degrades the actions of the king, who is usually associated with bravery and strength, by comparing the king's post-war lifestyle to that of a child. He trivializes his lifestyle by using the words "caper" and "nimbly" to mock the king's lifestyle. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a "caper" as a playful leap of a child.[32] In Richard's eyes, the king has transformed from a courageous, focused man to an aimless child, and he is no longer fulfilling his role as the head of the court.

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[32]. This definition of Caper entered the *OED* in 1592.

The word “caper” also refers to the movements of a horse, and instead of using the horse in the terms of war; Richard gives horses a negative connotation. In the eyes of Richard, the soldiers have turned their horse, their transportation during war, into a playful object. The entire court, from its king to its animals, is acting in a playful and frivolous way. The king has abandoned his violent nature, and he is now engaging in activities of love. He has have given up his armour for *amor*, and Richard does not approve of this type of behavior because he finds himself unfit for such a romance-centered lifestyle. Instead, Richard is at work, building his political campaign with the audience, abasing the king and presenting himself as the good leader. Richard’s disassociation from King Edward begins a new section within the soliloquy. His disassociation from the king marks the end of him updating the audience with what is happening in the present world of the play. He then begins to tell us why we should support him. Richard changes his control rhetoric; he goes from forcing his power upon us to using his story to get the audience to see his vigor and pity him.

Past

Lines 14-27

The audience finds ourselves in a time machine in the second part of the soliloquy. After Richard projects himself as the leader, he begins to tell us what makes him a great leader. Every great politician has the ability to tell his or her story in a way that makes the voters believe that he or she is the only one who could have survived particular adversities. Politicians’ stories make you believe in their resilience; their stories often paint images of them surmounting the absolute worst

to become successful, and Richard is no different. He addresses the source of his discontent, the source of his unhappiness, in the second part of the soliloquy. Richard's deformity has caused him to be neglected by women, and as a result, he hates the post war lifestyle because he cannot participate in it. He states:

> But I, that am not shap'd for sportive tricks,
> Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
> . . . Have no delight to pass away the time,
> Unless to spy my shadow in the sun, (1.1 14-16).

The post war activities include listening to music and courting; Richard thinks that his deformities render him unable to participate in such activities. He convinces himself that he is not made for pleasure, so he is unhappy that the war is over. He does not support the court's choice to participate in delightful measures instead of war. He craves to be in a warlike setting, and he is discontented with his life when he is not. He does not want calm; he wants the storm. He seeks the life of "Grim-visag'd War" (1.1 9).

Richard tells us the story of his deformities seemingly hoping that we will become inspired, and feel sympathetic toward him. He thinks our sympathy and inspiration will more strongly bind us to him. Richard states:

> But I that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
> Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,
> Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
> Into this breathing world scarce half made up –(1.1 18-21).

The words "curtail'd," "cheated," "deform'd," and "unfinish'd" all create a piteous image of Richard. He is missing a part of himself. The vivid words that Richard uses to describe himself make the audience feel proud of him for overcoming all of his physical tribulations to be a successful soldier. Richard uses his story to build a

personal connection with the audience. Richard also knows that this is the last moment for him to focus his attention on strengthening his relationship with the audience before he embarks on his villainous journey.

There is a lot of yearning within the play, and this yearning is immediately evident from the beginning when Richard starts embodying the king so that he can feel more powerful. Richard constantly uses words such as "discontented" and "unfinished," words that point to him wanting more. On one hand, Richard's "unfinishedness" refers back to his physical state of having a "mangled arm," (3.4 69) and missing a part of his body.[33] He claims that he is "cheated of a part of his nature" and "curtail'd of fair proportion." However, on the other hand, there are further implications of the term "unfinish'd" in the text. "Unfinish'd" points to Richard's general state of mind. Richard wants the crown while his brother is king. He is discontented with his social life, he wants to have a woman in his life, but his deformity makes it difficult for him to court. He is discontented with his setting, he wants to be fighting in war, but instead, he is forced to live in a peaceful post-war environment where people are enjoying the sound of music instead of the sound of battle cries. Cries of terror have been replaced with cries of joy, and all of these factors combine to make Richard dissatisfied with his life. Whether it is his body, his social status, or his lifestyle, Richard always wants something to be different; he is always unhappy, and discontented. Thus, it comes at no surprise that "discontent" is

[33]. William Shakespeare, *Henry VI Part III*, [3.2 153-162].

the seventh word of the play because Richard has a discontented mentality that he uses to fuel his desire to "finish" himself.

Richard uses his physical setbacks to motivate him. He still thinks he deserves to be the king even though, physically, he does not fit the part. According to the line of succession, Richard should have no more power than he already has as the Duke of Gloucester because Edward IV's sons are the next in line to the throne.[34] However, Richard overlooks history, he overlooks the rules of ascending the throne, and he pursues the crown. There is a disconnection between how Richard views himself, and what he wants. He sees himself as being unfinished and inferior because he is incapable of having a woman's love, but yet, he wants the prestigious crown. Richard wants to rewrite history, make up for his days of inferiority, and prove that he is worthy of the crown as any other "finished" person, and this is exactly what he does in the play. Richard reveals his plans for achieving the crown in the last third of the soliloquy.

Future

Lines 28-41

Richard uses the first part of his speech to claim our attention, the second to secure it, and the third section to put our support to use. The audience finds out about Richard's political platform in the last third of the soliloquy. Up until this point in the play, Richard has been taking the audience down memory lane. However, when he feels secured that he has earned our support through telling us of his

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34. Peter Saccio, "The Accession of Richard III," in *Shakespeare English Kings*(London: Oxford University Press, 1977), 175.

neglected life, he begins to confide in us, and he tells us exactly what he is going to do in order to get the crown to finish his ambition. Richard states:

> And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
> To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
> I am determined to prove a villain, -
> And hate the idle pleasures of these days
> Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
> By drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams,
> To set my brother Clarence and the King
> In deadly hate, the one against the other: (1.1 28 – 35).

Richard decides to create war inside the court, right after the Yorks win the crown, out of his discontentment. He devises a plan to put himself back into an environment where he thrives. Richard's decision to bring a war to the court shows that he feels that the crown from the defeat of Henry VI was not placed on the right brother's head, and thus, he must finish up what was started. He must create a war so that he can get the crown for himself. He must finish history in order to rid himself of his discontentment and his "unfinish'd" feelings. Richard's juxtaposition of lover and villain does not make sense.

The lover and fighter are the usual juxtapositions; however, Richard sees himself as a villain by being the opposite of a lover. Richard does not find himself fit to enjoy a pleasing and peaceful setting, and thus, he accepts himself as a villain, and he accepts a chaotic and cruel life. Richard decides that it would be easier for him to hurt people, versus putting himself in a position where he would have to succumb to other people's opinions about him, which being a lover would bring upon him. In addition to revealing his plans to create a war, this section of the speech raises the question of whether or not Richard's villainy is premeditated.

"Determined to prove a villain" stands out as the most haunting phrase of the 41-line soliloquy. It raises the question of predetermination and free will in the text. The *Oxford English Dictionary*'s definition of "determined"-- being "appointed, ordained, and fixed beforehand"[35]--suggests that Richard believes that he was born to be a villain. Thus, his malicious actions within the play are all part of a pre-ordained master plan that has enabled him with the characteristics and the mentality to be the Vice, the Machiavel, and the anti-Christ. He defines a villain as someone who is false and treacherous that rebels against romantic love and peace (1.1 37). If Richard's villainy is predetermined, then every action that he performs within the play is motivated by evilness, and he is simply living up to his destiny by murdering the other characters. As a result, even when Richard shows signs of being a lover, such as in Act 1 Scene 2 when he woos Lady Anne, all innocent connotations are removed from his actions. His intention to marry her is then is grounded in pure evil.

Richard III's plot has a strong premeditative sense. Richard begins to show signs of being a villain in the play's pre-life. In addition to deciding to take away the audience's free will so that he can control us in the pre-life, he also murders the previous king in the War of the Roses.[36] The premeditative element of the play helps to support the claim that Richard's villainy is something that he cannot avoid within the play. His usage of the past tense to tell us about how he plans to prove his villainy also supports his predetermined villainy. The past tense of the word "laid"

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35. This definition of determined was added to the OED in 1546.
36. Seward, introduction to *A Brief History of the Wars*, 2.

in the phrase “Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,” shows that his plans were premeditated. Richard knows that the act of setting his brothers against each other proves his evilness, and it will help him get the crown. Richard values his happiness more than anything else within the play. He wholeheartedly believes that he has the right to control the lifestyle of the court and throw it into a state of war because being in a chaotic nature makes him happy.

Despite the alluring arguments of Richard’s villainy being predestined, the possibility that the character consciously chooses to carry out a villainous plot cannot be ignored. There is no evidence of any other outer-worldly force acting on Richard in the play that forces him to be a villain. Thus, the possibility exists that Richard decides to be villainous so that he can entertain himself by watching the other characters suffer. The *OED* also defines “determined” as “to have come to a decision of definite resolve (to do something),” citing Shakespeare’s own usage of the word in the quote “determined to prove a villain” in its entry. The *OED* suggests that Richard’s usage of the word “determined” in the phrase shows that he makes a conscious choice to be a villain.

The phrase “Determined to prove a villain” has an impulsive element to its structure because it is a conditional statement. The quote has an “If I cannot do A do, then I will do B” structure. Thus, the soliloquy contains strong evidence that supports the claim that Richard makes an impulsive decision to become a villain over a lover. Such a reading suggests that Richard decides to no longer force himself to be something that he is not i.e. a lover, and he decides to further develop the

negative qualities that he already possess: hatred, manipulation, and discontentment in order to prove villainous.

An image of Richard mentally searching his soul for all of the characteristics that he thinks would make him villainous is evoked when he says he is "determined to prove a villain." Such an image places Richard's decision to be villainous in the present. The comma, and the conjunction "and" that follows the word "villain" in the quote also helps to evoke the impulsive feeling of Richard's decision. These two grammatical devices are used to show moments of pause, moments of collecting one's thoughts and searching for the right words. Richard also tells us that he is going to "hate the idle pleasures of these days" in the speech, and because he speaks of what he plans to do in the future, his decision to prove a villain seems like it was constructed in the present moment. It can be argued that Richard decides to be a villain because it means moving forward versus being stuck in the present and being neglected because of his burdensome past. Richard's talk of the future in the soliloquy points to his desire to progress. He stops whining about being inadequate, and he creates a future that allows him to be himself.

The interchange between the past and the present diction in this section of the speech creates many complex implications. Is villainy a new identity that Richard attaches to himself in the spur of the moment, or is it predetermined? How do these different perspectives affect the audience's relationship with Richard? Is he forcing us to see his decision to be villainous as an impulsive response so that we can have more sympathy toward him and chose to support him? The play does not directly answer whether Richard's villainy is preordained or not. However, there are

moments in the play when Richard knows exactly what he has to do in order to advance his villainous scheme for the crown, and moments when he has to think of a plan on the spot. Evidence for both interpretations of Richard's villainy exists in the general text.

Richard's wooing of Lady Anne, his plot to kill King Edward, his nephews, and Queen Elizabeth's family are moments of him knowing what he has to do in order to get the crown. These malicious actions are predetermined; Richard cannot be the king of a court that has a king, a heir, and a brave family to protect the heir. If being a villain is something that Richard has premeditated, then the play becomes a dramatic presentation of a man irremediably committed to evil.[37] Such a reading, suggests that the play is a visualization of Richard aimlessly unleashing one successful plan after the other. This reading of the play takes away the element of surprise from the character, and lowers the play's stakes because it is determined that his plans will not fail. A reading of this kind can make the audience less invested in the play's plot because the element of surprise is essential to hold an audience's attention. Richard's manipulation of the audience also increases if his decision to become a villain is premeditated because it shows that Richard indeed knows that he has an indefinite hold on the audience and the play's plot. This knowledge would exponentially increase Richard's power within the play, and the audience would see him as a caricature for evil that can never change. However, it is essential for the

37. Roy E. Aycock, "Dual Progression in Richard III," *South Atlantic Bulletin* 38, no. 4 (1973): 77, accessed September 3, 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3197086.

audience to believe that a character will undergo some type of growth within a play.[38]

Some of the unforeseen moments in the play where Richard has to improvise are when he is forced to lobby in order to get the citizens support, and he is forced to come up with a marriage plan in order to defend his crown from Richmond. If villainy is a new title that Richard attaches and forces himself to live up to then his actions in the text becomes a dramatization of him forcing himself to be a certain character. Richard would be expressing his freewill to make the choice to be a villain, but he would also be restraining himself at the same time by forcing himself into being an idea. Regardless of what type of villainy, predetermined or impulsive, Richard showcases in the text, Richard carries out evil actions within the play. He takes the audience on a long five act villainous journey.

Richard's relationship with the audience is at the helm of the last third of his first soliloquy. He highlights another aspect of his relationship with the audience in this part of the speech. This is the moment when the audience becomes his confidant, and he shares new information with us that no one else in the play knows. He tells us about his choice to become a villain, and he goes into details about the plans that he has for the future. Richard's investment with the audience in the text, ranks second only to his preoccupation with himself and his own ambition. Richard states:

> Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
> By drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams,

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38. Aristotle, "Part XIII," in *Poetics*, accessed November 29, 2013, http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/poetics.2.2.html.

> To set my brother Clarence and the King
> In deadly hate, the one against the other: (1.1 32-35)

Richard tells the audience his first step to villainy: he is going to wipe out the king and his strongest opponent, his brother Clarence. The act of setting his brothers against each other in "deadly" hate will result in a blood bath because once the king dies the court will go into an uproar, much to Richard's happiness. The only setting that Richard functions and enjoys is a chaotic one so he has to set the court in war in order for him to have control. He is entertained by chaos.

Richard showcases himself being the director of the play through his usage of the word "set." All of the members of the court are actors in his play; and he is the only person who has a copy of the script; everyone else has to improvise their words depending on the obstacle that he places before them. The audience provides Richard with someone to watch his crimes. Knowing that we are going to be watching his show, Richard opens up to us more. He tells us that he is "subtle, false, and treacherous" (1.1 37). Richard is being blunt; he is no longer trying to win us over, no more pity story, he feels that our bond is secured. Thus, he gives us an honest evaluation of himself; he tells us his character is rooted in evil. He distances himself from the king the more that he thinks his relationship with the audience is becoming stronger.

Richard makes a distinction between his two brothers in the soliloquy: he refers to Clarence as his "brother," and to Edward as the "King." Why does he not refer to both men as his brothers? Richard's choice to refer to Clarence informally and warmly, and the King formally shows the continued separation that he is trying to cause between himself and the king. He wants to distance himself from being the

king's brother so that his run for the crown becomes an act against the court versus an act against the family. Dethroning kings were a natural part of the Elizabethan society;[39] however, not dethroning your brother out of malice. Breaking the trust of the family is a greater crime than breaking the trust of the court, and such an act would reflect more negatively on Richard's character. He would further complicate his chances of getting the crown.

Richard's act of sharing his secret to dethrone his brothers to the audience naturally distances him from both of them because he plans on killing both of them. Richard's honesty with the audience shows that he still wants to make our bond stronger. His decision to kill his brothers shows a break in family trust. He does not need his family any more after he feels like he has a court of his own. The distance that Richard places between himself and his brothers in the first act later occurs between himself and the audience in the middle three acts of the play. Richard does not keep the audience close to him for long; he replaces us for a new confidant in Acts 2, 3 and 4.

[39]. Seward, introduction to *A Brief History of the Wars*, 2.

Chapter 2

Introduction

This chapter explores why Richard confides in the audience using two soliloquies in Act 1, but he distances himself from us in Act II and for the majority of Act III. This chapter argues that Richard claims the audience as his personal court at the beginning of Act 1 because he has no support from the original court, especially its women, until he meets Buckingham in Act 1 Scene 3. Once Richard meets Buckingham, he begins to confide in him, and he replaces the audience with Buckingham. He only speaks to the audience once while he still has a partnership with Buckingham, and this single direct address to the audience occurs at a high-tension moment in the play in Act 3 Scene 5. After this moment, Richard only begins communicating with the audience again when he loses control of Buckingham, and their alliance ends in Act 4 Scene 3.

No character that we meet at the beginning of Act 1 supports or trusts Richard. He knows that he is his sole supporter, and as a result, he tries to attach the audience to himself so that he can get some support. The audience also gives him something to control. Richard knows that he does not have any support from the original court because of his history with the characters. He carries out malicious actions that begin in the play's pre-life against the majority of the court. Thus, he knows that very few characters, if any, will support his decision to finish himself through stealing the crown. The audience gives Richard something to control.

Richard's isolation from the rest of the characters is shown when we first meet him, and he is on stage alone. And as we meet the other characters, especially the females, we find out more about their deeply rooted distrust and dislike for Richard. Lady Anne, Margaret, and Elizabeth all hate Richard.

Lady Anne is the first character that voices her hatred of Richard in the text. She, justifiably, detests Richard for killing her husband and her father-in-law. Although he manages to woo her with false claims of loving her, she never loses the disgust and hatred that she venomously spits at him the first time she sees and interacts with him in the play. She states, "What black magician conjures up this fiend" (1.2 34). The sight of Richard instantly horrifies Lady Anne. Her usage of the word "fiend" also sums up Richard's characteristics. He is wicked, and he is determined to cause mischief at all costs. She sees Richard as an inhuman devil, that that was conjured by the devil. Not only does she see him as the child of the devil, but she also sees him as the devil itself. Every word that Lady Anne uses to describe Richard tells us of the bile that she feels when she sees him. Even though she marries him, she never forgives him for murdering her family. She continues to be unhappy, and she hates him until her death. She refers to the news of his crowning as "despiteful tidings and unpleasing" (4.1 35). Richard receives a major confidence boost when he woos Lady Anne in Act 1 Scene 2; however, he knows that her saying yes to his marriage proposal is not a pledge of her support to him. He gets her hand in marriage, but he does not get her supporting hand for his political campaign. However, the little support that she does give to him, through falling for his wooing, is more than he gets from his own relative, Queen Elizabeth.

Queen Elizabeth's very first lines in the play show her distrust for Richard. She is uneasy because Richard is the Lord Protector of her son, the heir to the throne. She states, "his minority/ Is put unto the trust of Richard Gloucester, / A man that loves not me, nor none of you" (1.3 11-13). The first act that Queen Elizabeth carries out in the play is to reveal her distrust of Richard. She does not believe that he loves her, and thus, she does not trust that he loves her son. As a result, she doubts her son will have any security with Richard as his protector. Queen Elizabeth comments also references her fear of Richard having any power in the court. She is afraid of what he would do because of his lack of love for his family. Elizabeth's distrust of Richard is important because it shows the audience that even Richard's family does not trust him, and this distrust shows the audience why Richard attempts to create a court of his own with us from the play's inception. Although Queen Elizabeth makes powerful accusations against Richard, she still expresses her dislike of Richard in a gentle manner; their family tie forces her to speak civilly about him because they still have to work together for the king's benefit. However, Queen Margaret, the widow of King Henry VI, has no restrictions when it comes to voicing her, purely negative, opinions about Richard.

No other character in the play expresses as much hatred toward Richard as Margaret. Her contempt for him overflows every moment that she is around him, or she thinks of him. Richard makes her so angry that she cannot even find enough control to not insult him in public. As long as Richard is around, she is angry. She tells the audience that he is a "murd'rous villain" (1.3 134) in an aside; she cannot

contain the anger inside of her until she sees him. And once she sees him, the insults pour out from her angered soul. She states:

> thou elvish-marke'd, abortive, rooting hog,
> . . . The slave of Nature, and the son of hell;
> Thou slander of thy heavy mother's womb,
> Thou loathed issue of thy father's loins,
> Thou rag of honour, thou detested – (1. 3 228 – 232).

Margaret describes Richard as being a curse to his parents, he weighs his mother down by being a slander, and he insults his father by not being of his princely semblance. He is a false glass to his parents (2.2 51-53). In the case of being liked and supported, Richard is not guilty. Margaret's hatred ends in a dash, she was interrupted, or else one can only imagine what other insults were going to follow in her hateful speech at Richard. Margaret lets Richard know that he is irreversibly damned. She thinks his evilness surpasses everyone else's.

Margaret's views on Richard are aligned with the actual life he lives. She sees him as being nature's slave, and hell's son, which means that he is continuously punished, and he is always in a state of turmoil, and she is right. His physical nature leaves him yearning after women that he cannot have, and his ambitious nature leaves him without the crown that he wants. His mental nature leaves him yearning to be in a destructive war environment. Richard is always out of place, and he has no peace. He is constantly being led to the valley of evil, and his nature for the most unfortunate things seems to be the reason to blame for his constant desire to be surrounded by anguish. He needs turmoil in order to feel secured; he knows how to survive in chaos because he was spawned from anguish and pain, and as a result, Richard finds such conditions stimulating.

The contempt Lady Anne, Margaret, and Elizabeth express spawns from personal actions that Richard takes against them. The views of these women begin to show the audience how much support Richard lacks, and they are not the only ones who distrust Richard. The general court fears Richard, and a result they do not support his political campaign. The citizens of the court also voice their distrust of Richard when they realize that the future of their country is doomed when the king dies, and he could be in charge. As they deal with the aftermath of the king's death, they realize the true extent of the country's fragile state. Citizen 3 states, "O, full of danger is the Duke of Gloucester," (2.3 27). The citizens are scared of Richard and they do not trust him to be a good leader. Everyone fears Richard, and their fear causes them to hate and to oppose him. Thus, the only way for him to pursue the crown is for him to create his own court, which is exactly what he does with the audience, in his head, at the beginning of the play. The reader first meets the members of the ensemble, which Richard casts us in from Act 1 Scene 2, and we realize that no one trusts Richard. Previously, Richard was the only character who shaped the audience's views of the court through his soliloquies. However, all of the other characters begin getting their stage time to shape our views of Richard.

All of the characters think Richard's dangerous dissemblance makes him unfit to be the king except for Buckingham. Buckingham stands up for Richard against Margaret in Act 1. Scene 3. He is the first character to do so within the play, and from that moment, he becomes Richard's friend. The following dialogue occurs between Margaret and Buckingham during the moment when Margaret is cursing Richard in Act 1:

Rich: What doth she say, my lord of Buckingham?

Buck: Nothing that I respect, my gracious lord (1.3 295-296).

When Buckingham answers Richard that Margaret has said nothing that he respects, he shows his support of Richard in front of Margaret. Buckingham also speaks very warmly of Richard referring to him as his "gracious lord," giving Richard the most respect that he has received thus far in the play. Buckingham's support of Richard is important because they have no familial ties. Buckingham's speaking up against Margaret on Richard's behalf was the moment that Richard was waiting for; he finally finds a character who can help him with his plots. He gets a willing supporter, and he begins to involve Buckingham in his plans. Richard forfeits all other ties he was building; he loses interest in using the audience as his constituent, and he begins to confide in Buckingham only.

Richard forms an alliance with Buckingham, an active character in the play that he can collaborate with to get the crown he seeks. Buckingham becomes the most important character to Richard in the play. Buckingham is a credible character; he is a Duke and thus, he is knowledgeable. He is an asset to Richard because of his political knowledge. By the time that Buckingham shows his support for Richard, Richard has already experienced the wrath of the women in the play. Thus, when he meets supportive Buckingham, he becomes distracted about still communicating with the audience, and he begins to focus solely on his and Buckingham's relationship. Richard distances himself from the audience once he forms an alliance with Buckingham as he does with his brothers in Act 1 with the audience.

Richard and Buckingham begin having private conversations in Act 2 Scene 2. The first plot they decide on together is where they should meet the young prince. Richard sees that Buckingham is truly committed to helping him when Buckingham suggests how he should greet the young prince. Richard states, “My other self, my prophet, my dear cousin: / I, as a child, will go by thy direction (2.2 151-153). Richard places multiple terms of endearment upon Buckingham for the advice he gives him. He is delighted to have someone else help him, and he begins praising Buckingham. He begins trusting Buckingham as his “prophet” to tell him what is going to happen in the future. He also begins to trust Buckingham to carry out plans on his behalf because he sees him as his “other half.” Richard immediately thinks that Buckingham is equally committed to his self-elevation as himself. Richard’s praising of Buckingham by calling him his “prophet” is important because it marks the moment where Richard becomes dependent on another character to help him achieve his ambition.

Throughout the play, Richard wants to be everyone’s superior; however, he allows Buckingham to take the lead on executing some of the plots he devises. He gives up some of the power that he fights vehemently to get to Buckingham in exchange for Buckingham’s support. He begins to look upon Buckingham as a “child.” Richard’s prophetic following of Buckingham shows how much Richard yearns for the support of someone inside the play. His loneliness has forever been a void that he has wanted to fill, and thus, Buckingham wins Richard over with his delivery of one sentence of support. Richard is happy to have a willing supporter, and his ego grows when Buckingham joins his team. The audience becomes useless

when he gets a noble duke to support his quest for the crown. Buckingham becomes the one that Richard goes to first and plans with. Richard immediately casts Buckingham as his lead supporter.

The audience begins finding out about the play's plot through the two men's conversation rather than through direct conversation with Richard. Richard begins the play by telling the audience about his plots in Act 1; however by Act 2, we are no longer finding out about his plots first. Richard starts treating us as regular spectators. The conversation between the two men about the young prince is an example of a conversation that Richard would usually have with the audience. Richard's planning with Buckingham is significant because not only does it highlight Richard's leaving of the audience behind, but it also shows the beginning of Richard losing control of the play's plot. He is no longer coming up with plans on his own. He becomes a co-director of his own quest with Buckingham, and while their plots are being smoothly executed, the two men only plot with each other all the way to Richard's crowning in Act 4.

The first time that Richard speaks again to the audience in confidence in the middle of the play is in Act 3 Scene 5. Richard has just faced a major setback in his quest for the throne. Lord Hastings refuses to support his kingship so he has to come up with other ways to get the crown. He is tense. Richard states:

> Now I will go to take some privy order
> To draw the brats of Clarence out of sight,
> And to give notice that no manner person
> Have, any time, recourse unto the Princes (3.5 105 – 109).

Richard's short speech to the audience comes in a moment of dire need. The brevity of the soliloquy points to the great momentum and urgency of the moment within

the play. The expediency of his actions can be seen in his diction. He says "now," which shows his immediacy and the tension of the moment with the play. Richard's usage of the word "now" at the beginning of this short speech points back to his usage of the word in the first soliloquy; Richard is unhappy with what is happening in the court, and he is setting out to fix it once more so that he can get the power he seeks. The last time Richard spoke to the audience in Act 1 his soliloquy was 41 lines, and now, he devotes four sentences to keep the audience up to date with what he is doing.

At this point in the play, Richard is no longer forcing a partnership with the audience. He does not feel like he needs to devote 41 lines to speak to the audience about his plans because he thinks that he already has our support through his act of attaching us to him in Act 1. He becomes complacent. He begins acting without the audience's attachment. He rarely speaks to us, and when he does it is short. He switches from using the pronoun "our" to using "I." The issues of the play are no longer "ours," but rather solely his. The Richard that we encounter at this point in the play is the same confident Richard that we meet at the beginning of the play; however, his power has increased because he has killed the main people who opposes his kingship: Hastings and Elizabeth's family,[40] and as Richard's power increases so does his confidence. His increase in confidence can be seen in his usage of the verbs "will" "to take" "to draw" and "to give." Even though he is still uncrowned, he believes he is in charge. Thus, although he returns to the audience,

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[40]. Susan E. Leas, "'Richard III', Shakespeare, and History," *The English Journal*60, no. 9 (December 1971): 1214, accessed September 10, 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/812772 .

he still does not treat us as though we are important as he did in Act 1 because he still has Buckingham, who successfully helps him achieve his quest. The play does not clarify exactly what Richard's relationship is with the audience at this point in the play. However, we see that he is less invested in us, the closer he gets to the throne.

Richard finally achieves his dreams in Act 4 Scene 2, when he is crowned as the king. Although he fights long and hard for this feat, he does not take the time to stop and relish in this celebratory moment. He orders the next death within 18 lines of sitting upon the throne for the first time, and this death order becomes the catalyst that destroys his kingship. Buckingham is contented after Richard is crowned, and he is ready to reap the benefits of the kingship. Richard, however, is hungry for more blood, and thus, he orders Buckingham to kill his two nephews. This death order causes Buckingham, for the first time in the play, to seek some distance from Richard. In response to Richard asking him to kill the young prince, Buckingham states, "Give me some little breath some pause, dear lord, / Before I positively speak in this;" (4.2 24-25). Buckingham contemplates Richard's death plans. He literally cannot process what Richard is asking of him; he needs physical space away from Richard so that he can think. Buckingham's request for some time to think about murdering the young princes is the point at which his mental break from Richard occurs. They are no longer on the same wavelength about where Buckingham's allegiance lies.

Buckingham is devoted to Richard's kingship, he is a political killer, and thus, he supports Richard when he kills for the crown. However, once he realizes that

Richard does not only murder for political reasons, but he also murders for his own pleasure, Buckingham stops supporting Richard. Buckingham's reaction is surprising to Richard. Richard misreads Buckingham's devotion at the beginning. He assumes that Buckingham's alliance is equally to his physical body as it is to the state. He thinks that Buckingham will kill for him at any cost. Once Richard realizes that Buckingham does not support his personal hobby of killing, he decides to cut Buckingham out from his court. He immediately returns back to the audience to speak in our confidence. He states:

> The deep-revolving, witty Buckingham
> No more shall be the neighbor to my counsels.
> Hath he so long held out with me, untir'd,
> And stops he now for breath! Well, be it so (4.2 42-45)

Richard is still coming to terms with the fact that Buckingham was only a political friend to him, and not his personal best friend. He realizes that he has been abandoned once again, and he becomes spiteful toward Buckingham because he is angry with him for neglecting him like the rest of the characters. As a result, he disowns Buckingham as a collaborator. Richard walks away from Buckingham after denying him the title of Hereford, which he promises to give to him when he becomes king.

Buckingham initiates his physical break from Richard when he takes his mental pause; however, Richard, ultimately, creates the permanent physical break between the two men. Buckingham and Richard end their physical alliance at the end of Act 4 Scene 2. Their breakup happens in the same scene of Richard's coronation. Buckingham finally sees Richard achieve the crown, the prize that he sacrifices his soul for by killing and plotting for Richard's benefit. However, Richard

walks away from Buckingham the moment he achieves his dreams; he turns against Buckingham despite the many sacrifices he makes for him, and he later orders his death.

Richard has no other credible character to plot with after Buckingham leaves. Buckingham leaves him with Ratcliffe and Catesby, who do not have much credibility,[41] as his only collaborators. Without any credible supporters, Richard immediately comes back to the audience to confide in us. He makes the audience neighbors to his counsels, once again. Richard speaks to the audience twice in 42 lines after his allegiance with Buckingham ends. Buckingham's departure is a sign of Richard losing control; he is being rebelled against. As soon as Buckingham leaves, Richard hears that his crown is being attacked by Richmond. He needs to feel empowered again, so he returns to the one supporter he thinks that he has everlasting control over. He also comes back to the audience so that he can have someone to devise new plans with, as he does in Act 1 when he is about to go to war.

Richard has to figure out an immediate plan to protect his crown from Richmond. Thus, he makes an impulsive decision. He decides that he has to marry his niece to secure his crown. Richard states, "I must be married to my brother's daughter, / Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass" (4.2 60-61).
Richard's decision to marry his niece shows that he has become a reactionary character. He loses control of foreshadowing how all of the events in the play will pan out because he places his prophesying in the hands of Buckingham. He goes from creating his own circumstances to having to live through the circumstances

41. Saccio, "Richard III," in *Shakespeare English Kings*, 178.

someone else creates. Richmond's impending attack represents a moment of desperation for Richard. Richard notes the tense times himself when he speaks of his kingdom standing on "brittle glass." Richmond starts directing the play; Richmond's actions and not Richard's begin controlling the play's plot. Richard becomes reactive to the play's plot versus being proactive and creating the plot.

The audience witnesses Richard feeling like he has lost control. He is being forced into performing actions as is indicated by his use of the word "must" when he speaks of marrying his brother's daughter. Richard is forced to think of a plan on the spot, and he decides to do something foolish that would not necessarily guarantee him the crown.[42] He acknowledges the flaws in his own plans when he states, "Murder her brothers, and then marry her - / Uncertain way of gain!" (4.2 62 -63). Richard's back is against the wall. Even though his plan is not the most sensible or feasible, he cannot take any other route to secure his crown because every gash that he has caused in the play is pouring blood, and he has no other choice but to wade in the blood of his crimes. He says "But I am in / So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin;" (4.2 63-64). Richard has committed so many murders that if he were to stop killing, he would still have to defend his crown. He is "so far in blood"[43] that he can no longer escape blood. Richard becomes trapped in his own war, and he needs clarity. Richard is always sure of his plans when he is conversing with the audience,

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42. This moment of Richard deciding something that does not necessarily make sense upon an impulse mirrors the moment that Richard juxtaposes being a lover with a villain in Act 1. He does not always decide the best plan or say the right thing when he has to be impulsive because he has the majority of the play's plot planned out by the beginning.

43. "So far in blood" is a reference that Shakespeare reuses in Macbeth to point to the dangers that Macbeth's ambition brings upon him. (3.4 143 -145).

and thus, he converses with the audience again after he begins to doubt the feasibility of his plans.

Richard's final speech to the audience in Act 4 is the longest soliloquy that he has in he middle of the play. This speech has eight lines, which doubles the amount of lines of the other soliloquies in Acts 3 and 4. This soliloquy follows a similar structure as the first soliloquy of the play. There is a section where he reflects on the past, and there is a section where he plans for the future. Richard uses the first four lines to recap the significant actions of the middle of the play, and the last four lines are dedicated to what he is going to do in the future. The soliloquy structure signals to the audience that Richard will reveal major plans for how he is going to keep his crown, a parallel to when he tells us that he is going to bring war to the peaceful court in Act 1. He states:

> The son of Clarence have I pent up close;
> His daughter meanly have I match'd in marriage;
> The sons of Edward sleep in Abraham's bosom,
> And Anne my wife hath bid this world good night (4.3 36 – 39).

These are the four recapping sentences of the soliloquy. Richard arranges the death of most of his family members in the play. His final words about his wife and his nephews sound like an obituary. Richard speaks of the characters' deaths as if they were a catharsis. He uses calming diction such as "bosom" and "bid goodnight" to pay his last respect to his family. He closes this chapter of his life, and then he tells the audience the next part of his plan.

The next part of his plan is to secure young Elizabeth's hand in order to secure his crown. He states:

> Now, for I know the Breton Richmond aims

> At young Elizabeth, my brother's daughter,
> And by that knot looks proudly on the crown –
> To her go I, a jolly thriving wooer (4.3 40-43).

Richard prepares the audience for the show that he is going to put on in order to try and woo young Elizabeth. These four lines prepare us for his "wooing show" as the last third of the first soliloquy prepares us for his "execution show." He is wooing Elizabeth in order to depower Richmond like he murders his brothers in order to depower them. Richard's return to speaking to the audience in his dire times points to his unfinishedness. Richard has an estranged relationship with the audience until his power begins to destruct. He cannot fulfill himself on his own; he needs the audience to finish help him achieve his ambitions. A new dawn awaits Richard in the final act.

Chapter 3

Introduction

Chapter 3 investigates the impact of Buckingham's death on Richard, and it also explores how Richard's relationship with himself and the audience is depicted in the final soliloquy. Buckingham's death foreshadows Richard's death at the end of the play, both metaphorically and physically. Richard's final soliloquy has two different components. The first three-fourths of the soliloquy dramatize the process of Richard coming to terms with the deaths he causes, and his realization that he has two sides: reflective Richard, the new self, and villainous Richard, the old self, that are in opposition to each other. His internal struggle results in the audience having a divided loyalty to his character. The last third of the soliloquy explores how Richard uses the audience to help him finish himself.

Act 5, the final act, of *Richard III* starts with Buckingham being led to his execution. Buckingham's execution is the last successful death that Richard orders in the play. Buckingham owns up to his sins before his death. He finds himself deserving of his death. He states:

> This is the day which in King Edward's time,
> I wish'd might fall on me when I was found
> False to his children and wife's allies.
> This is the day wherein I wish'd to fall
> By the false faith of whom I trusted (5.1 13-17).

Buckingham recalls the numerous jokes he makes about dying if he were ever to betray Edward, Edward's family or Richard. His jokes have now come to fruition. He

is being punished for all of his crimes. He accepts his punishment with open arms, and he repents his sins before he is led to his death. Richard mirrors this act later. Buckingham views his death as his rightful punishment for both helping Richard commit crimes, and for going against Richard. With Buckingham out of the picture, betrayed and battered by Richard, Richard is truly left on his own.

In a competition of the most villainous, Buckingham ranks second only to Richard, and thus, Buckingham's death at the beginning of the text foreshadows what happens with the most villainous character of them all, Richard III. Richard tells us that he has a mangled arm, in Act 2 Scene 4, and thus, we know that one of his arms is useless. Richard loses his second arm when Buckingham, his right hand man, dies. Thus, Richard begins Act 5 armless. This metaphor of Richard being armless remains a part of Act 5's subplot. Richard is physically disarmed in the battle with Richmond. Richard's first moment of being disarmed occurs in Act 5 Scene 3. Richard becomes mentally disarmed in his dream when he struggles to come to terms with all of his heinous murders; the contents of his dreams make him bewildered.

Richard has a spectacular sense of time throughout the first four acts of the play. However, when he begins his final soliloquy in Act 5 Scene 3, he is disoriented. He wakes up from a dream, and he is less assertive, less confident, and he is self-loathing. Richard's disorientation makes this soliloquy unlike the others in the text. Instead of revealing a plan to the audience, the audience witnesses Richard have a vulnerable conversation with himself. Richard is not thinking about manipulating anyone when the soliloquy begins. He, instead, questions himself to understand why

he kills so many people, including his family in the play. The final soliloquy promises to give the audience the opportunity to experience Richard in a new way, and thus, our relationship with him is altered because we get to see the unguarded side of Richard for the first time. We travel from a pre-meditated speech in the first soliloquy, to witnessing Richard being reactionary in the middle of the text, to witnessing an improvised speech in the final act. The audience is the only one that gets to witness Richard from all of his perspectives.

The stage direction at the beginning of the soliloquy reads, "Richard starteth out of a dream" (5.3). The audience immediately realizes that an outside force is acting on Richard at the beginning of this speech. He does not have any self-control. He is unprepared, and he is unaware of himself. His guard is down because he is not conscious, and he is in a vulnerable state. Richard's guard has been taken away from him by sleep. He startles out of the dream, and he is in a confused and fragmented state when he begins to speak. Richard cries, "Give me another horse! Bind up my wounds! / Have mercy, Jesu!" (5.3 178 – 179). Richard wakes up believing he is on the battlefield. He believes that he is injured, which can be seen when he says, "bind up my wounds." Richard is in a state of terror. Richard believes that his life is being harmed, as can be seen when he screams for "mercy," and for "Jesus." The audience witnesses Richard in a heightened state of fright. He lacks precision, and he is unsure of himself in this state.

The audience sees that Richard is a determined soldier. He is scared, but he does not give up. He calls for another horse to keep fighting. Richard shows that he is willing to fight until his last breath to keep his crown, and the audience once again

sees that Richard would do anything for the crown. Even without meaning to, he shows us the price he is willing to pay for the crown – his life, through his dream. The crown is on his mind even in his sleep. Richard's tormented, but yet determined, state of mind in the first two lines of the soliloquy sets up the tone for the remainder.

This soliloquy brings forth the first moment in the play where Richard is frantically and manically speaking to himself with limited awareness. The audience is not finding out information because he wants us to, but rather, we are eavesdropping on him in his limbo state. He is not immediately aware of our presence, and thus, he speaks about himself in a carefree tone, which happens to be self-abasing. He states, "O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!" (5.3 180). Richard III calling himself a coward is a surprising act because he has proven to be a fearless murderer throughout the first four acts. Richard begins to show signs of falling apart when he starts belittling himself; he is not the solid certain character that he was before**.** Beyond calling himself a coward, the word "conscience" also shines a new light on Richard's character.

Everything that Richard has done so far in the text forbids him from claiming he has a conscience. Richard is a not innocent, he kill before the play starts, and he goes through the majority of the play killing, and being comfortable with being a villain*.* He has never shown full comprehension of knowing how to respond to people when they are grieving. He laughs in the face of the family of his victims, he murders children, and he murders his own family. He creates arguments when someone is on their deathbed, and he frightens the young children in the play after

someone dies. He never walks away from a murder in the play. What causes Richard to become reflective at the end of the play? Richard realizes that he stands a great chance of being avenged for the murders he causes; he is alone, and his crown is standing on brittle glass. He wants the audience to identify with his human characteristics and finally give him our support. Richard's mention of having a conscience begins to highlight a new developing reflective side. Once Richard become reflective, a struggle begins to brew between his newfound conscience and his old villainous self.

Richard's life flashes before his eyes within his dream, and he sees an image of himself killing people. Richard himself is taken aback by the images of his own dream. He does not realize the full magnitude of his killings until he sees all of the faces of his victim roll off his conscience and onto his eyelids in his dreams. He realizes that he is leaving the legacy of a murder behind. Shakespeare dramatizes that Richard needed to be in a fresh state, and he needed to have an out of body experience in order for him to reflect on all of his actions and see the hurt he causes. The dream is the catalyst that transports Richard out of the mindset of constantly yearning to murder and into the mindset of a reflective person who begins to realize the destruction he causes by killing so many people. He needed to see himself away from the judgment of living characters in order for him to realize how much hurt and pain he causes everyone. The dream also allows Richard to understand himself from the perspective of others, achieving a feat that all of the other characters in the play failed at, and he realizes his own flaws.

Richard's dream causes him to question whether there is anything good or redeeming about himself. Richard states, "Is there a murder here?" No. Yes, I am!" (5.3 185). The dream causes Richard to seek understanding of his true self. The first striking aspect of this excerpt is the fact that Richard questions his own identity. Richard's questioning of his identity is a profound act because he has proven to be a self-aware character. He is aware of himself enough to know that he has the tactics and the intelligence to murder his way successfully to the crown. Richard has never been uncertain of himself; Richard showcases a new part of himself when he questions whether or nor he is a murderer. Richard's act of questioning himself highlights the internal struggle that manifests within this soliloquy between the two different sides of Richard.

A second personality that he does not know immerges from within Richard. Richard does not define the second side of himself that emerges within the final soliloquy. However, the audience knows that there is villainous Richard who is determined to justify his malicious actions at all costs. We know that the second personality is not a lover because Richard still does not engage in the pleasing post war lifestyle. Thus, this leaves a reflective Richard, who attempts to straighten villainous Richard's moral compass, and make him embrace his crimes. Richard's moral compass has been skewed from the beginning when he equates being a lover with being a villain. Villainous Richard does not want to be inhabited by a reflective side; he does not want to accept that he is a murderer. However, it is too late, the dream awakes and plants this reflective side into his brain. These two sides try to overpower each other in order to completely inhabit his body. Villainous Richard

tries to deny his crimes, and reflective Richard tries to make him own up to his crimes. The constant back and forth of these two sides of Richard are expressed in every sentence where Richard attaches a new humiliating label to himself such as when he calls himself a murder. The dream allows Richard to see himself beyond his façade.

Richard struggles to understand his newly discovered self. The short questions, and his short uncertain answers to his own questions concerning his identity, all point to Richard's internal struggle. Richard's inability to reconcile the two parts of himself makes it difficult for the character to have a unified relationship with the audience because both of his sides are vying for the audience's attention, and they are against each other. Thus, the audience is left to bear witness to Richard's uncovering of himself for the majority of the soliloquy. Richard's dream allows the audience to finally observe the character without him forcing his power upon us. He does not have enough awareness within the soliloquy to deal control himself and the audience at the same time.

The only thing Richard knows for certain about himself by the end of his play is what he physically looks like on the outside. He has no clue who he truly is on the inside. It is only after he pursues the crown, to complete himself physically that he realizes his own mental incompleteness. If anyone, Richard should know who he is because every other character sees him as a one-dimensional villain, and he is the only character that knows his motives for his villainy. Richard's uncertainty of whether or not he is a murderer references back to the character being unfinished. The one other person who has experienced Richard from every facet of his

personality is the audience, and if Richard cannot tell us who he is, then we are left to determine Richard's character on our own. Richard's uncertainty of whether or not he is murderer represents the first moment in the soliloquy where the seed for the audience to complete Richard is planted.

The dream shows Richard his true colors, and he is afraid to face himself. The killing of twelve people, even though it looks awful on paper, is imaginable. However, Richard's reaction to himself makes the murders seem unimaginable because he goes from being a merciless killer to being scared of himself when he realizes exactly how many deaths he has ordered. Richard states, "Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh. / What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by;" (5.3 182-183). The dream causes Richard to have a visceral reaction to the crimes he commits. His eyes finally see the faces of the people he kills, and his ears finally hear their painful cries of terror. It takes twelve murders to make Richard become afraid of murdering himself, not because he wants to, but because killing has become so automatic to him that he fears he will kill the next thing in sight, which is himself. Richard has an enemy in every soliloquy that he aspires to kill, and this time he is his own enemy. The audience witnesses Richard's own conscience, his own self, bring him despair in his final soliloquy; not the members of the court as it has been in the text.

Richard is shocked by his own ability to fear himself. He has a hard time accepting his self-fear. He states, "there's none else by" (5.2 183). By saying, "there's none else by," Richard shows that he is looking for someone else, beside himself, to fear. Richard's self-fear cause him to feel insecure about his love. He begins to

understand how detrimental and shallow his love has been throughout the play. He states, “Richard loves Richard, that is, I and I” (5.3 184). Richard is shocked to find out that his love for himself is not strong enough to keep him safe from his murderous tendencies. Richard loves himself, but he is still not safe from himself because his desire for murder outweighs his love. It is his love for himself that leads him down the bloody path of getting the crown because he feels like he deserves to be king, and this same love for himself threatens his life in this excerpt.

Richard’s self-fear makes him feel distant from himself.

Richard tries to avoid speaking about himself in the third person in order to feel closer to himself. He is trying to understand what it means to be himself. Richard states, “Richard loves Richard, that is, I and I” (5.3 184). This third person Richard is dangerous, he is self-inflicting; he forces Richard to see himself with unmasked eyes, and Richard does not want this. Thus, he speaks of himself in the first person by breaking “Richard and Richard” down to “I and I.” The “I and I” shows the character’s thought process: he goes from seeing himself as the Richard that is the murderer that his dream suggests, to being “I,” the confident self loving person that he knows. Richard fights to feel like he knows himself; he struggles to love himself wholeheartedly again. Thus, he uses the first person pronoun to him feel like a unified being rather than two separate parts. However, even his usage of the first person cannot keep him from having to deal with the two confrontational sides of himself.

Richard turns upon himself when he realizes how much pain he has caused. Richard states, “Fool, of thyself self speak well! Fool do not flatter” (5.3 192). The

two sides of Richard are at war again. Villainous Richard tells his reflective side to stop speaking badly against himself, and his reflective side tells him to not flatter himself, he is indeed a murderer. The Richard of the first four acts would never call himself a fool. No one would ever call Richard a fool either because he has proven his cleverness over the course of the play. A fool is the most demeaning name that Richard calls himself in the entire play, even being a murder and villain means that he has some great talents, even if said talent is killing people. Richard never insults himself, he holds himself upon the highest of pedestals, and he boasts of his own intelligence within the play, especially when he woos Lady Anne. By calling himself a "fool," the audience realizes that Richard has come to a point where he is reflecting and being judgmental of his own characteristics.

The reflective Richard is not letting the character run away from seeing himself as everyone else sees him. The reflective Richard knows that Richard does not deserve to be spoken of well because he has murdered many people, and he deserves to wear the tile of murderous villain within the play. The more Richard negatively judges himself, the more the audience is being forced to see Richard's redeeming qualities. Reflective Richard sentences himself as punishment for his crimes. However, this does not mean that the old Richard gives up. There is still a glimpse of the villainous pompous and confident Richard that we have come to know who is telling his reflective side to speak well of him. There is a side of Richard that still believes he deserves respect, despite his realization that he has indeed hurt a lot of people. The old Richard with a dark confident humor is still present within the last soliloquy.

Richard tries to clear his name in this soliloquy. Richard states, “I am a villain – yet I lie, I am not!” (5.3 192). All of the evidence of his dream points to him being a murderer and a villain; however, he does not want to accept this. Richard is being hit with a true depiction of himself blow after blow. He cannot catch his breath to even try to process himself; he becomes more and more confused by what he discovers about himself as he ponders. Richard was okay with simply ordering the murders, but he does not want to face them. Richard’s desire to be in denial about being a murderer explains the soft and lulling way that he speaks about his wife and nephew’s death in Act 4. As soon as he comes face to face with his victims, he loses his steadfast malicious persona. Richard himself decides that he going to prove a villain, but yet, he backtracks from the title when someone else is actually holding him to the title because he does not want to confirm to the other characters ideas about himself. He has been rejecting being labeled by the other characters since the first soliloquy.

Every single ghost tells Richard that he is a villain, and being condemned by others causes him deny the title. He states, “and every tongue brings in several tale, / and every tale condemns me for a villain:” (5.3 195 – 196). Richard does not want to be classified by the other characters in the play. Every murder he commits was done out of spite and pure evilness, and thus, Richard is guilty of being a murder from whichever angle his killings are analyzed. Richard seeks to be a villain in the beginning of the play, and by the end, he is wearing the title effortlessly. However, after he achieves his goal of proving to be villainous, he is unhappy with himself. He does not want to be a villain; he wants to be a victim who receives pity. Richard’s

backtracking on his identity at the end of the play highlights his unfinished state once again. He achieves both of his goals, he gets both titles: villain and king. However, the titles do not complete him as he hopes. Richard is never at peace with himself; he is never satisfied. He is unsettled. He does not get to wear one title for a long time. As soon as he gets the crown, he has to defend it. As soon as he becomes accustomed to his identity of being the king, he is confronted with being the villain once again. Richard constantly jumps in between identities and mental states.

He starts the play as a solider, and then he chooses to become a villain because he cannot be lover. He is a brother, an uncle, a husband, and a friend, but then he decides to kill his family members so he is left without any familial ties. The one solid relationship that Richard has throughout the text is a strong sense of himself, and at the end, this relationship begins to deteriorate. He is suddenly faced with a conscience that allows him to truly reflect on his actions, and he cannot stand it because this "cowardly conscience" (5.3 180) makes him see himself through his victims' eyes. The blood from his victims blinds him to this true self; he does not see himself clearly until these same victims show him his true colors in his dreams. He becomes torn in between seeing himself as the Richard that he knew throughout the play who loves and respects himself, and the new self-condemning Richard. The more that the character loses understanding of himself the more raw he becomes to the audience, and thus, we grow closer to him because we see him in an unedited and natural state.

Reflective Richard sentences himself; he speaks all of his faults, and he judges himself as a murderous villain taking the opportunity to do so away from the

audience. Villainous Richard switches gears at the end of the soliloquy. He realizes that he cannot reconcile his image and make himself seem noble, trusting or admirable. He realizes that he possesses a mental incompleteness in addition to his curtailed physical body, and thus, he decides to place the task of determining who he is upon the audience. The audience is given the task of being the savior of Richard's legacy at the very end of the soliloquy; we become responsible for telling his post-play legacy positively. Reflective Richard takes care of the character's negative legacy in the actual play. He states his guilty verdict, and he puts a rest to his case. However, villainous Richard does not sentence himself, he places his verdict in the hands of the audience, and he begs the audience to think differently of his character. The audience ultimately has to finish Richard because he is unable to do so himself. The audience has experienced the entire play both forcibly at Richard's side, and at an observable distance. Thus, we have a clear idea of whom Richard is regardless of whether we find him to be a villain or not.

Richard asks a lot of questions in this soliloquy. These questions play a dual role. Firstly, the questions dramatize Richard's struggle to make sense of his own identity. Secondly, the questions force the audience to make sense of Richard's identity. Richard asks the audience and himself the questions simultaneously. When he asks himself whether he should fear himself, he also asks the audience whether he should fear himself. When he questions whether he should take revenge on himself, he is also asking the audience whether he should revenge himself. Richard fires off these questions at a quick pace at the beginning of the soliloquy. He knows that the evidence proves that he is guilty so he does not give us the time to give him

an unwanted sentence. However, when it comes to the questions of whether Richard deserves pity, the momentum of the questions, and the diction slows down. Richard takes his time because he truly wants the audience to process this question, and find a reason to pity him. Richard wants the audience to judge him differently than how he has been judged by his other reflective side. Richard's only benefit to being king is his place in history; he wants to make sure that he has a great legacy so he sets out to woo the audience for their support. He asks us to spare his legacy at the end of the soliloquy.

Villainous Richard is concerned about the audience's perception of him. Thus, he tries to victimize himself, in order to make us pity him. Richard states:

> I shall despair. There is no creature loves me,
> And if I die, no soul will pity me –
> And wherefore should they, since that I myself
> Find in myself no pity to myself? (5.3 201 – 204).

Richard draws another parallel with being a villain and being a lover in his final soliloquy. He does not want to face what he does, and thus, he tries to justify his actions by speaking of being unloved. Richard says that "there is no creature that loves me" after he is condemned for being a villain (5.3 200). Richard blames his lack of love for his villainous downfall. Throughout the play, Richard tries to equate either his inability to love or to be loved as the reason for him choosing to be a villain. Although Richard says that he is a villain, and he finds no pity within himself, he does not actually want to be pitiless.

Richard would not have asked who would pity him if he was not looking for pity. He wants to be spared. Richard calls on the one supporter that he still feels like he has control over to support him and pity him, the audience. However, for the first

time in the play, Richard asks the audience for their permission. He does not assume that the audience will pity him, he asks the audience to pity him. He places the task before us, and he gives us the opportunity to make up our own minds about him. When Richard asks, "Wherefore should they?" he is essentially asking the audience "why should I be pitied? By framing the question in this manner, he automatically makes the audience think of reasons why he should be pitied.

Richard calls himself a villain, and this term can be taken at face value, and the audience can mindlessly classify him as a villain because he labels himself one. However, when he questions whether or not he should be pitied, the audience undoes any mindless dismissal of his character that previously occurred, and we ask ourselves whether or not he deserves sympathy. Questions allow us to be open-minded; we cannot be passive to Richard. However, it is impossible for the audience to conclude that there is nothing morally redeeming about his character because Richard has shown that he has some admirable qualities such as his humor and intelligence throughout the play.

Richard casts the audience as his moral compass; we get to decide exactly how bad his actions are, and the degree to which his legacy should be condemned. When Richard asks why he should be pitied, the audience is automatically placed on the spot to come up with an answer. Questions are live and in the moment, when they are asked, we have an immediate reaction: a reaction to answer, a realization that we do not have an answer, or simply a moment of acknowledgement of what was said. Questions jolt the brain into action and thought. The audience has an unpremeditated response to his questions because we are not expecting them.

There are varying meanings to Richard's pity question. Firstly, Richard asks us whether or not we have the capacity to feel sympathy for someone who feels lonely, disregarded, unloved, and fearful. Secondly, Richard asks the audience whether we have any sympathy for someone who felt that they had to carry out such monstrous actions in order to be respected. When the question is seen from these two perspectives, it causes the audience to ask our self whether Richard's motives justify his killings. We meet Richard feeling neglected and unloved at the beginning of the play, and we find him in the same state at the end of the play. To say yes, Richard's motives justifies his actions, is appalling because then one becomes an advocate of his murder. However, the answer also cannot be a simple no because Richard has reasons and justifications for his actions, even if they are trivial. Richard cannot garnish enough pity within himself to save his own character from being classified as a villain. However, Richard successfully makes the audience consider whether or not he deserves any pity. The audience's simple pondering of the question ensues him with some pity because we stop to think about the question, giving Richard some of our time. The audience's act of thinking about pitying Richard is the moment in the play where we become complicit to Richard's crimes.

Despite killing twelve people, Richard still has the ability to grab our attention and make us think about whether or not he deserves pity at the end of the play. The fact that Richard still has the ability to grab and hold our attention after he has forced us to be submissive to his leadership points to Richard's charismatic wooing. Richard manages to build a relationship with the audience because he lives

up to his word. He promises to put on a show for our entertainment in the beginning of the play, and he remains committed to this ambition. The audience develops a weird form of trust for Richard because he lives up to his ambition, and thus, at the end this trust manifests itself into our pondering about whether or not he deserves to be pitied. After five acts of Richard projecting a bond between himself and us, the audience chooses to become complicit with Richard, and we think about pitying him on our own.

The tone of the soliloquy tells us that the play is reaching its climax. Richard experiences a metaphorical death in the soliloquy when he finally sees himself as a murderer and a villain, and he understands the harm that he causes within the play. He condemns himself as a result of these discoveries, and in his condemnation he repents. Richard asks the audience for rightful judgment immediately after he dreams of his own death, and this action gives the soliloquy a repentance tone. Richard has never held himself to the judgment of others within the play, and yet he does so at the very end. Why? Richard realizes that the time for his death is coming. The eye-opening dream, self-doubt, terror, and impending war all help Richard to know that his death is potentially near. Richard knows that he may not win the war, and as a result, he tries to get the audience rallying behind him before he enters the war with Richmond. When Richard's dream is seen from this perspective, it sheds new light on the beginning of his speech.

Richard's cry for another horse at the beginning of the soliloquy can be seen as a plea for another life, another legacy from the audience. He wants us to bind up his wounds and retell his story from a less bloody perspective. He wants to be saved,

and restored. His cry for mercy can be seen as a plea to the audience to pity and not condemn him. Richard wants the audience to have mercy on his legacy all in the name of Jesus; he calls us on our own morality, he makes us think about forgiveness. The way that the audience feels about Richard's character is a reflection of our own morality and not his. Richard is asking the audience to remain on his side, see him through the end of the play, and beyond, even though he has caused an immense amount of harm. We are made to feel that pitying Richard is the right thing to do because being judgmental is a negative characteristic. Richard asks the audience to save him, and finish him, and we take him up on this offer.

Audiences all over the world have been finishing Richard for over four hundred years. Every time the play is performed, filmed, analyzed, read, or written about, we are finishing Richard by interpreting his character. An exploration of how Richard has been finished in two films in the last 55 years follows in chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Introduction

The story of Richard III is "unfinished" until the play is analyzed as a theatrical piece. In his text *Shakespeare and the Film*, Roger Manvell argues, "It can be claimed that Shakespeare's dramatic art is best fulfilled on the screen through an uncompromising transmutation of everything for which his words stand into an entirely new form, made up of images-with-sound."[44] Film has long been a medium for Shakespeare's plays, and like each theatrical production, each film interprets each play in a unique way. Laurence Olivier and Ian McKellen are two of the most astounding and respected actors of all time, and they both have starred as Richard III in two of the most pioneering productions of the play.

This chapter explores how Laurence Olivier and Ian McKellen "finish" the character Richard III in their respective film productions. Both productions start with Edward IV's coronation, emphasizing immediately that the play is about power and family. Both films finish Richard by depicting him as a family member who chooses to distance himself from his family for the love of power by starting with the coronation. Both films also point to Richard's military abilities by referencing his speech from *Henry VI Part III.* Gloucester is an accomplished soldier in *Henry VI Part III* who chooses to become the villainous Richard in *Richard III*. I am going to look at Ian McKellen's production of *Richard III* first because it is the more recent of the two films.

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44. *Shakespeare and the Film*, 16.

Ian McKellen acquires a false face, a façade that he uses to disguise the contempt and hatred he feels for his family when he is in their presence. He smiles and laughs, and pretends he is enjoying their company so that he can later manipulate them without them being suspicious of his intentions. McKellen goes through the entire film being able to hide behind his façade until his final soliloquy, where the ghosts frighten him, and he is forced to engage with his vulnerable emotions. Richard shows that he is not just a manipulative murderer, but he is also insecure and lonely in the ghost scene, and once he experiences these vulnerable emotions, he is unable to completely bury them again in the film. He becomes overwhelmed by his fear, and it leads him to take his own life at the end of the play McKellen's expression of fear, and his suicide, allows the audience to see Richard's humane side by the end.

Olivier's Richard is in many ways the opposite of McKellen's. Olivier seeks to complete, or to "finish," Richard by portraying him as someone who hates love and is more devious than Machiavelli. Olivier draws upon the characteristics of the Machiavel and the Big Bad Wolf to help him create his Richard. He reveals his intentions to portray the character in a dark and unscrupulous way in his opening soliloquy, and he retains these characteristics until his death. He expresses a quick moment of fear in the ghost scene, however, the majority of the scene is cut, and Oliver quickly returns to being his old hateful self. Olivier's character does not change within the film; Olivier starts and ends his production as the Big Bad Machiavel; he fights to his death.

Ian McKellen's Film

Ian McKellen's *Richard III* was produced in 1995. Renowned British director Richard Loncraine directed the film, and McKellen and Loncraine adapted the screenplay. The play was taken out of its original setting, and it was reimagined in Europe of the 1930s for the production. McKellen's Richard speaks the play's famous lines supported by media savvy, black-shirted thugs and heavy artillery.[45] McKellen's Richard enters the post-WWII American and British imagination via film.[46] Jared Johnson argues, "McKellen's film assigns Shakespeare to a specific, though anachronistic, time period, setting the film in an imaginary Britain between the World Wars and appropriates one of the play's major themes, Richard's manipulation of the masses, to fit with a twentieth-century recasting of the play."[47] This review of the film aligns with concepts of modernity that McKellen himself had about his own film. In the introduction to his screenplay, he states, "In 1958 I saw Laurence Olivier's Richard II at the Odeon Cinema in Bolton. A spell was cast as I watched the shadows of great actors and I had continued my juvenile sense that Shakespeare was for everybody. I hope that today's young audience might feel something similar when they see our film."[48] McKellen's portrayal of Richard III was noted as being a cold, gripping study of the political cunning and spiritual bareness of fascism.[49] Despite such reviews, McKellen himself answers the question of how he chose to finish Richard. He writes, "It is an odd, critical commonplace that, despite

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45. "Richard III: Screenplay," Ian McKellen Official Home Page, accessed November 15, 2013.
46. Jared Scott Johnson, "The Propaganda Imperative: Challenging Mass Media Representations in McKellen's 'Richard III,'" *College Literature* 31, no. 4 (2004): 46, accessed September 3, 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25115227.
47. Johnson, "The Propaganda Imperative: Challenging," 47.
48. "Richard III: Screenplay," Introduction.
49. Colley, "Performing as Gloucester," in *Richard's Himself Again*, 261.

so many performances to the contrary, Richard III is still accepted as an embodiment of pure evil . . . I was prepared to explore Richard's humanity rather than reduce him to an emblem of wickedness."[50] McKellen wanted the audience to experience Richard's humanity, and he uses the final soliloquy to portray Richard in the most humane way.

First Soliloquy

Richard's first speech of the film begins as a public announcement to the court. Everyone is gathered in a ballroom of the palace for the king's coronation. Richard stands on a stage and scratches the mesh of the singer's microphone before he begins to speak. With this action, he signals that he is on air, and that he is ready to entertain the court; his entertainment for the night, however, is not singing. Richard says the first nine lines of the play to the entire court, taking pauses to smile and entertain the crowd as he goes along. All of the characters respond accordingly by smiling and laughing at what they think are jokes. Richard stands on stage and puts on a show for the court, disguising his maliciousness, showing the audience how he uses his façade to manipulate the court. The film changes the audience of the soliloquy from the original play-text. McKellen directs the first third to the court, and he directs the last two-thirds to the audience in confidence, instead of directing the entire speech to audience as the text as it is in the play text.

On the line, "Grim-visag'd War," (5.3 9) McKellen stops smiling, and the camera begins to zoom in on his face. The camera zooms in on McKellen's face to focus on his yellow rotten teeth. The film draws our attention to Richard's mouth.

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50. "Richard III: Screenplay," Introduction.

Even though the production uses guns and military artillery to dramatize the deaths of the characters, Richard's mouth is the most detrimental weapon the play. It is the weapon that he uses to order every killing that occurs within the play. It is important that Richard's teeth are rotten because this is the director's way of giving the audience an inside view of Richard, and he tells us that Richard is rotten on the inside. Being rotten is one of the first ways that Richard is "finished" within the text. In addition to his mouth, Richard's general face is important within the film because he uses the chameleon ability of his face to manipulate the characters. He makes the court thinks that he is happy about the war being over during the first third of his speech when he is not. McKellen's false face finishes Richard throughout the text until he gets the pretense knocked off of his face by the ghosts in his final soliloquy. The zooming in of the camera also takes away the coronation court, and places Richard in a dark stifling word by himself.

The camera begins to separate Richard from the court before he physically separates himself by leaving the stage and going to the bathroom on the line "He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber" (1.1 12). The speech transitions from being entertainment for the court to being the revelation of a death plan to the audience. McKellen transforms from being a family man talking about the war to being a man who is against his family. The first person he begins to insult is the king, and he does this in the confidence of the audience. The camera makes a sharp cut to show Richard walking into the bathroom where he begins to speak of his bleak past.

McKellen takes a deep sigh as he urinates in the bathroom. He uses the natural relief that comes from urinating to help him with his inflections. He states,

"But I that am not made for sportive tricks," (1.1 14). The sigh helps the audience to feel McKellen's regret and sadness as he speaks of himself being unsatisfying to women. He bows his head when he says, "I that am rudely stamp'd" (5.3 16), as if he is inspecting himself as he speaks. His motion attempts to show us where he is rudely stamped, his penis. This phallic meaning that he associates with the phrase "rudely stamp'd" fits the context of the speech because he is speaking about his relationship with women. When he speaks of being deformed, he readjusts his immobilized arm that is slung against his body, drawing the audience's attention to his deformity, mangled arm. McKellen's interaction with his physical self begins to show the audience that the character feels inferior about his body.

McKellen leans into a mirror as he tells us that his only pastime is to descant on his own shadow, and he takes another deep breath. By looking into the mirror, we see the actor physically react to his blasted, sagging self that he sees reflected in the mirror with sadness.[51] This is also the first moment where he goes off the script of the original play-text. McKellen quotes from Gloucester's monologue in Act 3 Scene 2 of *Henry VI Part III.* He says, "Why, I can smile; and murder while I smile; / And wet my cheeks with artificial tears / And frame my face to all occasions!"[52] McKellen uses these additional lines from *Henry VI Part III* to frame the way he portrays Richard. Richard chooses to become a chameleon and "frame his face to all occasions." He is confident that he can disguise his true emotions, and portray whatever emotion is necessary to deceive all of the other characters. These lines are

51. "Richard III: Screenplay," Ian McKellen Official Home Page. Scene 17.
52. "Screenplay," Scene 17.

the only additions to the soliloquy, and they are used to inform the audience about how McKellen shapes Richard III.

McKellen emphasizes Richard's deceitfulness. McKellen's Richard never, consciously, depicts honest emotions in the film; he portrays whatever emotion will allow him to have more power. Since Richard frames his face for all occasions, McKellen does not even show his true emotions to the audience. Thus, McKellen's Richard has a less honest relationship with the audience than the play-text's Richard. The audience is meant to believe that Richard is always honest in his soliloquies in the play-text, and thus, we feel like we know the true Richard. However, the film takes away some of the sacredness of the audience's and Richard's relationship. McKellen's revelation to the audience that he always wears false emotions on his face serves as Richard's final moment of contemplation before he begins to put action to his villainy. This is the last introductory information that Richard felt he had to share with the audience before he puts on his show.

McKellen turns away from the mirror, stares directly at the audience, and he tells us that he is going to become a villain. His voice drops to emphasize the word villain, and as he walks toward the door, a smirk is spread across his face. Dramatic music begins playing to mark the end of the soliloquy. Once Richard gets to the door, he does a one finger "follow me" gesture, and he leads us outside so that we can witness the plans that he has set against Clarence come into fruition. This "follow me" gesture is the moment that Richard tries to attach the audience to him in the film. This act happens much later in the film than it does in the play. Richard attaches the audience to himself before the play starts in the text. McKellen;

however, builds a relationship with the audience, he shows and tells us about his false nature before he tries to attach us to him. The audience's attachment to Richard in the film then becomes an act that the audience does willingly because McKellen completely opens up about his character before he tells us to follow him. We know that he is villainous already, and if we decide to follow him, the fault is our own.

Final Soliloquy

McKellen's final soliloquy to the audience begins with him being in an agonizing dream. He is snoring and snorting with his mouth open; he has a sweaty face; and the voices of the ghosts are immediately heard in the background. In addition to the voices, the looming blue background helps to invoke the eeriness of the night. A low tune is heard in the background throughout Richard's dream. The ghosts are not seen on the screen; however, Richard sees what each and every one of them looked like as they were about to die.[53] McKellen violently jerks forward in his sleep in an attempt to get away from the ghosts' voices as they yell and curse him; however, he is unable to do so. The sweat on his face shows his violent struggle to awaken from his dream. He twists, turns, and breathes so laboriously that he sounds as though he is suffocating. He is arguably indeed suffocating from his guilt as he faces the deaths he orders within the play for the first time.

McKellen wakes up from his dream gasping, sweating, trembling and choking upon his spit to Queen Elizabeth's labored and distraught cry of "Where are my children?" He blinks hurriedly to wash the images of the ghosts away from his eyes,

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53. "Screenplay," Introduction.

struggling to catch his breath, and as he realizes that he is only dreaming, he shrinks back into his bed and sighs in relief. However, the wrinkles on his forehead, and the tension that he holds in his contracted shoulders can still be seen, and he begins rubbing his sweaty forehead, and he closes his eyes as he says the first line of the monologue: "O coward conscience" (5.3 180). Richard is in a total state of hysteria. His sweat exposes his fear to the audience. He struggles to get control of his composure, which is difficult because he is in a total state of exhaustion. The ghosts take away his ability to control his false face.

Richard cannot face the truth about the murder he commits in his dreams. He covers his eyes as he states, "Oh coward conscience," (5.3 180) and he only opens his eyes and rubs his temples when he asks, "What do I fear? (5.3 183). Richard continues the monologue saying "There's none else by; / Richard loves Richard, that is, I and I" (5.3 183 – 184). Richard is alone. All that he has is himself, and while giving this speech, he is lying in a dark room on a simple bed without all of the glamour of his crown that he murders for. He takes labored sighs, loud gulps, and rubs his forehead as he says the rest of the monologue.

Richard looks around as he asks, "Is there a murderer here?" (5.3 185). And as he says "yes I am," (5.3 185) he closes his eyes again. When he says, "yes I am" the audience can hear the difficulty he has admitting that he is a murder; there is a lot of hesitancy in his pronunciation of the "yes." Richard begins to show some progress in finishing himself by attaching a "murder" label to himself; however, he does not want to face this identity. He stutters and prolongs his pronunciation of the word. McKellen knits his brow when he says, "I love myself. Why?" (5.3 186). The knitting

of his brow shows that he is trying to understand how he looks to the other characters in the play. He keeps his eyes closed until line 190.

Richard opens his eyes completely when he says, “O no, alas, I rather hate myself / For hateful deeds committed by myself. / I am a villain” (5.3 191-192). He says he is a villain with absolute certainty, staring at the ceiling and taking a long pause after the phrase. The opening of his eyes during the delivery of these lines, and his straightforward delivery of the word “villain” shows that Richard has finally realized how much he has hurt the other characters within the play. However, he is so accustomed to hiding his true emotions that even when he tries to show them, his old habit of lying about his feelings resurface. As a result, he closes his eyes again and he says, “yet I lie, I am not” (5.3 192). He is trying to escape the reality that he creates. However, Richard shows that he realizes that he is indeed a villain when he says that his own conscience finds him guilty (5.3 194 -200). He speaks the word “guilty” slowly, and clearly. There is no heavy breathing or choking on his words. The fluidity of his words shows his realization of his crimes. He accepts that he is a villain; however, he does not want the audience to classify him as a villain for the rest of the play. Once Richard realizes that his soul is doomed because of his murderous actions, he decides to invoke pity within the audience.

When McKellen says, “I shall despair. There is no creature loves me, / And if I die, no soul will pity me - ” (5.3 201), he closes his eyes and his lips quiver; he gulps, swallowing his tears. Here, the actor completely lets us in on the character’s mental state; we see that McKellen’s Richard is vulnerable and completely distraught because of his isolation and neglect from the other characters. McKellen shows the

audience that he actually carries deep hurt within him because he is unloved within the play. He is not all villainous; he also feels emotions like the characters that he kills. McKellen is in such a lonesome state that when Ratcliffe approaches him at his bed, he is surprised by the presence of someone else. As soon as Ratcliffe approaches McKellen, and he realizes someone has come to comfort him, he grabs onto Ratcliffe's hand, and the motion that he uses to stand up from his bed is that of someone being reigned in by a lifeguard from dangerous waters. Ratcliffe drags McKellen to a sitting position, circling him with one hand, and clasping a blanket to his body with the other, and McKellen holds onto him dearly. The drowning image established within this moment is developed throughout the scene with McKellen's sweaty body, his loss of breath, and the continuous gulps of air that he takes at no success of easing his hysteria.

McKellen's head is on Ratcliffe's shoulders, and Ratcliffe presses his head to McKellen's, and he rocks McKellen as he exclaims his fears. The way that McKellen holds onto Ratcliffe and takes comfort in having someone around to comfort him shows the audience that Richard have always wanted to have someone love him. However, he becomes so caught up in only expressing false emotions that he loses his ability to engage with his real emotions unless he is unconscious. This soliloquy is the first time in the play where Richard gets a break from killing, and Ratcliffe is the first person that comforts Richard in the film and in the text. He never has any family by his side. The audience sees him feeling neglected and hurt in his first moment away from killing. Thus, the audience is meant to believe that Richard hurt in his quiet moments, and as a result, he carries out evil actions in order to rid

himself of his pain when he is awake, and bustling in the court. McKellen truly portrays Richard as a character that uses a façade in order to hide his deep-rooted pain.

The fact that Ratcliffe, another soldier and not a family member, comes to Richard's aid in his moment of deep woe shows Richard's lack of family. The scene ends with Ratcliffe telling Richard "be not afraid of Shadows," (5.3 216) and Richard sobbing into his arms. Ratcliffe's and Richard's relationship within the film gives the audience an insight into Richard's personality that is not readily apparent in the text. We see Richard physically depend on someone else, and we see him trust someone else when he is vulnerable, not only for conspiracy purposes as he does with Buckingham. The audience witnesses Richard being unguarded and emotionally transparent. This moment is especially important because it is the last time that Richard speaks to the audience in confidence, and he "finishes" himself to us by owning up to his villainy, and showing us that he is capable of feeling humane emotions, for the first time.

The placement of this speech within both the text and the film allows the audience to see Richard in a new state; it is the first time he is not taking revenge against someone. The moment Richard enters legitimate war, he is completely shaken up, and he loses his steadfast composure. When Richard is on his murder spree his emotions are hidden and inaccessible; however, when he is about to fight a war he disarms himself showing his true emotions. Why does war bring out real emotions in Richard? War brings uncertainty; Richard does not know whether he is going to win or lose. He does not have control over the war, and thus, he lacks

confidence. Richard cannot stand losing. He already feels that he is at a disadvantage throughout the play because he was made deformed, and now all the ghosts condemn him within the play, and they endorse Richmond's army. He realizes that he is equally as lonely and unloved at the end as he was at the beginning. Getting the crown does not solve any of Richard's neglect issues; the only thing he gets is power that still does not comfort him.

The vulnerability that McKellen expresses in his dreams is something that was very important to the actor. McKellen allows the audience to see Richard's pain, and thus, the film creates a lasting image of Richard being a character who deserves our pity. McKellen commits suicide at the end of the play, an act the he says was the director's decision. At the end of the soliloquy, the audience sees Richard as someone who is overwhelmed by what he has done, and his choice to commit suicide helps to create this feeling. He literally has no idea what else to do next so he takes his own life. McKellen finishes Richard by portraying him as a character who becomes a victim to his bad habit: he kills, and he hides his true emotions so much that when he finally faces himself, he is shocked by his own villainy. He is unable to recover from his shock at seeing his true villainous self through the eyes of his victims.

Laurence Olivier's Film

Laurence Olivier directed and starred in the 1955 groundbreaking film production of *Richard III*, which has since influenced all other film productions of

the play. Many critics cite Olivier's film as one of the best Shakespearean films.[54] Olivier drew upon the paranoid characteristics of Hitler, and the Big Bad Wolf to help him create his Richard III.[55] He saw Richard as being at once deadly earnest and playful; as simultaneously menacing, terrifying, dangerous, and funny. He was not interested in physically representing Richard's limp in his production; however, he had an accident on set of the production that caused him to naturally limp, and he used the limp for the benefit of the character.[56] Olivier was very aware of how much the success of the play depended on his relationship with the audience. He records in his biography, "Something caught between [the audience and me] and, like an electric wire, held us together."[57] Olivier knew that the audience had to like Richard, and he used this knowledge to help him design the character. He believed that Richard has to win the audience over with his wit, and his brilliantly wry sense of humor.[58] With this thought in mind, Olivier aimed to play Richard terribly sweet, and charming, until he got to the soliloquies where he aimed to "have a syringe ready and let the audience have it straight up the arse."[59] Olivier aimed to show the audience his true colors; he aimed to be the both Machiavelli and the Big Bad Wolf throughout the entire production.

Opening Soliloquy

The film starts with the coronation celebration of Richard's brother, King Edward IV. The viewer immediately witnesses Olivier being both conniving and

54. Alice Griffin, "Shakespeare Through the Camera's Eye: III," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 7, no. 2 (1956): 235, accessed April 18, 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2866445.
55. Colley, "Performing as Gloucester," in *Richard's Himself Again*, 172.
56. Colley, "Performing as Gloucester," in *Richard's Himself Again*, 174.
57. Jack J. Jorgens, "Laurence Olivier's Richard III," in *Shakespeare on Film*(Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1977), 137-138.
58. Jorgens, "Laurence Olivier's Richard III," in *Shakespeare on Film*, 118.
59. Laurence Olivier's Richard III," 149.

sweet. Olivier's Richard shows his deviousness through the sinister look that he places upon his face as his brother is being crowned, and directly after this he shows his sweetness when he kisses his nephew hands and blesses him. Thus, even without the first real words of the film being spoken, the viewer has already seen Richard showing two different sides.

The film uses the visual of a door being closed to transition from the coronation scene to Richard's soliloquy. The door from the coronation hall closes after every character, except Richard, exits. This closed door tells the viewer that the public event is over. This same door slowly opens inwardly to show Richard standing by himself, facing the side of the room; he is not looking at the camera. The slow opening of the door to reveal Olivier signals to the audience that they are now in a private conference with the actor. This film retains the original structure of the play-text, and Richard delivers his entire soliloquy in the confidence of the audience. Olivier's production emphasizes Richard's secretive relationship with the audience. It was a goal of Olivier to engage his audience in a very personal manner, and to build a strong connection. He achieves these aims through speaking only to the audience in the first soliloquy.

The audience can only see a half-shot view of Richard when the scene begins, and this is significant because it points back to the two sides of Richard that we have already seen at the beginning of the film. The film emphasizes from the beginning that Richard is an incomplete character; it shows that there are parts and sides to Richard still left to be discovered. Richard turns his face directly toward the camera and begins limping toward it, getting closer to the audience upon the sound of the

door closing. This is when he says the first line of the text, “Now is the winter of our discontent” (1.1 1). The audience sees Richard’s full body as he walks toward the camera, and he reveals his limp. This full body shot is significant because it reveals an important element of Richard’s character: his infamous limp, and also because it draws attention to Richard’s ability to hide things. Olivier does not reveal his limp until he is engaging in private conversation with the audience. The masking of Richard’s body points directly to his ability to shape his own character. He chooses how to present himself depending on what he wants to achieve in the moment. Olivier reveals his deformity at a gradual pace: the angrier he becomes in the film, the more pronounced his limp becomes.

Richard animates his actions: he looks up when he speaks of the “sun of york” (5.3 2), down when he speaks of the “oceans” (5.3 4), and he smiles when he speaks of “delightful measures” (1.1 2-8). He opens his eyes widely when he speaks of “fearful adversaries,” (1.1 11). And, he pauses to draw attention to the subtle music that is playing in the background when he speaks of the music of the lute. The celebratory coronation continues in the background until Richard starts to speak of the past and his deformities. When the music stops, it signals the shift in topics of the soliloquy and a shift in time. The music ends as Richard switches from speaking of the present times of peace to speaking about his difficult past, where he engages in the dark matters of his deformed body.

Richard moves away from the camera, giving the audience a back view of him when he begins to speak about his deformities. From the words “I, that am curtail’d,” until “That dogs bark at me, as I halt by them-“ (1.1 18 – 23), he physically retreats

from the audience. Olivier's act of moving away from the camera shows the audience that Richard's deformities still bother him; he has not completely resolved his physical insecurities, and thus, he runs away from them. His voice rises as he speaks of all the deformities that he has, and this vocal pitch reveals his anger about not being able to enjoy courting. The physical distance that Richard places between himself and the camera when he speaks of the past literalizes the idea of the past being in the distance; however, Richard's past is still present in his life, and it still bothers him. His past shapes him; he decides to become a villain because of setbacks he faces from having a deformed body.

Olivier goes off the script of the original play-text to talk about being damned by love, which he accuses of being responsible for his deformity. He quotes from Gloucester's monologue in *Henry VI Part III*:

> Why, love forswore me in my mother's womb:
> And, for I should not deal in her soft laws,
> She did corrupt frail nature with some bribe,
> To shrink mine arm up like a wither'd shrub;
> To make an envious mountain on my back,
> To shape my legs of an unequal size;
> To disproportion me in every part,
> Like to a chaos, or an unlick'd bear-whelp
> That carries no impression like the dam (3.2 153-162).

Olivier shouts the words of this monologue to the audience. Olivier adds an additional nine lines to the soliloquy to explain his hatred of love, and this shows the deep anger that he feels at love. He blames all of his set backs on love. He blames his comfortableness of being in chaotic situations on love. Productions add additional text to their script in order to show the audience their interpretation of the play. Thus, Olivier adds numerous lines from *Henry VI Part III* to show the audience that

Richard's villainy is grounded in his hatred of love. Olivier feels betrayed by love because it unattractively alters his body. Olivier presents himself as someone who strongly hates love because he believes love hates him. One of the ways that Olivier finishes Richard is by making him into someone who hates love, and as a result, he seeks revenge on love by being the opposite of a lover within the film. Thus any interactions Olivier has with love takes on a dark and menacing form in the play

Olivier's Richard is not coy about his intentions to murder for the crown. He quotes the last 40 lines of Gloucester's soliloquy in *Henry VI Part III* to explain to the audience how he plans on portraying Richard in the film, and he chooses to embody all villainous characteristics. Olivier says that it is his dream to get to crown, and that he would kill anyone that stands in his way with an axe. The camera cuts to show the king's chair as he delivers his destructive plans to be king. The shot of the king's chair shows the audience Richard's ambition. He picks up his sword when he says, "he knows not know how to get the crown."[60] The act of picking up his weapon reveals to the audience that he plans to shed blood in order to get the crown.

When he begins to speak of the torment that he feels by not being the king, he stumbles toward the king's chair with his hands in the air. Richard's grabbing of the sword, and his animated actions as he walks toward the king's chair show that he is ready to fight for the crown. His movements as he walks toward the king's chair mirrors that of someone who is in a battle because he is limping and his arms are flailing above him. He is leaning forward, like an injured weakened creature. Richard's movement in this moment foreshadows his death. A lot of adaptations are

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60. "Now is the winter of our discontent," last.fm, accessed November 15, 2013.

made in Richard's first soliloquy; however the most revealing thing that Olivier tells the audience in his beginning soliloquy is his aspiration to be the Machiavel.

Richard says that he could "Set the murderous Machiavel to school" (3.2 193). Machiavelli is a character that embodies the cunning, unscrupulousness, or duplicity in behavior (especially in politics) principles and practices of Machiavelli or of Machiavellians.[61] Olivier sets out to be cunning, and unscrupulous, and he begins to embody these characteristics from the film's inception. Richard's duplicity takes on two forms within the play. He showcases his mental duplicity in moments when he is being cunning such as the beginning when he blesses his nephew at the coronation. The camera also shows his physical duplicity through either filming him from a half shot or from a side view. When Olivier is speaking softly, or he is coming off sincere the camera shows a half shot of him. However, as soon as Richard begins lamenting, and speaking of destruction and murder, giving an honest representation of himself, the camera pans out to show the audience the entirety of his body. Richard sets out to further practice being a Machiavel throughout the film.

Final Soliloquy

The ghost scene begins with Olivier lying on a bed staring at the ceiling. He shows some signs of struggle, and there is some sweat on his body, but for the most part, he does not have any strong reactions to the ghosts. Up-tempo music accompanies the images of each of the ghosts who look like his or her original self as they deliver their curses to Richard. The ghosts' voices are warped, and this effect

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61. "Machiavellian, n. and adj.". OED Online. September 2013. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/111832 (accessed November 30, 2013).

distinguishes them from the live characters in the film. The only major reaction Olivier has to the ghosts occurs when he startles up from his bed after he sees one of his victims flying towards him for revenge. He wakes up screaming, and he jumps out of his bed yelling, "Give me another horse! Bind up my wounds! Have mercy, Jesu!" (5.3 178 -179). Olivier's screams when he awakes combine with his victims' screams to create a single cry of terror within the film. On his final scream of "Jesus," the music dies down, and we finally witness Olivier in an upright position; he is leaning on his bed gasping for deep breaths in an effort to calm himself down.

When Ratcliffe hears Richard screaming, he starts making his way to his tent, and he finds Richard leaning on his bed, silently whimpering when he enters. Richard grabs onto Ratcliffe and he tells him "I fear, I fear!" (5.3 215) in an exasperated and strained voice. Ratcliffe reassures Richard of his safety; and Richard takes a few short breaths to compose himself, and then, his vulnerability vanishes, he regains his usual posture, and he begins lamenting about winning the war. The dream becomes a surge of energy for Olivier; he becomes more eager for the battle after he gets a taste of war in his dream.

The monologue is drastically cut, and the audience does not witness Olivier struggle with his conscience. The cutting of the final soliloquy affects the audience's sentiments surrounding Richard's death. This is the last opportunity that Olivier has to connect with the audience before he dies, and he connects with us by shoving his "syringe of villainy up our arses," as he sets out to do in his production.[62] He does not take the time to deal with Richard's fear as McKellen does; he composes himself

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62. Jorgens, "Laurence Olivier's Richard III," in *Shakespeare on Film*, 149.

rapidly and becomes the avenging Machiavel again. With the majority of the monologue cut, the audience only sees Richard's determination to kill at the end of the play. Oliver's Richard does not grow as a character, but rather he finishes Richard as the love hating. Olivier's production reshaped the way that Richard was portrayed on stage since its debut in 1955.

Conclusion

Richard proves to be a villain in the play. After murdering twelve people, he loses his ability to claim being a lover. Richard wants the audience to see him as a great leader throughout the play, and thus, he embodies powerful figures, and he adapts great leadership characteristics. He presents himself as the father, the protector, and the soldier. He is the knowledgeable character, he is a great planner, and he is an even better executioner. He is reliable; he keeps his word to the audience. Richard is a tyrant who proudly parades himself as a villain throughout the play, until he has a quick moment of self-reflection at the end.

Richard becomes consumed by his urge to kill; once he gets one taste of blood, he seeks it from every corner and crevice of the court. His villainy feasts on the lives of both adults and children. Richard suffers from insatiable hunger throughout the play. He yearns for the crown, he yearns for love, he yearns for pity, and he yearns for immortality; he wants a positive legacy. Richard's crown becomes more than a physical object that represents his power. After he realizes that he stands the chance of losing the physical crown, he strives to get the audience to attach a metaphorical crown to his head after his death. This metaphorical crown would be the product of the audience pitying him, remembering him as a brave solider, and telling his legacy from a less vicious perspective than the one his life is told from, throughout the play. Richard places his raw emotions before the audience in his final soliloquy. He finally shows us that he is capable of feeling pain; he reveals that he is deeply hurt because he is neglected, and he asks the audience to use his vulnerable characteristics to influence the perspective from which we tell his

legacy. Richard III wants to be remembered by the audience, and he wants the audience to have mercy on his character.

Richard III has proven to be a villain since the play was first written 422 years ago. He has proven to be a hunchback, he has proven to be malicious, and he has proven to be loved by audiences all over the world. However, after 421 years of proving to be villainous, the discovery of the real Richard's III skeleton is contradicting a part of Shakespeare's story. The real Richard III is partially taking back his identity from Shakespeare: he is not a hunchback! How is the skeleton of England's most controversial king going to reshape his story and his legacy? The story of Shakespeare's Richard III will remain a part of the narrative because it is the one that we have come to know over 400 years; however, it is now going to be in competition with the new truth that was uncovered about the real King Richard III. The story of Shakespeare's Richard, and the new knowledge about the real Richard promises to recreate the identity struggle that reflective and villainous Richard has in the text.

Shakespeare's Richard is the villainous Richard, this is the Richard that we have read, and we have seen portrayed on stage and on film. This is the Richard that has the greater ability to influence the audience. However, Richard's skeleton will force us to reflect on Shakespeare's well-formed character. Now that there is new evidence that tells us about the real Richard's character, a reconciliation of the two Richards need to be done. Richard's legends, including Shakespeare's, and his true history need to be put into conversation with each other. Then the dialogue of this new hybrid story needs to be shared with the world through the medium that best

tells Richard's story: the stage. I hope to investigate how the conversation about Richard III will change now that our knowledge of the historic character contradicts Shakespeare's character. I want to investigate the role that the modern audience will play in reshaping Richard's story.

The audience's role in reshaping Richard III has become greater than pitying him after we read or produce the play. It is an audience member that spearheaded the archaeological exploration that led to the discovery of Richard's skeleton. It is an audience member that formed the Richard III Society to reclaim Richard's story from Shakespeare and to revise it. Richard's audience members are currently fighting over where his body should be reinterred. Shakespeare's fictional character gives the audience a role to finish him in the play; however, the real Richard III is also benefitting from this request. The audience is also currently finishing the story of the real Richard III. Shakespeare's Richard begs the audience for a legacy at the end of the play, and the audience is now also fulfilling the request for the real Richard III. Richard III has become relevant to our lives again, and our views about Shakespeare's character are going to be reshaped by our new knowledge of the historic character.

Richard III continues to be one of the most discussed characters. The dictators and leaders of our times, as well as Richard's historical legacy, continue to make the play relevant. However, *Richard III* is still not exported as a part of the Shakespearean pop culture in schools. Teachers shy away from exposing students to the play. They instead put in the same damaged copy of Leonardo DiCaprio's *Romeo and Juliet.* Why is Richard III not taught in schools? *Richard III* is a mirror of true life.

The violence within the play is something that students are exposed to both on a national and global scale. The developing story surrounding Richard's true identity is an example of real life. Sometimes, right after we accept the truth about a situation, we find out new information, and our beliefs are challenged. How do we deal with a situation such as this? Do we continue believing what we knew as the truth? Or do we embrace the new truth? Do we formulate a compromise? What does the choice we make say about us? *Richard III* still needs to be transformed from its elitist stature to a household name amongst students like *Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear,* or the *Tempest,* which most college students have read in high school. The story of Richard III is still unfinished, and students need to become a part of the audience intended to "finish" the character.

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