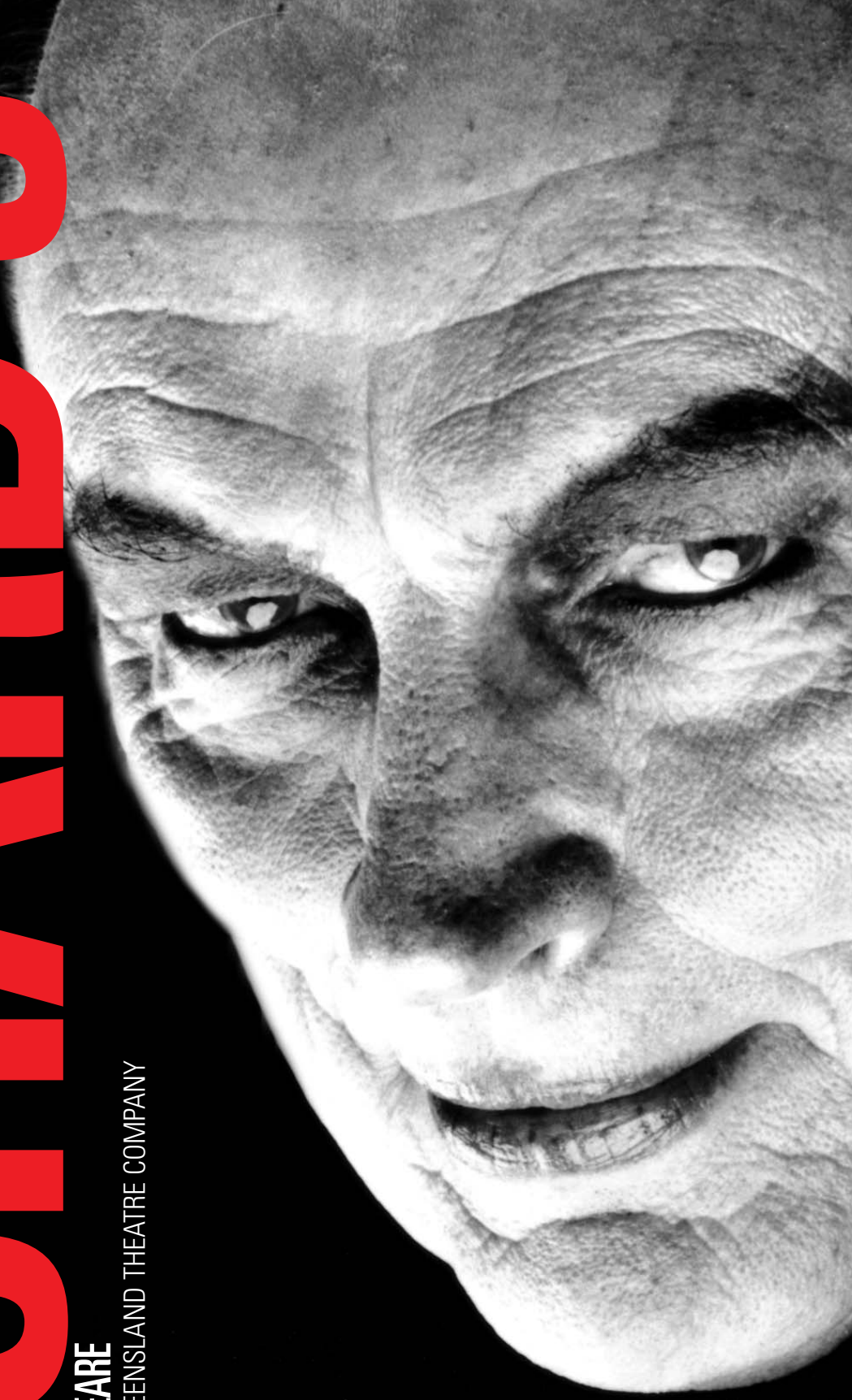


BELL SHAKESPEARE'S

RICHARD 3

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

A COLLABORATION WITH QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY



TEACHER'S KIT

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THE BELL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

Launched in 1990, The Bell Shakespeare Company is a dynamic, Australian theatre company with a broad mandate to educate and entertain the public. The Company strives to present – at the highest possible standard – the works of William Shakespeare, and from time to time other classics.

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BELL SHAKESPEARE'S RICHARD 3

A COLLABORATION WITH QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY

Director	Michael Gow
Designer	Robert Kemp
Lighting Designer	Matt Scott
Composer	Brett Collery
Assistant Director/Fight Choreographer	Scott Witt
Movement Director	Gavin Robins
Sound Designer	Peter Eades

CAST

Richard, Duke of Gloucester	John Bell
Buckingham	Christopher Stollery
Clarence/Tyrell	Sean O'Shea
Rivers/Stanley	Darren Gilshenan
Queen Elizabeth	Anna Volska
Hastings/Norfolk	David Davies
Dorset/Richmond	Paul Eastway
Brakenbury/Mayor	Damien Ryan
King Edward/Oxford	Robert Alexander
Lady Anne	Blazey Best
Grey/Archbishop	Robert Meldrum
Duchess of York	Penny Everingham
Catesby	Paul Denny
Prince of Wales/Murderer	Lucas Stibbard
Prince (Young York)	Morgan David Jones

Other parts played by members of the company.

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FORWARD

Welcome to 2002 and The Bell Shakespeare Company's production of *Richard 3*! It is our hope that all students will find the production to be an exciting, stimulating, thought provoking one, and, not least, a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

The following Teacher's Kit supports this purpose and will hopefully be a rich resource for the teaching of a wide range of students: Years 10 – 12 drama, theatre or English students, those who are academic, those artistic.

LESSONS ONE and TWO examine the character of Richard and provide a discussion of all the main characters, an overall view of the play, its structure, language, and dramatic influences. LESSONS THREE and FOUR deal in more detail with Anne and Richard, with the structure, and with the last part of the play, Richard as crowned King.

Included in these notes are the pertinent Richard soliloquies from *Henry 6 Part 3*, which are well worth close study for a fuller understanding of Shakespeare's Richard.

A comparison between the characters of Richard and Macbeth – the way in which both men achieve the crown and their demise afterwards – is inevitable for the students, and possibly many secondary students will be galvanised by this topic. We therefore also offer this as extra discussion material.

On the genesis of this production, we have included notes on the inspirational sources by our production's director, Michael Gow, and notes by John Bell on his approach to playing Richard. We also have an interview with the set and costume designer, Robert Kemp.

More generally, we have also provided historical information on the real Richard Plantagenet and the Wars of the Roses, for those interested in a comparison between the play and history.

It is suggested that LESSONS ONE and TWO be given before seeing the play, as the students will then glean useful insight into Richard's character, as well as gain information on the play's language and structure, and the main characters.

In these notes, the protagonist is always referred to as Richard. It has to be pointed out, though, that early in the play he is known as Richard of York, Duke of Gloucester, and is referred to in the script as Gloucester. Only later, when he becomes King, is he known as King Richard 3.

These notes and all extracts quoted are sourced from the full Arden edition of *Richard 3*, though audiences will notice various textual and character truncations in the production that have arisen to suit the needs of the ensemble and this particular interpretation. All references to the play in these notes have been standardised to the production's use of the modern numeral in the title, *Richard 3* rather than the conventional Roman numerals.

Nell Hourn
Education 2002

Bell Shakespeare's *Richard 3* Teacher's Kit was compiled by Nell Hourn, Education Officer of The Bell Shakespeare Company.

THE CONTRIBUTORS TO THESE NOTES

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Nell Hourn is Education Officer for The Bell Shakespeare Company. She conducts interactive Shakespeare workshops for teachers and students all over Australia.

SYNOPSIS

Richard 3 is the final play in Shakespeare's famous War of the Roses history cycle in which the playwright depicts the bitter generational struggles between the Houses of York and Lancaster for the crown of England.

The Duke of Gloucester (later Richard 3) is bitterly unhappy under his elder brother Edward 4's present rule, and at the start of the play determines to destroy everyone and everything in his path to become the King of England.

He masterfully designs the execution of his older brother, Clarence; woos and wins the Lady Anne – whose father, and Lancaster husband and father-in-law he has killed in battle; sends England's heirs, his two young nephews, to their deaths after the death of their father, Edward IV; sends Queen Elizabeth's family, Lords Rivers and Grey and his Lord Chamberlain to their executions; and then is finally crowned King, having successfully hidden his treachery by playing the part of the innocent, pious gentleman all along.

However, once he is King, his rule is immediately attacked on many fronts, led by a Lancaster claimant to the throne, the Earl of Richmond. Richard has executed his own right-hand man, the Duke of Buckingham, and has only a few loyal followers remaining. He is betrayed by one of his key men, Lord Stanley, and then is defeated in battle and killed by Richmond.

Richmond claims the English throne, marries Elizabeth York, the daughter of Edward IV, and thus the Houses of Lancaster and York are united, and after eight generations, the wars of red and white roses are finally over.

DETAILED SUMMARY OF THE PLOT UP TO ACT 4 Scene 1

Act 1 Scene 1

The play, being part of Shakespeare's Wars of the Roses cycle, is set in the English court, and opens with a long soliloquy by Richard, Duke of Gloucester. The speech begins with one of the most famous lines in the Shakespearean canon: "Now is the winter of our discontent."

Richard is bitterly unhappy in the currently peaceful times under his brother King Edward IV's present rule. War has ceased, and he chafes at the relative luxury and idleness of the times.

He tells us he takes no delight in the chief occupation of the King, courting ladies, because of his gross physical deformity, and therefore decides, "I am determined to prove a villain."

Already he has set his brothers Clarence and the King in bitter opposition by issuing a prophecy that the King will have an assassin by the name of "G". One of Clarence's names is George.

At this very moment, Clarence enters under heavy guard on his way to the Tower of London, by order of the King. Richard shows a full deep concern for his brother, as Clarence explains that he has been sent to prison for fear that the prophecy will prove true.

Richard maliciously suggests that it is the King's wife, Queen Elizabeth, and her family who are responsible for inciting Edward's fears, as it was they who recently turned the King against Lord Chamberlain Hastings, resulting in him having been sent to the Tower.

Richard feigns his own innocence in Clarence's incarceration with, "We are not safe Clarence, we are not safe!" and offers to take his brother's case to the King, and even to 'sweet talk' the Queen in order to obtain a speedy release for Clarence.

We also learn that the King and Lord Hastings share a lover – Mistress Shore – and much gossip from the court is regularly circulated from this lady's chamber.

The moment Richard is alone after Clarence's departure, he declares that he hopes never to see him again.

Lord Hastings, newly released from prison in the Tower, enters with the news that the King is ailing badly in health and spirit, to which Richard sanctimoniously replies that the King's lascivious ways are probably responsible. Then in soliloquy, he expresses his most fervent hope that Clarence will die before Edward, and determines to immediately set even deeper hatred between them to ensure Clarence is not released. With both brothers dead, "the world (is free) for me to bustle in."

He also determines at this point to marry the Lady Anne, whose husband and father he has killed earlier. He wants her not for love, but perhaps for conquest and "for another secret close intent".

Scene 2

The Lady Anne enters behind the funeral train of the previous King, a Lancaster, King Henry VI, also her father-in-law. She is lamenting his murder and that of her husband, the late Prince Edward, and cries out to the gods for violent retribution upon their killer, Richard Duke of Gloucester.

Richard enters and Anne spurns and curses him vehemently, crying that he is the cause of the greatest misery and unhappiness that is her life. Richard is every part as eloquent as she and responds instantly with wit and vigour, and the two spar verbally until she is indeed out-spurred by Richard's convincing profession of his love for her. It was, he says, *her beauty* and his desire to possess her that provoked him to murder her family. He offers his sword for her to kill him, but she refuses. He offers to slay himself at her command, but she refuses. She does accept his contrition and a ring from him, making no promises.

In soliloquy to end the scene, he comically boasts of his conquest to the audience. But immediately, he says: "I'll have her, but I will not keep her long." He is flattered that Anne finds him attractive, though he cannot see why, but decides to commission designers to make new clothes for him.

Scene 3

Queen Elizabeth, her brother Lord Rivers, and her sons from an earlier marriage Lords Grey and Dorset, try to comfort her as she frets over her husband's grave illness.

The Duke of Buckingham and Lord Stanley enter with news of an improvement in the King's health and of His Majesty's express desire for reconciliations between Richard and the Queen's family members.

Already aware of this, Richard enters with Lord Hastings, protesting that he bears no ill feelings for the Queen nor her brother and sons. He accuses them of slandering his name to the King. Elizabeth responds that it was the King himself who directed the reconciliations with no influences at all.

It is clear Richard despises Elizabeth, at least partly because he considers her to be of too ignoble birth to be a Queen, and accuses her of effecting the imprisonment of both Hastings and Clarence. An all round bitter airing of ancient grudges ensues, dramatically deepened by a covert entrance by the old Queen Margaret, wife to the late King Henry VI, voicing cynical asides to the audience. She presently interjects, and in a rage, curses Richard for murdering her husband and her son, and curses the whole present House of York and every attached courtier.

Despite Richard's deception of nearly everyone around him concerning his true evil intentions and nature, Queen Margaret is definitely not deceived and acts as harbinger to the whole court. But no-one is listening.

Alone with the audience, Richard tells us of his artful polarisation of the court: Derby, Hastings, Buckingham and his innocent Christian self, set against Rivers, Dorset, Grey and Queen Elizabeth for the imprisonment of Clarence, though of course it was he who was secretly responsible.

Two murderers Richard has hired enter. He hands them the King's warrant to quickly execute Clarence.

Scene 4

The scene is set in the Tower of London, where Clarence has passed the most fearful night of his life in which he dreamt a vivid dream of being thrown overboard a ship by his brother Richard of Gloucester, and then drowned. In an eloquent and image-filled speech, he describes his fate of drowning and the shame of being fully and baldly confronted with his life's crimes.

He falls back to sleep and finally is disturbed by the entrance of the two murderers, who are at first hesitant to strike him while he sleeps. They struggle with their consciences and once Clarence awakes, he almost succeeds in persuading them to preserve his life. But the first murderer stabs Clarence and then drowns him in a tub of wine, while the second is repentant and will not go to Richard for payment.

Act 2 Scene 1

King Edward IV, ailing badly, is reconciling all those in his court before his imminent death: Lords Hastings and Rivers apologise and swear their love and loyalty to each other. The King warns them to be sincere; not to dissemble. Elizabeth, Buckingham, Hastings and Dorset all join in and pledge their unity to one another.

Richard arrives and offers a lengthy contrition to all he may have offended and swears he has a heart pure and innocent of any grudge for any human being alive.

Elizabeth proffers to the King that Clarence should also be called forth, whereupon Richard proclaims how disrespectful she is not to remember he is dead. But no-one in the court knows of his death and all are shocked. Richard explains to the horrified King that Clarence died by the King's first warrant, and the second warrant to stay the execution, being "borne by some tardy cripple" (Richard) arrived too late.

Lord Stanley enters begging pardon from the state for his servant who has lately committed murder. The King bitterly laments his brother's death and rails that no courtier begged for Clarence's life as Stanley is presently doing for a mere drunken servant. No-one reminded the King of Clarence's great achievements and loyalties. With this, the broken-hearted King departs attended by the Queen and family.

Richard immediately takes the opportunity to continue polarising the court by redoubling his efforts to convince the court that the Queen's family is responsible for Clarence's death.

Scene 2

In a scene that is just about always omitted in performance, the Duchess of York, Richard's mother, and Clarence's two children weep over their father's death. The Duchess is not in the least deceived by her son Richard's character; she knows he is full of vice.

Queen Elizabeth enters with her hair in disarray, mad with grief over the death of Edward, the King. The Duchess proclaims that she herself has lost everything – her own husband, and her children, Clarence, and now Edward. She does not count Richard who lives, as she is fully ashamed of him.

The women and children make lamentations very reminiscent of a Greek chorus, and this subject of the use of language is approached in Lesson Three:

Children: Alas for our father, for our dear Lord Clarence!
Duchess: Alas for both, both mine Edward and Clarence!
(Act 2 Scene 2: 72-73)

Richard enters, to his mother's disgust, followed by Buckingham who proclaims that the young heir, Prince Edward, must be fetched hastily and taken covertly – for his own safety – to London for his coronation as the new King.

Buckingham, by now fully deceived by Richard – or else equally malevolent – and convinced that the Queen and her company are untrustworthy, determines that he and Richard should find some means to keep Elizabeth and her family away from the young heir. Richard readily agrees and they travel to collect the Prince themselves. Buckingham is in this scene now very clearly working for Richard without solicitation from him.

Scene 3

This is a scene in which three ordinary local citizens share the news, and their fears and insecurities surrounding the King's death. It is usually omitted in performance due to time constraints.

Scene 4

The heir's family – his younger brother, grandmother and mother – greatly anticipate his imminent arrival.

But a messenger enters to tell them sorry news: Richard and Buckingham have sent Lords Rivers, Grey and Vaughan to Pomfret Castle – an infamous place where many terrible executions have been performed. Both women are overwhelmed with grief and see Richard's path of destruction excised before them. They take the boy and rush to sanctuary in a monastery.

Act 3 Scene 1

Richard, Buckingham, the Lord Cardinal and Catesby welcome the Prince of Wales, heir to the throne, in London. The Prince notices that many familiar faces are missing among those who greet him. Richard, pious and avuncular, warns his nephew of the deceit in the world, saying that Rivers and Grey were traitors not to be missed. Hastings enters to inform the heir that his immediate family has taken sanctuary somewhere.

Buckingham orders the Cardinal to go and fetch the younger Prince away from

his mother, but the Cardinal is loath to do so as it would break “holy privilege” and the rules of sanctuary. Buckingham only counters that children are not entitled to claim sanctuary, and the Cardinal finally agrees, departing with Hastings to fetch the boy.

Richard benevolently suggests to the heir, Prince Edward, that when he is reunited with his brother, they both repose for safety’s sake in the Tower of London for a few days. The Prince is initially serious and reluctant at the suggestion, but is light-hearted once more when his brother, York, enters. There is playful fun and banter with each other and Richard, but the latter makes frequent sour asides and double entendres so that the audience is reminded beyond doubt of his real intentions: “My dagger little cousin? With all my heart.”

Although the young York fears he will not sleep well in the Tower for the ghosts that are surely there, with a heavy, unpropitious air, the two young Princes depart for the Tower.

Buckingham is incensed by the cheekiness of young York towards Richard and insists that he must have been instructed in it by Elizabeth, and in this vein, sounds out Catesby as to whether Hastings is likely to side with them against the Queen and her family.

But Catesby is vehemently of the opinion that neither Stanley nor Hastings will betray the memory of Edward 4 by siding against his heir in favour of Richard. Buckingham directs him to go to Hastings and find out for sure, and to order him to council at the Tower the following day to deliberate over the coronation. Richard bids Catesby take encouraging word to Hastings that his old enemies Rivers, Grey and Vaughan will be executed this day at Pomfret.

Richard promises that after he is crowned King, Buckingham will be given the Earldom of Hereford for his service.

Scene 2

In the small hours a messenger from Lord Stanley awakes Hastings to tell him of an ominous dream his master has had this night: “The Boar razed off his helm.” The Boar was Richard’s emblem, and Stanley interprets the dream to mean that Richard will extinguish Stanley’s lineage. He also fears a deep schism in the court council. He urges Hastings to fly at once with him to the north to escape danger. But Hastings is controlled and even amused, and sends word back to Stanley that there is nothing to fear from The Boar.

Catesby enters on errand from Richard and Buckingham, asking if Hastings will

support Richard's vie for the crown. But as Catesby suspected, he declares firmly that he will be loyal to the late King to the very end. However, he is delighted at the news of his enemies' imminent execution at Pomfret and smugly states his own security in Richard's love.

Stanley nervously enters to travel to the Tower with Hastings to form council, fretting over the surety of their positions at court, especially in view of what has happened to Rivers and company. But Hastings is jovial and unheeding, blindly sure their lives are safe.

Hastings meets Buckingham en route and the latter conveys glibly to the audience that a bit more awaits at the Tower than Hastings realises.

Scene 3

In this very short scene we see Rivers, Vaughan and Grey facing their deaths at Pomfret. They recall Queen Margaret's curses and see that those curses have been realised in their own fates.

Scene 4

The setting is the Tower where the council meet and are made up of Buckingham, Stanley, Hastings, the Bishop of Ely, Norfolk, and others. But Richard is not immediately present. Buckingham pretends he does not know Richard's mind as to a date for the coronation, leading Hastings to boast that he knows himself to be in Richard's favour and special confidence.

Richard makes a well-timed arrival, and perhaps for the sake of normality requests home-grown strawberries from the Bishop's garden. Ely exits to send for them.

Taking Buckingham aside, Richard confirms that Hastings will not be coerced into supporting his thrust for the throne. They withdraw to discuss their options.

With rash confidence, Hastings asserts in Richard's absence that he can read Richard's face like a book and that certainly Richard is offended with no-one here.

With great dramatic effect, Richard storms back in and accuses Hastings of treason. He claims to be bewitched with a crippled arm by Elizabeth and Hastings' lover, Mistress Shore, as directed by Hastings. Richard orders his immediate execution.

Hastings laments that he was so blind and foolish in not fleeing London with Stanley when he had the opportunity. He is led off to his death, predicting only misery and death for England.

Scene 5

Buckingham and Richard are dressed up in any old and rusty armour they have discovered in the Tower as part of a charade to justify their sudden execution of Hastings to the Lord Mayor brought in by Catesby. In marvellously convincing performances from both, Richard fearfully asserts that Hastings, his trusted confidant, was found to be plotting to kill he and Buckingham. They slur Hastings name so convincingly, the Lord Mayor feels he may as well have heard a confession from the traitor himself. The Lord Mayor departs to inform the citizens of the events.

Richard orders Buckingham to spread malicious gossip among the people about the lascivious sexual appetite of the late King and the possible illegitimacy of the young Princes, and even of the infidelity of his own mother, the Duchess, when conceiving Edward. Thus, deep concern among the people will proliferate over the lineage of the late King.

Buckingham agrees with alacrity, making a tryst with Richard at Baynard's castle later – Richard in the company of priests; Buckingham with the Lord Mayor and townspeople.

Scene 6

A scribe or "scrivener" notes that he had been commissioned eleven hours ago, the night before, to write out the indictment against Hastings, yet the man was only accused and executed a few hours ago. Clearly, Hastings' fate was formally sealed before he was even charged or had breath to defend himself. The scrivener notes the sinister injustice of it.

Scene 7

Richard and Buckingham at Baynard's Castle are conferring over whether Richard has the favour of the people. Buckingham has spread Richard's slurs but he reports that the people gave no support at all to his cries of "God save Richard, England's royal King!"

Buckingham advises Richard to withdraw and get prayer books and priests about him and to resist all efforts to be called to face the crowd. Meanwhile,

Buckingham works the crowd like a politician to convince them of Richard's virtue and the late Edward's vice.

Richard is eventually coerced from his prayers to hear the petition of the town. He eloquently and artfully refuses the crown a number of times and is only persuaded to take it when Buckingham insists that any ordinary subject will be placed on the throne rather than the bastard, the young Prince Edward.

Richard, the master actor, reluctantly agrees to bear the great burden of the crown so that his lineage is not disgraced.

LESSON ONE

RICHARD, THE ACTOR; RICHARD, THE ORATOR

In *Richard 3* Shakespeare tells the story of the rise and fall of an evil, tyrannical king. We should be aware that the contemporary audience would have been in no doubt as to the historical accuracy of Shakespeare's Richard. They would have believed him to have usurped the crown, to have ordered the executions of those who stood in his way to achieve the crown, to have murdered the two young Princes in the Tower to strengthen his kingship, to have married his wife Anne for political reasons, and probably to have poisoned her as well. And they would have also believed that he would have married his own niece, sister to the murdered Princes, had not public opinion and his own advisers persuaded him that to do so would be politically dangerous.

So from one point of view Shakespeare may have written in *Richard 3* an historical play acceptable to his audience, and no doubt one that was politically advantageous to himself and his company of players. But from another angle, what Shakespeare did also was to present, and have us consider in the character of Richard, a being of sheer evil, a tyrannical monster. His genius, in doing so, is to have us consider our personal reaction to his villain. *Richard 3* becomes an individual experience for every thinking member of the audience.

No doubt there will be much fruitful and spontaneous discussion about the play

and about Richard himself. Richard makes it plain immediately that his goal is the crown of England and he reveals his strategy to obtain it. He has already done so too in several long soliloquies in *Henry 6 Part 3*, which are included at the end of Lesson Four.

Why does he want to be King? The students may come up with several reasons, but two suggestions might be:

RICHARD IS A PRODUCT OF HIS TIME

His entire life has been lived in wartime. The Houses of York and Lancaster have vied for the crown, both parties to the conflict have lost fathers, husbands, and brothers and have been both perpetrators and victims of treason, treachery, murder and bloodshed.

Can it be wondered at then that a person might come forward who is evil and callous, and will stop at nothing to achieve power?

RICHARD'S PHYSICAL DEFORMITY

This is the reason that Richard himself gives:

I that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
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,
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;
Why, I in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity.
(*Richard 3 Act 1 Scene 1: 16-27*)

Then, since the world affords no joy to me
But to command, to check, to o'erbear such
As are of better person than myself,
I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown,
And whiles I live, to account this world but hell,
Until my mis-shap'd trunk that bears this head
Be round-impaled with a glorious crown.
(*Henry 6 Part 3 Act 3 Scene 2: 165-171*)

So pursuit of the crown might be compensation for physical deformity.

Can we believe though, that there does not exist in this man a moral deformity far worse than the physical?

It might be advantageous to look at four aspects of Richard, two now, and two in Lesson Four: Richard the Actor; Richard the Orator; Richard the King; and Richard and the Audience.

RICHARD THE ACTOR

Where does Richard show himself to be an actor?

There are many examples. His *Henry 6 Part 3* soliloquy continues:

Why I can smile, and murder while I smile,
And cry "Content!" to that which grieves my heart,
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.
I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall;
I'll slay more gazers than the basilisk;
I'll play the orator as well as Nestor,
Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could,
And, like a Sinon, take another Troy.
I can add colours to the chameleon,
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
And set the murderous Machiavel to school.
Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?
Tut, were it farther off, I'll pluck it down.
(*Henry 6 Part 3 Act 3 Scene 2: 182-195*)

Richard vows to be a stage villain, not a stage lover. Yet he is such an actor that his first deception, his first role in *Richard 3*, is as a lover as he woos, wins, and later weds Lady Anne whose husband and father-in-law he has murdered (Act 1 Scene 1: 33-228).

He acts the friend and ally of Clarence as he plots his death, then acts the would-be rescuer of his brother after his death to lay the blame on Elizabeth's faction at court (Act 1 Scene 1: 42-70, 106-112).

He acts the loving uncle to the young Princes, seemingly concerned for their wellbeing as he places them in the Tower, ultimately to have them murdered (Act 3 Scene 1: 1-150).

He acts first as the jovial Duke – requesting strawberries – then the victim of evil magic as he removes Lord Hastings who refuses to support his bid for kingship. He acts so well that when he cries bewitchment, that his arm "Is like a blasted sapling, wither'd up", no-one dares remind him that his arm has always been withered (Act 3 Scene 4: 22-79).

His consummate role, though, is that of reluctant candidate for kingship. His “stage manager”, Buckingham, sets the scene, plays the supporting role, and helps Richard give his best performance. He achieves the crown with his acting, but this is also to be his last performance (Act 3 Scene 7: 94-245).

RICHARD THE ORATOR

“I’ll play the orator as well as Nestor,” boasts Richard, and so he does. He is a supreme propagandist, a master of persuasive language and can adapt his style to his immediate audience, whether that is an individual like Lady Anne, a small group of nobles, or churchmen, or a crowd of citizens.

His capacity as an actor is founded upon his capacity as an orator, and the consistent theme of his oratory is to present himself as a humble, trustworthy, God-fearing man. He constantly mistreats language to present his own propaganda, to misrepresent his own motives. A plethora of dictators have done so before and since.

Examples of his oratory might be elicited from students and within these examples they can explore how each of Richard’s acting performances rely on his words.

Two of the most significant are noted here and suggested for class discussion:

1. The wooing of Anne

The wooing of Anne is masterful oratory. He commands the pallbearers to set down Henry 6’s coffin, then listens patiently to Anne’s tirade of abuse at him and his crimes and when she finishes, he humbly asks:

Of these supposed crimes, give me leave,
By circumstance, but to acquit myself.
(Act 1 Scene 2: 76-77)

Gradually and quietly he turns the conversation, endures her spitting at him, and offers a brief and apparently modest reply to all her accusations – that it was for love of her that he killed members of her family:

He that bereft thee, lady of thy husband,
Did it to help thee to a better husband.
(Act 1 Scene 2: 142-143)

And eventually he is sufficiently confident of the effect of his words that he can risk the ultimate bravado: he gives Anne his sword and lays open his breast for her to strike him. This highly charged scene can be gripping in its suspense (Act 1 Scene 2: 175-200). When Anne puts up the sword, there is great tenderness in Richard's words:

Look how this ring encompasseth thy finger.
Even so thy breast encloseth my poor heart;
Wear both of them, for both of them are thine.
(Act 1 Scene 2: 207-209)

As Anne leaves, following the coffin, Richard rightly believes that success is assured. Ironically and sardonically, he celebrates his victory. He has taken sadistic pleasure in manipulating Anne, as his grimly humorous soliloquy reveals. He mirrors his earlier disgust at his deformity:

Why I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity:
(Act 1 Scene 1: 24-27)

with a now almost gleeful:

Upon my life, she finds, although I cannot,
Myself to be a marvellous proper man.
(Act 2 Scene 2: 258-59)

Shine out fair sun, till I have bought a glass,
That I may see my shadow as I pass.
(Act 2 Scene 2: 267-68)

Alas for the wretched Anne, whom the sadistic Richard will not keep long, and whose bedroom treatment of her is better not left to the imagination. The brevity of her life and her deep despair after marriage are sufficient to dwell upon.

2. The gaining of the crown

Act 3 Scene 7, is the double act of Richard and Buckingham wherein the Lord Mayor and a group of citizens eventually call upon Richard to be their King.

Buckingham's task is to imply the bastardy of the young Princes, and to encourage the populace to crown Richard. With Buckingham unsuccessful at first, Richard becomes the actor again, placing himself between two bishops,

appearing to be in deep religious contemplation and presenting himself, as if accidentally, before the citizens. It is then Buckingham's turn to be the orator:

This prince is not an Edward
He is not lolling on a lewd day-bed,
But on his knees at meditation;
Not dallying with a brace of courtesans,
But meditating with two deep divines;
Not sleeping, to engross his idle body,
But praying, to enrich his watchful soul:
Happy were England, would this gracious prince
Take on himself the sovereignty thereof:
But, sure, I fear we shall ne'er win him to it.
(Act 3 Scene 7: 70-79)

So the henchman sets the scene, and with the help of Catesby and the odd word by the ludicrous Lord Mayor, Buckingham gives the impression that the crowd demands Richard take the crown. Richard appears humble, reluctant:

I know not whether to depart in silence,
Or bitterly to speak in your reproof.
(Act 3 Scene 7: 140-141)

Your love deserves my thanks; but my desert
Unmeritable shuns your high request.
(153 -154)

But, God be thank'd, there is no need of me.
The royal tree hath left us royal fruit,
Which, mellow'd by the stealing hours of time,
Will well become the seat of majesty,
And make, no doubt, us happy by his reign.
(164 -169)

When Buckingham presses, Richard appears to resist more strongly.

Alas, why would you heap these cares on me?
I am unfit for state and majesty;
I do beseech you, take it not amiss;
I cannot nor I will not yield to you.
(203 - 206)

Then, when Buckingham exclaims, seemingly in exasperation, "Come, citizens: 'zounds! I'll entreat no more," Richard, at the height of sanctimonious hypocrisy, replies, "O, do not swear, my lord of Buckingham." (218- 219)

Ultimately, of course, Richard accepts. He has done as Buckingham suggested – "Play the maid's part, still answer nay, and take it." Richard departs the scene, still in character: "Come, let us to our holy task again." While he is apparently carried to kingship by the overwhelming will of the citizens, it is important to note that the citizens utter only one word – "Amen".

LESSON TWO

THE STRUCTURE AND LANGUAGE OF *Richard 3*

“No Shakespearean play has so reminded me of Greek tragedy”, is a remark by the German dramatist and poet, Schiller, and the play does indeed derive from Greek tragedy. However, it derives also from the Latin, Senecan tradition and the medieval morality play.

Much of the play is stylised. An example in the early part of the play is Richard’s wooing of Lady Anne in Act 2 Scene 2 over the coffin of her father-in-law, King Henry 6, murdered by Richard, as he himself admits in the play. Richard also claims responsibility for the death of Anne’s husband in the battle of Tewkesbury. The scene is sparse – a few bearers of the coffin and Anne as the only mourner – when Richard interrupts their progress. Gradually he turns her loathing and contempt for him to a mild acceptance of courtship, which we know will lead to marriage (Act 1 Scene 2: 33-228).

This whole scene is a reflection of two characteristics of Senecan tragedy. First, *language style*: there is the typical use of half-line quipping, rapid-fire responses of one character to another as in:

Richard: Say that I slew them not?

Anne: Why, then they are not dead
But dead they are, and devilish slave, by thee.

Richard: I did not kill your husband.

Anne: Why then he is alive.
(89-93)

Anne: O, he was gentle, mild and virtuous!

Richard: The fitter for the king of heaven that hath him.

Anne: He is in heaven, where thou shalt never come.

Richard: Let him thank me, that help to send him thither;
For he was fitter for that place than earth.

Anne: And thou unfit for any place but hell.

Richard: Yes, one place else, if you will hear me name it.

Anne: Some dungeon.

Richard: Your bedchamber.

Anne: Ill rest betide the chamber where thou liest!

Richard: So will it, madam till I lie with you.
(106 -116)

Senecan too is the structure and tone of the play: the criminal hero, the absence of both subplot and comic relief (save for Richard's sardonic humour) and a highly organised and formal plot demonstrated as the criminal hero step by step surmounts all obstacles on his way to the crown. In this tradition too is the lack of on-stage bloodshed in a play where physical violence abounds. With Richard's murder count standing at ten and with only Clarence wounded on stage, Professor Antony Hammond in his introductory essay to the Arden edition of the play is surely right to suggest that "such resolute avoidance of violence in a play about so famous a violent man can hardly be accidental". Indeed the only on-stage death is that of Richard, himself. The play is more concerned with strategy than physical shock.

On the other hand, probably the most significant example of the Greek influence lies with the female characters. In Act 4 Scene 4, Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of York are "wailing women", the one lamenting the loss of her two young ones, the other bemoaning the woe visited on the kingdom by her son. Here is a reflection of the Greek chorus, commenting on the action and exhorting emotion:

Elizabeth: Ah, my young princes! Ah, my tender babes!
My unblown flowers, new-appearing sweets!
If yet your gentle souls fly in the air
And be not fix'd in doom perpetual,
Hover above me with your airy wings
And hear your mother's lamentation!

Duchess: So many miseries have crazed my voice,
That my woe-wearied tongue is mute and dumb,
Edward Plantagenet, why art thou dead?

- Elizabeth: Wilt thou, O God, fly from such gentle lambs
And throw them in the entrails of the wolf?
When didst thou sleep when such a deed was
done?
- Duchess: Blind sight, dead life, poor mortal living ghost,
Woe's scene, world's shame, grave's due by life usurp'd,
Brief abstract and record of tedious days,
Rest thy unrest on England's lawful earth,
Unlawfully made drunk with innocents' blood!
(9 –30)
- Margaret: From forth the kennel of thy womb hath crept
A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death:
That dog, that had his teeth before his eyes,
To worry lambs and lap their gentle blood,

That foul defacer of God's handiwork,
That excellent grand tyrant of the earth,
Thy womb let loose, to chase us to our graves.
(47- 54)
- Duchess: Why should calamity be full of words?
- Elizabeth: Let them have scope: though what they will impart
Help nothing else, yet do they ease the heart.
(126-131)

The significance of the “wailing women” scene is summed up in these last three lines.

Ritualistic language abounds in the language of revenge. In the play we witness this over and again, for instance in the scenes of the “wailing women”; again when Lady Anne is confronted by Richard before he eventually wins her (Act 1 Scene 2); and in the scene of the ghostly parade of victims which disturbs Richard's eve-of-battle sleep (Act 5 Scene 3).

In the play, revenge falls heavily on those who admit their guilt or perhaps, like Hastings, are so naïve as not to suspect the extent of Richard's evil. The admissions of guilt by Clarence (Act 1 Scene 4: 43-74), whose turncoat acts of treachery precede the play (see *Henry 6 Parts 1,2,3*), and Buckingham (Act 5 Scene 1: 12-29) are also ritualistic. Yet, while ritual rather than realism is the keynote, these passages have an emotive power which can captivate the

audience. The play is powerful by being “full of words”, not by searing the emotions with shocking physical imagery.

Finally, the play owes much to the medieval morality play. In these ancient, didactic plays, originally the several human vices were individually personified, but by the mid sixteenth century, a single representation of evil, known as “The Vice”, came to the fore. This character relied on deceit and guile, while feigning tears and laughter, and mock concern and affection for his victims. And importantly, he attempted to engage the audience in conspiracy with him. No student will be long in recognising these characteristics in Richard, while those who have been prepared to view Richard in this way can be encouraged to observe the circumstances existing in the royal court of England which allowed the rise of The Vice and the manner in which “he” is eventually destroyed. The destruction of The Vice will be discussed in greater depth in Lesson Four.

THE ROYAL COURT AND ITS CHARACTERS

The students should be encouraged to consider the setting and costuming of this production.

What do they reveal of the court? How successful are they in conveying the troubled times of the Wars of the Roses – the corruption, the grasping for power, and the political treachery of its inhabitants?

Is there in the play a character who is admirable?

Here it might be advantageous to introduce some of the more important characters and look forward to the roles they play in the rise and fall of Richard.

THE FEMALE CHARACTERS

The Duchess of York

Does Richard's mother have a good word to say about her son?

The nearest she comes to any expression of affection is to exhort him to charity and obedience when attempts are being made to reconcile rival factions at court (Act 2 Scene 2: 107-8). Richard's ironical aside reveals his contempt for her:

Amen; and make me die a good old man!
That is the butt-end of a mother's blessing.
I marvel that her grace did leave it out.
(Act 2 Scene 2: 109-11)

Bemoaning the death of her husband, and her son Clarence, she is left only with Richard. Her disdain for him is apparent:

I have bewept a worthy husband's death,
And liv'd with looking on his images:
But now two mirrors of his princely semblance
Are crack'd in pieces by malignant death;
And I, for comfort, have but one false glass,
That grieves me when I see my shame in him.
(Act 2 Scene 2: 49-54)

It is a question of whether her hatred stems from the evil she perceives in her son or whether a lack of maternal love is, at least in part, the cause of it. Some

psychologists take the latter view. One line of Richard's in the earlier play, *Henry 6 Part 3*, "Why, love forswore me in my mother's womb" (Act 3 Scene 2 : 153) is most often taken to refer to his physical deformity. But there may be more to it than that.

What do the students think? Is Richard evil because his mother does not love him? Or is he evil naturally?

Queen Elizabeth

This lady is an ambivalent character. She expresses her fear and loathing for Richard, takes her youngest son into sanctuary for protection, and yet eventually consents to persuade her daughter, Richard's niece, to be his wife. In the play, Richard's demise occurs too quickly for any marriage to take place; historically, public opinion and wiser counsel prevented it. Both dramatically and historically, however, Elizabeth agrees.

Is she utterly naïve or foolish? Or is she so politically motivated as to wish to see her daughter elevated to a position of power in the land even though it means marriage to a monster? Alternatively, does she deliberately lie to him when agreeing to the proposal? She has sent her own older son for protection off to Richmond. Is she already in cahoots with Richmond, planning to marry her daughter off to him behind Richard's back?

Lady Anne

Student reaction to Anne will be interesting. Will they feel animosity for her stupidity at being duped by an obvious villain, disdain for her ambition at achieving marriage with a powerful prince, or sympathy for her naiveté and inability to avoid succumbing to his terrifying charm? More will be said of Anne later, but these possibilities might well be put before the students before seeing the play.

It should be remembered, though, that Richard's killing of Anne's husband and father-in-law were politically and not personally motivated, that Anne is unaware of Richard's ultimate goal, and that we have been taken into his confidence while Anne has not. He has shown us, as audience, his ability to act the charmer, and he works his charm on Anne. He has confided his motives for marriage in us, not in Anne, and we know the torment that awaits her. Richard's ability to cajole, to act a role, and his relationship with the audience are also more extensively considered in Lessons One and Four.

THE MAJOR MALE CHARACTERS

Clarence

Although he exits from the play quite early, Clarence is a most significant character. He is given the most poetic lines of the play. His dream (Act 1 Scene 4: 1-74) is heartrending, and his murder (Act 1 Scene 4: 150-263) is one of the emotional climaxes of the play. These passages repay detailed study.

Richard's machinations have brought Clarence into disfavour with his brother, King Edward 4. A political turncoat who regularly changed sides during the Wars of the Roses, Clarence had been forgiven by and reconciled with the King. However, his past actions would make him vulnerable to distrust; Edward would take little convincing that he might again resort to treason. Imprisoned in the Tower of London, Clarence is mystified. He intends no treachery, and puts his incarceration down to omens. He is another who is easily duped by Richard and only learns the truth from his murderers.

Clarence's significance is twofold: first from the point of view of plot, he must be removed as he stands nearer the throne than Richard. More important dramatically, though, is his demeanour. In his dream he is sorely troubled by his past. Here he is simple and sincere, and he points out the contrast between himself and Richard to the audience. Clarence is sorrowful to the point of torment by his part in the Wars of the Roses; Richard glories in his.

Buckingham

Ambitious, ruthless, Buckingham is Richard's henchman. One assumes a friendship, yet early in the play (Act 1 Scene 3: 328) Richard calls him "a simple gull" and uses him only to advance his own ends. Buckingham does show himself to be something of a strategist. He is aware that Richard must go to Ludlow to bring to London the young Prince of Wales, now in fact King Edward 5. Buckingham's persuasive words convince the archbishop to yield up the Duke of York from sanctuary. It is Buckingham's effective stage management and his "straight man" to Richard's comic turn of sanctimonious hypocrisy before the Lord Mayor and citizens that gain Richard the crown.

The language of the fawning Buckingham is almost worshipful towards the newly crowned Richard. Reminiscent of liturgical exaltation, it is directed to a villain and Buckingham *knows* Richard's villainy. "My gracious sovereign", "Say on my loving lord", "My thrice renowned liege", "noble prince" (Act 4 Scene 2: 2-14) and ironically, the moment he utters these platitudes is the moment of his downfall.

For all of Buckingham's experience of Richard's malevolence, he is astounded at his own betrayal. =

Did he not know Richard well enough to be aware that to question was to lead to destruction, or did he come to a level of evil beyond which he was not prepared to go?

For Buckingham did not give his immediate assent to Richard's plan to murder the young Princes, rather he took time to consider.

Did he perhaps sense that he himself might be intended as the instrument of their death?

We can only surmise, for he comes with his answer and, intriguingly, Shakespeare does not let us hear it.

What do the students believe his answer to have been after seeing this production? Would he have had the courage to confront his King with denial?

Whatever his decision, it comes too late for:

The deep-revolting witty Buckingham
No more shall be the neighbour to my counsels.
Hath he so long held out with me untried,
And stops he now for breath? Well, be it so.
(Act 4 Scene 2: 42-45)

Hastings

Lord Chamberlain Hastings is in prison as the play opens, having fallen from favour through the influence of Queen Elizabeth's faction, the Lords Rivers, Grey, and Dorset. On his release, he too supports Richard, but he reaches the point of opposition before Buckingham does. He will not give approval to Richard's usurpation. So to be rid of him, Richard implicates him in a witchcraft plot, which is sheer bravado. It is a show of strength on Richard's part, a test of how far he can go without being checked.

As for Hastings, is he the pragmatic, worldly politician who follows naively and undiscerningly, used for a time then cast aside by an arch villain? If so, he has learned nothing from recent history.

Did he support Richard merely as a means of revenge upon his enemies –

Elizabeth's family at court? Or did he genuinely believe that Richard could deliver England from its recent bloody history?

Whatever his motive, his lack of judgement of character and his naiveté cannot be questioned, for of Richard he can say:

I think there's never a man in Christendom
That can less hide his love or hate than he;
For by his face straight shall you know his heart.
(Act 3 Scene 4: 51-53)

Too late he comes to a realisation of Richard's acting abilities:

O bloody Richard! Miserable England,
I prophesy the fearful'st time to thee
That ever wretched age hath look'd upon.
Come, lead me to the block: bear him my head.
They smile at me that shortly shall be dead.
(Act 3 Scene 4: 103-107)

Richmond

Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, is exiled in France as the play begins. It is he who will defeat and destroy Richard in the battle of Bosworth and become King Henry 7. Thus the Plantagenet Kings are replaced by the Tudors. Little more needs to be said at this stage, other than to encourage students to be prepared to discuss the dramatic means by which Shakespeare, and this production in particular, deals with the confrontation between these two forces and whether these forces are merely two men who seek supreme power in the land.

DETAILED PLOT SUMMARY FROM ACT 4 SCENE 1 ONWARDS

The women, Elizabeth, the Duchess, Lady Anne, and Clarence's daughter, together with Dorset are on their way to visit the young Princes in the Tower to congratulate Prince Edward on his coronation day. However, they are horrified to be refused entry by "order of *the King*". The women plead for entrance, but Brackenbury, the lieutenant of the Tower, is firm.

Lord Stanley arrives with the news that Anne is immediately required at Westminster to be crowned Queen to Richard 3. She and all the women are devastated and know full well that this forebodes all the destruction and misery for everyone that old Margaret damned upon them.

Elizabeth instructs her son, Dorset, to flee for safety to France to the Earl of Richmond, Stanley's stepson, and the Lancaster claimant for the crown. Stanley participates by sending word ahead to Richmond of Dorset's arrival. Anne, with a heavy reluctance departs for Westminster. Her only wish is that she die before she is finally crowned, but she is aware that her own curse of misery upon the wife of Richard earlier at Henry 6's funeral has fallen upon herself.

Elizabeth exits to sanctuary with a sorrowful farewell to the Tower where her Princes reside, and the Duchess of York welcomes her own death.

Act 4 Scene 2

Richard 3 enters in full regalia as England's King. Seated in the throne, he quietly asks Buckingham what he thinks of the idea that he kill the two young Princes but is rankled when Buckingham stalls.

Richard decides that he will never use this man as his confidant again and sends for a subject by the name of Tyrell to arrange the murder of the Princes. He orders Catesby to spread rumour meanwhile that Queen Anne is gravely ill and determines to dispose of Clarence's children by marrying the daughter meanly and leaving the simple boy to his own foolishness.

He plots in soliloquy to marry Elizabeth York, Edward's daughter, after he has murdered her young brothers and so secure the throne and his future rule.

Tyrell enters willing to perform any vile order of the King's in exchange for royal favour. Richard dispatches him to execute the Princes.

Richard, seemingly distracted for the rest of this scene, is at once instructing Stanley to watch his own loyalty is not divided by any familial duty to Richmond to whom Richard now knows Dorset has fled, but he also ponders over a prophecy that Richmond will be King. Buckingham beseeches him for the promised Earldom of Hereford. But Richard, troubled by Buckingham, declines, and the latter is angry and afraid, deciding to desert now “while my head is on”.

Scene 3

Tyrell soliloquises over the piteous deaths of the two Princes, which by report even brought sorrow to the hardened hearts of the two hired assassins.

Richard is pleased with news of their deaths and feels his way is now clearer with Anne’s death and the children of both his brothers disposed of, but decides he must woo the young Elizabeth York without delay before Richmond does so.

Richard is informed that Buckingham and the Bishop of Ely have deserted and are gathering power for an attack against him.

Scene 4

Old Margaret hovers about gleefully listening and making asides to the cries and lamentations of Elizabeth and the Duchess over the deaths of the Princes. Once again the lamentations are written in repetitive theatrical rhetorical patterns sourced in Greek tragedy. Elizabeth begs Margaret to teach her how to curse as well as she, but Margaret replies that her grief will do that. Both York women decide to seek out Richard and “smother” him with curses.

Richard enters and indeed the women curse him, sounding the names of all he has murdered: Clarence, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey, Hastings and the Princes. The Duchess holds no love at all for Richard and wishes him shame and death, telling him she intends to pray for the opposing side in the coming battle. Richard hardly hears or cares.

Elizabeth is stayed by Richard. He wishes to speak with her concerning his proposal of marriage to young Elizabeth. She is obdurate at first but with elastic eloquence, he proposes that this marriage will in fact advance her children and secure their lineage and indeed amend the necessary killings of her sons. He has taken the kingdom from her sons only to give it back to her daughter and the children she will bear.

The duologue is protracted and stylised with similar verbal patterning as earlier, but finally Elizabeth promises to acquaint her daughter of Richard’s plan and

accepts a kiss from Richard to give to her.

Immediately after she departs, Richard is scornful: “Relenting fool and shallow changing woman!”

Richard is given the sudden news that Richmond is strong at sea, approaching fast upon the western coast, so he sends for support from the Duke of Norfolk. Richard is under great stress, is abusive, distracted, and infuriated by Richmond’s strength and support by Dorset, Buckingham, and Ely. He warns Stanley if he also should waver in his loyalty, Stanley’s son George – who is to be held henceforth as assurance – will die. Stanley promises his loyalty.

Two more messengers arrive with bad news of advancing assaults on the crown from Devonshire and also from Kent, but a third messenger, impatiently struck by Richard, ironically bears the good news that Buckingham’s army has been dispersed by floods. Richard orders that Buckingham be captured.

The scene moves very quickly in condensed theatrical time frame: Richard also faces an attack approaching from Yorkshire, but it is now reported that Richmond is on his way back to France after suffering losses in a storm at sea. Catesby announces that Buckingham is captured and that Richmond has in fact landed at Milford in Wales with mighty support.

Richard, facing attacks from many different fronts, ventures first to Salisbury to which place he orders the captured Buckingham be brought.

Scene 5

Stanley dispatches word to Richmond informing him of the danger young George is in if they are caught communicating, but he also conveys Elizabeth’s consent for her daughter to marry Richmond.

We learn that Richmond is indeed in Wales, where he has the support of many great and powerful men throughout the kingdom.

Act 5 Scene 1

It is All Souls Day and Buckingham takes his last walk to his execution. Like many before him in the play, he is finally mindful of all his ambition and wrong doings and is contrite. He too feels that “Margaret’s curse falls heavy on my neck”.

Scene 2

The Earl of Richmond and his followers are marching a long way across the land. Richmond encourages them with the news that in only one more day's march, they will meet their dreaded opponent Richard 3. It is suggested the King has no friends, only followers who are likely to desert him when he needs them most.

Scene 3

Richard and his army, including Norfolk, Ratcliffe and Surrey rest while their tents are pitched in the field. Richard seems cheerful and notes that his regiments three times outnumber that of his enemies.

Shown on the other side of the stage, Richmond and his followers are also pitching their tents and preparing battle strategies for the following day. Richmond sends word to Stanley who is camped nearby.

Richard gives orders pertaining to the battle including strict word sent to Stanley to be in readiness at the royal camp before sunrise or young George's life will be in peril. He worries over the morale of Northumberland and is reassured but then conveys a flatness of spirit himself.

Despite the danger, Stanley steals to Richmond's tent to offer every support to him for the coming battle, even though he may appear to be fighting for Richard the following day.

Both Richard and Richmond retire. A parade of ghosts shortly appears – Prince Edward, Henry 6, Clarence, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey, Hastings, the young Princes, Lady Anne and Buckingham. They enter separately or severally and speak first to Richard cursing him and his battle efforts the next day, and then to Richmond predicting victory and showering praise upon his cause to fight.

Richard awakes as after a terrible nightmare with little sense of who or where he is. For the first time, he is filled with fear and guilt over his treachery and frets to Ratcliffe that his men might prove traitors.

Richmond meanwhile has slept well and awakes after a most sweet and fitful sleep, ready for battle. He remembers the dream and feels that many spirits support him. He gives a righteous oration to his men before embarking on the battle, promising it will bring safety and peace evermore to their wives and children.

Richard is eavesdropping upon his men, and feels it does not augur well for at

least one party that the sun has not yet risen, despite it being well past the appointed time in the almanac for it to do so.

A sudden cry to arms comes from Norfolk, and Richard hastily sets about giving orders and strategic plans. His earlier fear is forgotten as he shouts:

Let us to it pell-mell
If not to heaven then to Hell
(Act 5 Scene 3: 313 –314)

His oration to his men is a defamatory cry over the enemy, belittling them as “rascals and run aways” led by a “paltry fellow”, men who will ravish women everywhere unless they are conquered. He orders them to “ride in blood!”

A messenger enters with news that Stanley refuses to bring his men, but as the enemy is advancing there is no time to carry out Richard’s execution order of young George Stanley.

Scene 4

The following two scenes are battle scenes in which Richard seems at first to be gaining by his great valour. His horse has been killed and he is now fighting on foot. He shouts the famous cry: “A horse! A horse! My kingdom for horse!” Richard indicates he has had trouble distinguishing Richmond in the field.

Scene 5

Finally Richard and Richmond meet and fight. Richard is killed and the body is carried off. Richmond announces: “The day is ours; the bloody dog is dead.”

Stanley places the crown taken from Richard upon Richmond’s head. Richmond pardons the soldiers who have deserted, orders necessary funerals for those killed, and is cheered by the news that George Stanley is unharmed.

He makes a gracious oration announcing an end to the wars between the Houses of Lancaster and York, which will now be united by the marriage of the two true inheritors of each House, he and Elizabeth. He makes a pledge for long and peaceful days for England.

LESSON THREE

THE COURTSHIP OF RICHARD AND ANNE

Certainly one of the most fascinating aspects of the play is Richard's courtship of Lady Anne. Some audience members might be inclined to dismiss it as theatrical licence: an impossibility in real life but acceptable in a drama. But, of course, Richard 3 of England did in fact marry Anne Neville. We will never know exactly why he married her, or why Anne consented. But we can guess.

Shakespeare helps us to guess, but in his dramatic version of their courtship, it still seems incredible. At the end of the scene we ask: why on earth does she yield to Richard?

Anne's progress from the start of the scene, where she understands Richard's true nature so well, to the end, where she is blinded by it like most other characters in the play, is certain testament to Richard's power and perhaps her own frailty. For Richard, like the devil that he certainly represented to Elizabethan audiences, has a dark omniscience. He knows all there is to know about temptation – exactly where the target of vulnerability lies within each individual. And like the devil, he takes delight in proving to himself the essential weakness of human nature and the shallowness of the world. It is his favourite sport (Act 1 Scene 2: 232 – 243).

Richard's courtship of Anne is a pre-planned, theatrical demonstration of his power. He informs the audience before the scene that he will woo and win her, though he killed her husband and father (Act 1 Scene 2: 153 –9). As if to illustrate just how simple this impossible task will be, with Shakespeare's use of comic theatrical coincidence, hardly has he stated his intentions when in she walks. And he does it. How does he achieve it? The devil, we have been told, is a great flatterer. Richard knows where to fan Anne's ego: her beauty.

In the volatile male world of York-Lancaster history of which Anne is a part, where life is short and tempestuous and violence is surely commonplace, women have a limited role and no power at all. The Lancaster Queen Margaret, for instance, as evil and abusive as everyone finds her, is not even a threat to the York males; they permit her to live and, it seems, as Shakespeare tells the tale, to break the terms of her banishment. The York women in the same way are not taken seriously in the least by Richard.

The only power women seem to have in this male world is their breeding power. Women like Anne must trade first on a pedigree and upon beauty above that. We can look around society today to see abundant examples of the idea that female

beauty is defined and used as power. Of course, it is a shallow world that thinks this way, but what is new?

Beauty becomes trading power for Anne in 1483. She feels power over the devil, Richard, when he tells her that her beauty has power over him. He makes her think she has conquered him. She may be coquettish, for instance, in her reply, "To take is not to give", at Richard's gift of a ring.

Anne is vulnerable, having lost those most dear to her, and the life-line he offers her is a belief in her own power; the power of her own beauty. He committed atrocities for her, so great was his desire for her, so great is *she*. We all recall stories elsewhere of the devil tempting his subject with the promise of greatness.

Richard also may have triggered Anne's sense of empathy: the desolation of his heart appears to match that of hers (Act 1 Scene 2: 160-171), and his desolation is all *for want of her*, it seems. There is, of course, a comic vanity on Anne's part here, if indeed she does think this way. But this vanity is exactly what Richard, as the devil, is banking on. It also more generally exposes human frailty: the flaws in each of us exposed by our choices when faced with opportunities and the demands of circumstance, and the needs which drive some humans to grasp at any ostensibly strong bridge over insecurity, whatever the costs. Anne truly does understand Richard's character, as demonstrated at the start of the scene (Act 1 Scene 2: 44 to end), but she allows herself to be blinded. And as the play progresses, that blindness does not last long.

There is the possibility that Anne admits the blindness because she is not necessarily a good person. Certainly there are ironies: at the start, she is a Christian woman praying to a vengeful God to kill, destroy and wreak havoc upon her enemy, to make Richard's future wife suffer every misery and strife, which, of course, is a curse which befalls herself. Also to be considered is the dog-eat-dog culture of the Wars of the Roses through which Anne and her kin have always lived; it is valid to consider its effect on her virtue. Her vengeance is understandable human behaviour, in her circumstances, but it leaves room for the choice of a less virtuous interpretation of Anne's character than is conventional.

However, Richard does woo her with a convincing sincerity:

Look, how my ring encompasseth thy finger,
Even so thy breast encloseth my poor heart;
Wear both of them for both of them are mine.
(Act 1 Scene 2: 207-209)

He presents himself to her as if to reveal deep masculine vulnerabilities: he is physically deformed and not handsome at all, if we are to believe his own descriptions of himself. He is in love with her and was driven to kill his more beautiful rivals as the only path to be near her. He also is badly dressed.

Richard has in these ways created a space for her sympathy by which he probably hopes to stir a feminine impulse to nurture him – not for his sake, but to last at least long enough to bed her and serve his political intentions. It is certainly playable for an actress that, by the end of the scene, Anne wants to look after him because she thinks he needs her.

It is not a comfortable admission, but one just has to grant how attractive Richard is in the early stages of the play. Whether it is because his power, confidence and efficiency are masterful and these are qualities we admire, or whether it is something else, we cannot really blame Anne if she also succumbs as we do to his appeal, sexual and otherwise.

In the present day we read – not rarely – of educated, middle-class women who fall in love with mass murderers or rapists when on a visit to a prison. It seems so curious and impossible, yet it happens. Is it because prisoners have had their power taken away from them and women feel sorry for them? Is that Richard's guise in front of Anne – his morality hijacked and imprisoned by his own great love for her, confined by his deformed, badly dressed body? Does Richard know women just too well?

Finally, at the end of the play, Anne has danced with the devil and she knows it, and both characters are curiously drained of the compelling attraction and curiosity we felt for them at the start of the play.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND EXERCISE FOR DRAMA STUDENTS

Finding a character

The character of Anne is conventionally played as an innocent, saintly, good Christian woman. The most famous example is that by Claire Bloom in the Olivier film version of the play, readily available.

What contradictions to this interpretation of her character can you see in the text? Is Anne a good Christian woman? Is she in any way contemptuous of Christianity? Is she just a normal human being under very great stress?

Examine her monologue in Act 1 Scene 2: 1-32, for consistencies and

contradictions to whichever interpretation you favour. What others are there in the rest of the scene once Richard enters?

Find two different interpretations of her character. Prepare them and perform them for the class. Discuss what each brings or omits to an understanding of the play – particularly with reference to Lesson Four of these notes and an understanding of the play's connections to the morality play.

Which character does Anne ritualistically represent in the morality play?

At which point in Act 1 Scene 2 does Anne begin to be charmed by Richard? Use the text to substantiate?

Can you think of a good political reason why Richard wants to marry her, considering he says immediately after her exit:

I'll have her but I will not keep her long
(Act 1 Scene 2: 234)

Who has the power in the scene? Start at the beginning and note who has it, who loses it, at which point – where it changes hands, if at all.

If you were preparing to play the part of Richard, what choices would you make as a character to make yourself attractive to Anne? How would you win her?

LESSON FOUR

RICHARD AS KING

It will be interesting to have the students discuss their perceptions of Richard once he is King. There is no doubt that from the beginning of Act 4 onward, he behaves quite, quite differently.

The death of the young Princes.

The obstacles in Richard's path up until this point have been overcome with a bravado, a sense of sheer excitement, even enjoyment. In considering the fate of the Princes he grows contemplative, even asks approval of Buckingham, who for the first time, balks at a proposal from Richard. He asks for time to reflect and we never know what his decision would have been. Buckingham is finished for having questioned. Richard dispatches the Princes secretly. Now, there is no rhetoric or oratory, no acting of a role to justify the deed.

Queen Anne

The last we hear of Anne, other than her ghostly appearance on the eve of the battle, is from her husband. Her death is now part of his strategy, as he believes that he now must marry his niece. How Anne dies we never know, though Shakespeare's audience would have been convinced that Richard murdered her. But the play allows us to ponder on the evidence of Richard's strategy, character and reputation, and Anne's loss of will to live as she goes to her coronation. Here she remembers the curse she herself placed on any future wife of Richard after her first husband's death:

"Be thou", quoth I, "accurs'd,
For making me, so young so old a widow!
And when thou wed'st, let sorrow haunt thy bed;
And be thy wife – if any be so mad –
As miserable by the life of thee
As thou hast made me by my dear Lord's death!"
(Act 4 Scene 1: 71-76)

and tells of her marriage to Richard:

For never yet one hour in his bed
Did I enjoy the golden dew of sleep,
But with his timorous dreams was still awak'd.
Besides he hates me for my father Warwick;

And will no doubt, shortly be rid of me.
(Act 4 Scene 1: 82-86)

Richard's final reference to Anne is followed by a short but significant soliloquy:

Rumour it abroad,
That Anne my wife is sick and like to die:

About it;
I must be married to my brother's daughter,

Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass.
Murder her brothers, and then marry her!
Uncertain way of gain! But I am in
So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin:
Tear falling pity dwells not in this eye.
(Act 4 Scene 2: 50, 57-58, 60-65)

How different is the tone now that he is King. And there is that brief reference in Anne's speech, which can pass unnoticed, to his "timorous dreams". One feels she is reporting evidence of Richard's fears for the future and the safety of his crown rather than a manifestation of his guilt over the past.

What has happened to Richard?

Anne's mention of his dreams and Richard's soliloquy show how he has been driven to introspection. Bravado, energy, the enjoyment of overcoming obstacles are no longer appropriate. Acting and oratory are now beyond him, possibly because he is a failure in his ability to play the King. Acting and oratory have gained him the crown but desert him in his attempts to maintain it. Richard, for the first time, is forced to look inward, and he finds only emptiness. His strategies have been based on murder and deception and these do not support him for long as King. Forces rise against him, domestic unrest opens the way for Richmond, and soon Richard is confronted by armed attacks on the crown.

Driven to his inner-self on the eve of the battle, his whole being collapses. He is haunted by the ghosts of his victims and wakes from his visions in fear. His long soliloquy (Act 5 Scene 3: 171-207), so different from all previous ones in language style, is now completely lacking in structure and certainly reflects the fragmentation of his being. A few lines will suffice as example:

What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by;
Richard loves Richard, that is, I am I.
Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am!

Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why:
Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?
Alack. I love myself. Wherefore? For any good
That I myself have done unto myself?

(Act 5 Scene 3: 183189)

Only in the last four lines does he gain coherence, and then only to realise his failure.

The students might like to compare and contrast the language styles of this soliloquy with the styles in any of the earlier ones before Richard is crowned.

The Battle of Bosworth

“The foe vaunts in the field.” (Act 5 Scene 3: 289)

The battle lines are drawn. The sense of failure which prevailed briefly in Richard’s dream sequence has now gone. In Laurence Olivier’s famous film of the play, he added a line to the text: “Richard’s himself again”, and so he is.

Once more Richard’s talk requires action, not introspection. Oratory returns as he exhorts his men to battle with stirring, though not particularly high-minded, words. Shakespeare takes nothing from him in bravery and even when all is lost, he still seeks his adversary, Richmond. But Richard’s reign has ended. On the field of Bosworth there is revenge, retribution, and reconciliation. There is a feeling that a great evil has passed and a new era of hope and possibility for *good* has begun with Richmond.

Richard and the audience

What do the students make of Richard? How has his relationship with his audience affected them?

One of Shakespeare’s great achievements with this play is the degree to which Richard achieves an attractiveness to an audience. He becomes an anti-hero. He establishes this relationship by immediately taking us into his confidence and he affects us, as he does the other characters, by his rhetoric, his audacity, and his sheer enthusiasm. We might be – should be – appalled at what he does, but somehow we cannot avoid being excited by his brazen attitude and action. We are confidantes to his diabolical humour over the successful wooing of Anne, his sardonic irony of Clarence being “new christen’d in the Tower” when we discover how he will meet his death. We gain no respect for Queen Elizabeth’s faction and so, like Hastings, shed no tears at their demise, and we have little time for a Lord

Mayor and “troops of citizens” so easily duped. We are strangely somewhat like Buckingham in our attitude to Richard, and Richard loses us at about the time he loses Buckingham. We feel for Lady Anne and for the young Princes. We cannot forgive Richard for his treatment of these three, and, significantly, from the moment he becomes King he ceases to confide in us.

Is it fanciful to think that, just as Buckingham ceases to be of use, so have we the audience, and if he had power over us, would we too lose our heads?

At the end we admire his bravery, but we are glad when he is destroyed. Perhaps we are also somewhat personally relieved, for, when we think back, our earlier attitudes may make us feel uncomfortable.

Richmond and the morality play

In Lesson Two we referred to the individual character who became the representation of evil, The Vice. In the tradition of the morality play, this personification could become “The Scourge of God”, a tyrannical being whose evil power terrorises and chastises an erring people. That chastisement over “The Scourge” must be removed, the love of God surpassing the anger of God. From the aspect of the morality play, Richard can be seen as The Scourge. Years of warfare, treachery and corruption with the Wars of the Roses required expiation.

Richmond, as a character, has often received a bad press from critics. He seems colourless, stuffy and boring, and on a realistic assessment these judgements have some validity. But Richmond as a ritualistic character is another matter. Here he is better seen as the personification of *good*, the purger of evil and the destroyer of evil. In his prayer before battle, he places himself in the hands of God, and ritualistically, becomes the weapon of God.

In summary, what Shakespeare has done in *Richard 3* is to use the formal ritualism of ancient dramatic styles and create a vital, yet still ritualistic, drama of sin and expiation which has had the power to excite audiences for more than 400 years. His masterstroke was to engineer audiences to the side of evil for a great deal of the time, but then to release us and allow us to condemn evil, even as we are forced to admit our own vulnerability. When Richmond, the weapon of good, defeats The Scourge, a great evil has passed, and we are relieved at the possibility of a new beginning.

SOLILOQUIES FROM *HENRY 6 PART 3*

Act 3 Scene 2: 124-95

Richard

Ay, Edward will use women honourably.
Would he were wasted, marrow, bones, and all,
That from his loins no hopeful branch may spring,
To cross me from the golden time I look for!
And yet, between my soul's desire and me –
The lustful Edward's title buried –
Is Clarence, Henry, and his son young Edward,
And all the unlooked-for issue of their bodies,
To take their rooms, ere I can place myself:
A cold premeditation for my purpose!
Why then, I do but dream on sovereignty;
Like one that stands upon a promontory
And spies a far-off shore where he would tread,
Wishing his foot were equal with his eye,
And chides the sea that sunders him from thence,
Saying he'll lade it dry to have his way;
So do I wish the crown, being so far off;
And so I chide the means that keeps me from it;
And so I say I'll cut the causes off,
Flattering me with impossibilities.
My eye's too quick, my heart o'erweens too much,
Unless my hand and strength could equal them.
Well, say there is no kingdom then for Richard,
What other pleasure can the world afford?
I'll make my heaven in a lady's lap,
And deck my body in gay ornaments,
And 'witch sweet ladies with my words and looks.
O, miserable thought! And more unlikely
Than to accomplish twenty golden crowns!
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 withered shrub;
To make an envious mountain on my back,
Where sits deformity to mock my body;
To shape my legs of an unequal size;
To disproportion me in every part,

Like to a chaos, or an unlicked bear-whelp
 That carries no impression like the dam.
 And am I then a man to be beloved?
 O, monstrous fault, to harbour such a thought!
 Then, since this earth affords no joy to me
 But to command, to check, to o'erbear such
 As are of better person than myself,
 I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown,
 And whiles I live, t'account this world but hell,
 Until my misshaped trunk that bears this head
 Be round impaléd with a glorious crown.
 And yet I know not how to get the crown,
 For many lives stand between me and home;
 And I – like one lost in a thorny wood,
 That rents the thorns and is rent with the thorns,
 Seeking a way and straying from the way,
 Not knowing how to find the open air,
 But toiling desperately to find it out –
 Torment myself to catch the English crown;
 And from that torment I will free myself,
 Or hew my way out with a bloody axe.
 Why I can smile, and murder while I smile,
 And cry "Content!" to that which grieves my heart,
 And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
 And frame my face to all occasions.
 I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall;
 I'll slay more gazers than the basilisk;
 I'll play the orator as well as Nestor,
 Deceive more silyly than Ulysses could,
 And, like a Sinon, take another Troy.
 I can add colours to the chameleon,
 Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
 And set the murderous Machiavel to school.
 Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?
 Tut were it farther off, I'll pluck it down.

- The students might like to take a comparative look at the above speech and that of Edmund in *King Lear*, Act 1, scene ii, lines 1- 22 and 123 – 139.

Act 5 scene 6: 61-93

Richard

What! Will the aspiring blood of Lancaster
Sink in the ground? I thought it would have mounted.
See how my sword weeps for the poor King's death!
O, may such purple tears be always shed
From those that wish the downfall of our house!
If any spark of life be yet remaining,
Down, down to hell; and say I sent thee thither,
(He stabs him again)

I that have neither pity, love, nor fear.
Indeed, 'tis true that Henry told me of;
For I have often heard my mother say
I came into the world with my legs forward.
Had I not reason, think ye, to make haste,
And seek their ruin that usurped our right?
The midwife wondered and the women cried
"O, Jesus bless us, he is born with teeth!"
And so I was, which plainly signified
That I should snarl and bite and play the dog.
Then, since the heavens have shaped my body so,
Let hell make crooked my mind to answer it.
I have no brother, I am like no brother;
And this word "love", which greybeards call divine,
Be resident in men like one another
And not in me; I am myself alone.
Clarence, beware; thou keepest me from the light.
But I will sort a pitchy day for thee;
For I will buzz abroad such prophecies
That Edward shall be fearful of his life,
And then, to purge his fear, I'll be thy death.
King Henry and the Prince his son are gone;
Clarence, thy turn is next, and then the rest,
Counting myself but bad till I be best.
I'll throw thy body in another room
And triumph, Henry, in thy day of doom.

LESSON FIVE

RICHARD AND MACBETH – IINTERESTING PARALLELS

Both *Richard 3* and *Macbeth* explore the nature of evil, which is at once fascinating and frightening. Any valuable comparison of the plays involves our discovering the motivations behind the central characters' wickedness. Both characters sacrifice everything for the power that they crave. Audiences find something perversely admirable in a villain who stands defiantly and desperately alone; and in *Richard* and *Macbeth* we have two such villains. We are paradoxically repelled and captivated by the evil that they each possess and unleash.

Historically, the study of the qualities of the tyrant king is a successful focus for many narratives. Given the interesting nature of the characters of *Macbeth* and *Richard*, it is not surprising that Shakespearean critics have previously drawn comparisons between the plays. Perhaps the first was Thomas Whatley's *Remarks on Some of the Characters of Shakespeare* (published in 1785) and much more recently with Helen Gardner, "Milton's Satan and the Theme of Damnation in Elizabethan Tragedy" in *A Reading of Paradise Lost* (OUP, 1965). *Macbeth* remains listed among Shakespeare's tragedies. *Richard 3* has been labelled as both a history and a tragedy.

Generally, audiences find little to sympathise with in *Richard*'s eventual destruction, whereas *Macbeth*'s demise may evoke some compassion from an audience.

Students would benefit from completing some research about the nature of Elizabethan tragedy. As they note the main qualities of a tragedy, they then need to consider which of these can be identified in each play.

Richard 3 is classified as one of Shakespeare's history plays but is it also a tragedy?

Is Macbeth more clearly the tragic hero of the two? Defend your decisions by making references to the plays with particular attention given to the actions of the central character and his relationship with an audience.

Our initial impressions of Macbeth's nature and abilities are established by other characters' reports. He is described as "worthy Cawdor", "valiant", a "peerless kinsman", and even Lady Macbeth recognises that he is "too full o' the milk of human kindness". Macbeth's character, however, is more complex than is considered by any of these assessors. He is at first motivated by his "vaulting ambition", and is further spurred on by the desperate possibilities that Lady Macbeth more clearly recognises in the witches' prophecies. She instructs him to "screw (his) courage to the sticking place" to ensure success, but within moments of the murder of Duncan we see that Macbeth's sense of guilt almost overwhelms him as he refuses to return to the scene of the murder. He tells Lady Macbeth that he is "afraid to think what I have done."

However, Macbeth's determination to succeed, whatever the cost, becomes readily evident once he becomes King. He adopts a tyrant's role with a sense of fatalism directing his actions. There is increasing evidence of his lack of sympathy for his victims as he states that:

I am in blood steeped so far
That, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.
(*Macbeth* Act 3 Scene 4: 37-39)

He mirrors Richard's thoughts at a similar stage in both plays:

But I am in
So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin;
Tear falling pity dwells not in this eye.
(*Richard 3* Act 4 Scene 2: 63-65)

Macbeth's conscience now that he is King, bothers him less than earlier. His ruthless determination repels friend and foe alike, until his climactic confrontation with MacDuff, when he finds himself alone, harbouring false security in the prophetic protection of the weird sisters.

By contrast, Richard does not reveal any sense of guilt at all until the very end,

after being confronted by his victims in his sleep. We possibly already see him as a man withdrawn as a result of his sense of isolation. He has an egoist's perception of his position and in his preparations for advancement. The shadow of his hunchbacked deformity reminds him of his separateness and this possibly provides the impetus for his malevolence:

Unless to see my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity.
(*Richard 3* Act 1 Scene 1: 26-7)

But Richard appears to lack the dignity of the tragic hero. He tells us from the first that he is "determined to prove a villain" (Act 1 Scene 1: 30). Additionally, he informs us that he is "subtle, false and treacherous" (Act 1 Scene 1: 37). It is through these shared confidences with the audience that our interest in his plans to usurp the throne is instigated. As with *Othello's* Iago, his audacity is remarkable, and while his villainy is repellent, his energy in the pursuit of his ambition demands our attention and interest.

Ultimately, Richard too fights his final battle isolated from allies. He is well aware that:

There is no creature loves me,
And if I should die no soul will pity me.
(*Richard 3* Act 5 Scene 3: 204-5)

Knowing this, why did he maintain his course of action? The Duchess of York, Richard's mother, had prophesied his demise when she stated, "Bloody thou art; and bloody will be thy end" (Act 4 Scene 4: 199). We recognise the truth of her words, but does Richard? When Richard of York becomes King he adopts the role of the brutal tyrant, and even to the last, his arrogance and uncompromising authority astounds us. He audaciously offers his proposal to marry young Elizabeth to the Queen while confessing to the murders of her other children:

If I did take thy kingdom from your sons,
To make amends I'll give it to your daughter;
If I kill'd the issue of your womb,
To quicken your increase I will beget

Mine issue of your blood, upon your daughter.
(Act 4 Scene 4: 301-5)

It is his consistent and intense disdain for every other significant character that makes Richard a captivating study.

Macbeth and Richard are both extraordinarily ambitious men. Macbeth *becomes* ruthless, whereas Richard is quite cold-blooded from the outset of his play. But the most striking parallel between the plays becomes apparent once they attain their goal to be king. The horror that Macbeth and Richard cause to maintain their position marks up the comparison between the plays. Consider the morality of the decisions that each man makes as King. Lord Acton stated in 1887 that "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

While the statement has become somewhat of a cliché, do you believe that Acton may be right? Is Acton's assessment of the corruptive nature of power accurate for each of these characters in these two plays?

Our growing awareness of their willingness to destroy family and friends in their pursuit of power is central to the plays' success. Their capacity for evil is most clearly evidenced in their desperate need to preserve their hold on that power. Both are aware that there are forces at work to overthrow them. Richard asks Buckingham:

But shall we wear these glories for a day?
Or shall they last, and we rejoice in them?
(Richard 3 Act 4 Scene 2: 6-7)

The objective for Richard had been to become King with little apparent consideration for the implications of rule once attaining this position. There is no sense of pleasure emerging from the role of King for Richard; he becomes obsessed with holding the position for its own sake. Similarly, Macbeth is distracted from the pleasures of power by his need to respond to the prophecies addressing Banquo's heirs. He states:

Fears in Banquo stick deep,
And in his royalty of nature reigns that
Which would be feared.
(Macbeth Act 3 Scene 1: 49-51)

His desire for knowledge about his future results in his taking smug pleasure in his own personal interpretation of the further three prophecies proffered by the witches. We readily recognise that he chooses an egoist's view of the warnings

given, which guarantees his eventual destruction and heightens the dramatic tension of the play as the “riddles” reveal themselves to Macbeth and the audience simultaneously.

Shakespeare’s audiences demanded that there be a reckoning for regicide. Richard and Macbeth are both assaulted by the ghosts of those they had unjustly killed or murdered; their past actions shadow their present through the visitations of those killed and their consciences are then laid bare on stage. Buckingham’s ghost hints at retribution, “Let me sit heavy on thy soul tomorrow” (*Richard 3* Act 5 Scene 3: 122), while Banquo shaking his “gory locks” (*Macbeth* Act 3 Scene 4: 52) is sufficient to jolt Macbeth’s confidence.

In terms of the grander scheme for an audience, the deaths of the tyrants, the usurpers, generally usher in a new state of order and the promise of better times. Richmond observes:

Now civil wounds are stopt, peace lives again:

That she may long live here, God say Amen.

(*Richard 3* Act 5 Scene 5: 41-2)

And so the play ends as if it were a prayer for the future. Malcolm appears less gracious but nonetheless magnanimous in his promise for his thanes to be made earls, and the invitation to celebrate his coronation at Scone (*Macbeth*, Act 5 Scene 8: 60-75). But future conflicts await as we remember that Fleance escaped Macbeth’s murderers and it will be his sons who will eventually be kings.

Some top web sites for the study of *Macbeth*:

- <http://www.jetlink.net/~massij/wssq/macbeth.html>
- *Macbeth* sources from Legends. Provides information on the historical figures behind the play:
<http://www.legends.dm.net/shakespeare/macbeth.html>
- Ed Friedlander's site dedicated to *Macbeth* "grew out of a question about exactly what is 'grease that's sweaten from the murderer's gibbet'"; it comes with a warning: "*Macbeth* is nasty. This site is nasty."
<http://www.pathguy.com/macbeth.htm>
- Excerpts from Holinshed's *Chronicles V*:
<http://www.clicknotes.com/macbeth/Holinshed/welcome.html>
- Locket, Joseph. "To Strut and Fret Upon the Stage: Theatrical Interpretation of Sources for *Macbeth*."

<http://www.io.com/~jlockett/Grist/English/macbethsources.html>

- The Penguin and Signet Classics teacher's guide to *Macbeth*:
http://www.penguinclassics.com/CAN/resources/teachers_guides/t_shakespeare_macbeth.html

Some top web sites for the study of *Richard 3*:

- *Richard III*, A Play for Our Time – from Think Quest. Provides a historical, political and psychological perspective:

<http://library.thinkquest.org/26314>

The Richard III Society's mandate is to fight the myths and disparaging allusions which have grown up around the historical figure. Many of these are a result of the popularity of Shakespeare's play, which paints a rather grim figure of a King who actually instigated many social advancements in England:

<http://www.r3.org>

- A teacher's guide to *Richard III* by Penguin and Signet Classics:
http://www.penguinclassics.com/CAN/resources/teachers_guides/t_shakespeare_richard3.html
- Harris, Craig. "To Prove a Villain – The Elizabethan [sic] Villain as Revenger" 1994. A general essay on villains with specific reference to *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Richard 3*:
<http://www.craigsworld.com/villain.htm>

GENERAL RICHARD 3 STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR ENGLISH STUDENTS

- 1. At the start of the play (Act 1 Scene 1) George, Duke of Clarence, is going to prison? Note also who is being released at the same time. Who do both of these men believe their enemies to be? Who is their real enemy?**
- 2. What kind of person is Richard? How does he see himself fitting into the world around himself?**
- 3. Note all the language of evil and sickness. What purpose does this serve?**
- 4. At the start of the play Richard tells us that he is determined to prove himself a villain in this play. As the plot moves forward, we see that Richard indeed stumbles from one act of depravity to another. What do you feel the outcomes for this type of character are likely to be?**
- 5. Michael Gow has said that, "The monster [Frankenstein] in Shelley's book, like Count Dracula and countless other sinister monsters down to Freddy Kruger, can trace their lineage back to the hunchbacked Richard of Gloucester". (See Michael Gow's Notes Page 61) To what extent is this statement true? What are some similarities between these horror figures and Richard?**
- 6. Why does Anne fall for Richard (in Act 1 Scene 2) after he admits to killing her husband? Why does she not kill him, given the chance? Who do you want to see triumph in this scene: Anne or Richard? Why?**
- 7. All the women in the play constantly list Richard's victims. Why does Shakespeare allow them to do this? What function do women serve in this play?**
- 8. Look at the scramble of logic in Act 1 Scene 4, to "justify" the killing of Clarence. Why so much talk, and what does it tell you about the world of this play?**
- 9. Note the details of Clarence's dream. What does this dream really mean?**
- 10. Why does the widowed Queen place herself and her son, Richard of**

York, in sanctuary? How does the boy end up leaving it?

- 11. Note the dreadful fates of the children in this play: Rutland, Edward (son of Henry 6 and Margaret), Edward 5 (son of Edward 4 and Queen Elizabeth), Richard of York, the children of George, Duke of Clarence. What happens to this world (or any world, for that matter) when its children are killed or mistreated?***

- 12. Note the cyclic nature of this play. The "glorious summer" following the "winter of our discontent" mentioned by Richard in Act 1 Scene 1, sinks into a bloodbath in this story, only to be replaced by the peace proclaimed by Richmond in the last words of the play. What does the presence of this cycle tell us as audience about history?***

THE HISTORICAL RICHARD 3

- 2 October 1452, Richard Plantagenet was born on at Fotheringhay Castle in Northamptonshire.
- Richard was the youngest son of Richard, Duke of York.
- The Duke of York held a senior government position but was unpopular with the Lancastrian regime. York's disputes with the King led to his early death at the Battle of Wakefield on 30 December 1460.
- The Duke of York's eldest son, Edward, seized the throne of England in March the following year and defeated the Lancastrians at Towton on Palm Sunday in 1461.
- King Edward 4 assumed responsibility for the upbringing of his younger brothers, Clarence and Richard.
- Richard was created Duke of Gloucester at the age of eight at the coronation of his brother, Edward 4.
- In 1471 Richard was given command of the vanguards at the Battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury.
- In 1476 Duchess Anne gave birth to their only child, who became known as Edward of Middleham.

RICHARD'S THRUST FOR THE THRONE

- 9 April 1483, King Edward dies a few days short of his forty-first birthday.
- The heir to the throne (another Edward) was only twelve years old. With no time to prepare for a transition of power, factions were immediately formed, each believing they had an important role to play in the government of England.
- At the time of his father's death, the new King was at Ludlow under the tutelage of his maternal uncle, Earl Rivers.
- The Queen sent for them to come to London and to be crowned without delay.
- Lord Hastings possibly informed Richard of his brother's death and urged that he come immediately to London.
- While moving to London, Richard began arresting any noble who supported the Queen.
- The Queen, on hearing of these events, withdrew to sanctuary in Westminster Abbey with her family.

- Edward 5 arrived in London on 4 May, the day for which his coronation had been planned, and the event was rescheduled for 22 June.
- Richard and the Council continued with the preparations for the coronation and with the governance of the country, but on 13 June Richard announced that a plot against him had been discovered and accused Lord Hastings of being the instigator.
- The Lord Hastings was immediately executed and Archbishop John Rotherham, Bishop John Morton and Thomas, Lord Stanley were arrested.
- On 16 June the young King's brother, Richard, Duke of York, left Westminster Abbey and joined his brother in the royal apartments at the Tower.
- On 22 June Dr. Ralph Shaa, brother of the mayor, declared to the citizens of London, that King Edward 4's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville was illegal. This was due to the existence of a pre-contract of marriage between Edward 4 and Lady Eleanor Butler, which Richard used to prove that the children of Edward and Elizabeth's marriage were illegitimate, and therefore, disbarred from the throne of England.
- Within four days Richard was acclaimed King of England.

RICHARD 3 AS KING

- King Richard 3 was crowned, with his wife Anne, on 6 July at Westminster Abbey.
- In 1483, however, King Richard suffered a serious setback. His former supporter, the Duke of Buckingham, became involved in a rebellion, primarily based in the west country and Kent. Although swiftly repressed, the effects were far reaching and King Richard now began to rely more on his northern supporters by placing them in the vacant offices left by the rebels.
- The rebellion had been supported by a scion of the House of Lancaster, the exiled Henry Tudor, a descendant of King Edward 3 through his son John of Gaunt's legitimised Beaufort family.
- Tudor had assumed the role of representative of the Lancastrian line and focus for any disaffected English nobles and gentry. On Christmas Day 1484 in Rennes Cathedral, Henry Tudor declared his intention of marrying King Edward 4's eldest daughter, the Lady Elizabeth, when he became King of England. He then spent the next eighteen months planning his invasion.
- King Richard meanwhile called his first, and only parliament, in January 1484. The legislation covered three main areas, the ratification of Richard as King, the passing of acts of attainder against the October rebels and the passing of a number of acts designed to reform part of the legal system.

- King Richard's reign was overshadowed by the threat of Tudor's invasion and by personal loss. Near the anniversary of the death of his brother King Edward, Richard's son died and the King and Queen shut themselves in their apartments at Nottingham Castle to mourn their loss. Richard's Queen died less than a year later on 16 March 1485.
- The long awaited invasion came on 7 August when Tudor landed at Milford Haven in Wales. King Richard mobilised his forces and on 22 August King and invader joined battle at Bosworth Field in Leicestershire. Despite Richard's superior army the battle was lost when the King was slain by the forces of Sir William Stanley, who turned traitor in favour of his step-nephew, Henry Tudor.
- Richard's reign gained an importance out of proportion to its length. He was the last of the Plantagenet dynasty, which had ruled England since 1154.
- He was the last English king to die on the battlefield.
- His death in 1485 is generally accepted as having occurred between the medieval and modern ages in England.
- Modern historians certainly do not agree on the extent of the real Richard's villainy. However, he is generally thought to be responsible morally or otherwise for the deaths of the two young Princes, and those of Hastings, Buckingham and the Woodvilles. But as Constable of England, he only oversaw the death in the Tower of King Henry 6, apparently ordered by Edward 4, and many historians also believe he was not responsible for the deaths of Clarence or Edward, Henry 6's son.

THE WARS OF THE ROSES

The Wars of the Roses were a long running, sometimes intermittent, civil war fought between the descendants of King Edward 3. The war was characterised by intense fighting followed by extended periods of peace.

- In 1399, Henry Bolingbroke, the son of Gaunt, seizes the throne from his cousin, Richard 2.
- His dynasty is only to last for three generations, ending with Henry 6.
- In 1453, Henry loses all the lands England held in France except for Calais.
- In August 1453, Henry suffers from an attack of insanity that lasts for sixteen months.
- Richard of York is declared Protector of the Realm, and uses his position to arrest Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset who, with Queen Margaret of Anjou, had manipulated and controlled Henry's rule.

- The King, however, recovers in December 1454, and Richard of York is forced to relinquish power over the country.
- Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset is released from prison and once again regains his position of favour with the King.
- In May 1455, the queen and Somerset call a meeting of the Council at Leicester, excluding Richard of York's supporters, to discuss the actions of the Duke of York as Protector of the Realm.
- Richard of York, however, gathers his retainers together and marches towards the King in an attempt to get a fair hearing.
- 22 May 1455, the two sides came together at the battle of St. Albans.
- Richard of York defeats and kills Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, seizes control of Henry, and regains the Protectorship of the Realm.
- 1456, Richard, Duke of York, loses the Protectorship and returns to Ireland.
- 1459, the fighting commences again at the battle of Blore Heath but ends with the Rout of Ludford Bridge where York and Warwick are forced to flee after some of York's supporters change sides.
- York flees to Ireland, from where Warwick and Edward, Earl of March marshal with a new force, and in 1460 defeat the royal army at the battle of Northampton, capturing King Henry 6.
- Richard returns from Ireland, and for the first time makes an attempt to claim the throne. He finally settles for being made heir, disinheriting Edward, Prince of Wales, the son of Henry and Margaret.
- Margaret raises a new army in northern England, and Richard, along with his eldest son Edmund, goes north to deal with it, leaving Edward to deal with the situation in the west.
- Queen Margaret now leads the Lancastrian army to victory at the battle of Wakefield (30 December 1460), killing both Richard of York and his son Edmund.
- After their victory, Margaret and the Lancastrian army move towards London.
- Leadership of the Yorkists now falls to Edward, the new Duke of York.
- Edward rules a disturbed realm for nearly ten years, until he is in turn deposed and sent into exile in favour of a restored Henry 6.
- The following year Edward returns from exile and Henry is again deposed after the decisive battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury in 1471. This time, however, he is murdered to prevent any further restorations; his only child Edward, Prince of Wales, had already been killed at Tewkesbury.

- Edward then rules peaceably until he dies in 1483.
- He is briefly succeeded by his eldest son Edward as Edward 5, who is in turn displaced by his uncle Richard, Duke of Gloucester, Edward's only surviving brother, who is crowned King as Richard 3 in July 1483.
- Richard is killed in 1485 at the battle of Bosworth by the invading Henry Tudor, who became King Henry 7.

RICHARD 3 - IDEAS AND INSPIRATION

Director Michael Gow

Bell Shakespeare's *Richard 3*

Richard 3 was written around the same time as *Titus Andronicus* and Marlowe's plays – plays written under the influence of the English publication of Seneca's tragedies. These were works full of sound and fury, flights of rhetoric, onstage cruelty, delight in evil and a fascination for the Machiavellian character, the ruthlessly ambitious, "take no prisoners", God defying, transgressive villain who was both appalling and fascinating.

These plays were set in distant times and cultures; *Tamburlaine* and the *Jew of Malta* in the Orient, *Dr Faustus* and *The Massacre at Paris* in distant, foreign history, *Titus Andronicus* in an Elizabethan Ancient Rome and Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* in a fantasy hot-blooded, superstitious Spain. In *Richard 3*, Shakespeare added extra spice by locating this horror story in fairly recent English history; the conquering Richmond is Elizabeth 1's grandfather.

For me, the success of the play and its continuing fascination are due not so much to a study in politics but to a joyous portrait of politics in the service of what Hollywood calls "total evil" when it is advertising horror movies. It's like the thrill of *The Exorcist*, where malevolent, Satanic power invades a suburban Washington home and takes over an innocent, everyday girl, or *The Omen* series where the angelic boy is the son of Satan and kills everyone in his path to become president. Like all excursions into evil, order is restored at the end, but that restoration is what allows us to enjoy the evil while it is abroad.

This led me to think about Gothic literature, a mode where exploration of evil is paramount. *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* describes Gothic literature as "a story of terror and suspense, usually set in a gloomy old castle or monastery (hence 'gothic' a term applied to medieval architecture and this associated in the eighteenth century with superstition)."

It goes on, "[in *The Monk* (1796), G. M. Lewis] made free use of ghosts and demons along with scenes of cruelty and horror." This rang a bell for me; it was first Queen Margaret's wonderfully Gothic:

So now prosperity begins to mellow
And drop into the rotten mouth of death.
(*Richard 3* Act 4 Scene 4:1-2)

and Elizabeth's:

Go, hie thee, hie thee from this slaughter-house,

Lest thou increase the number of the dead
(*Richard 3* Act 4 Scene 1: 43-44)

The slaughter-house image led me to that other Gothic masterpiece, *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Poe's story has the same sense of doom and claustrophobia as *Richard 3*. So the whole production is set in a gloomy, rotting house presided over by the evil genius, Richard of Gloucester. The play could almost be called *The Fall of the House of York*.

In this reading, the bleeding corpse of the dead King Henry and the parade of ghosts in the last act have their place, rather than being awkward devices usually cut.

Again from the *Oxford*: "Many novels that do not have a medievalised setting, but which share a comparably sinister, grotesque, or claustrophobic atmosphere have been classed as Gothic: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) is a well known example."

The monster in Shelley's book, like Count Dracula and countless other sinister monsters down to Freddy Kruger, can trace their lineage back to the hunchbacked Richard of Gloucester. And this is what makes *Richard 3* a tragedy. Hard to look at, Richard feels keenly his position as social outsider. The abuse heaped on him from childhood he has taken to heart and he sets out on a journey of revenge against the world that labels him "toad, bottled spider, hell hound, bent back" and so on. The climax of his revenge is when the two angelic, small but perfectly formed Princes are murdered in that terrible, terrifying place called the Tower.

Richard, like Frankenstein's monster, gave the world a focus for its fears and hatreds. But, like the monster, when those fears and hatreds are exhausted the monster has to be put down.

ON PLAYING RICHARD 3

John Bell

Bell Shakespeare's *Richard 3*

This is the third time I will have played Richard 3. For an actor to have the opportunity to play a role like this once in a lifetime is a great privilege. To have had the opportunity three times over is something short of a miracle. But one reason for the existence of The Bell Shakespeare Company is to give actors this kind of opportunity, to approach great plays and great roles over and over again.

The first time I played the part was at The Nimrod Theatre in 1975 in a production by the late Richard Wherrett. The play was set in an industrial landscape of metal and fire, a modern version of hell.

I arrived at a psychologically consistent Richard, someone blighted by deformity. A birthmark covered one side of my face and one eye was deadened by the use of a black contact lens. I wanted to show a Richard who was more at home with violence than domestic peace (as his first soliloquy indicates), so I cultivated a rough way of speaking. We invented a kind of Elizabethan dialect that was rough and earthy – I didn't want to sound as if I were reciting poetry.

When I played the role a second time it was in my own production for The Bell Shakespeare Company in 1992 and 1993. This time I wanted to get away from a modern setting. I felt that anything too naturalistic or contemporary was at odds with the element of superstition in the play – the emphasis on dreams, nightmares, omens, curses, the fear of divine retribution. I set the play in a world of exotic nightmare. The set was the inside of a tower with tall, narrow stone walls while the characters were like feral animals at the bottom of a well or sewer-pipe, struggling to climb over each other to escape. The animal imagery, so prominent in the play (hog, boar, spider, dog, toad, etcetera) was employed in the costume design. Clothes were made of fur or feathers with prominent claws or talons. The Richard I played was less of a psychological study and more of a nightmare joker or trickster; but I did a good deal of research into his physical deformity and consulted several medical specialists for authenticity.

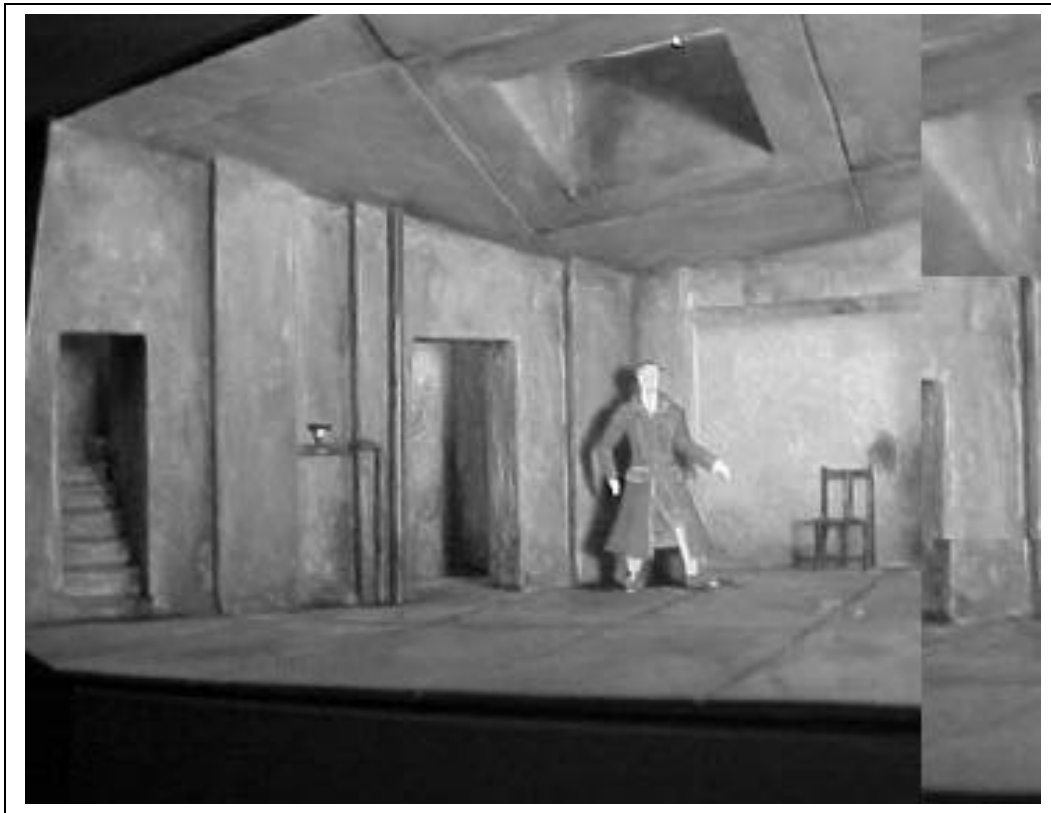
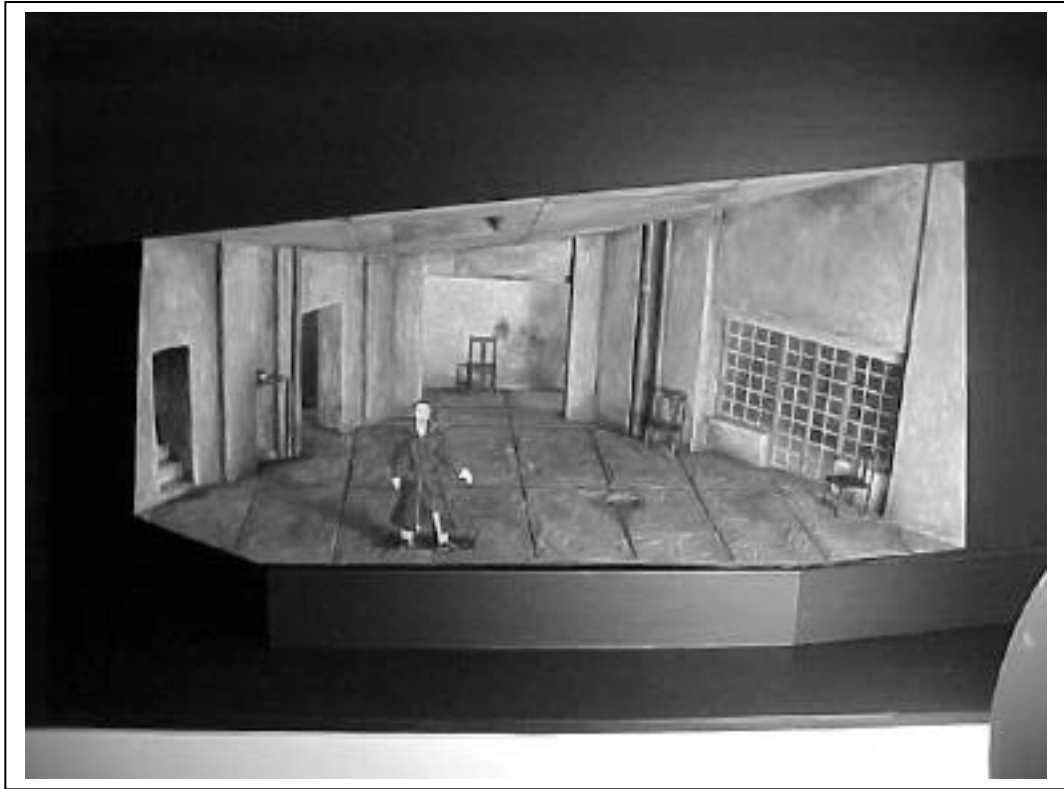
This time round I am looking to show Richard's many faces. He tells us he is going to smile, dissemble, and change shape and character according to situation. In performance, very few Richards take this cue – they are not chameleon-like enough, remaining too consistent.

Shakespeare takes daring psychological leaps and the best way to perform is not to seek consistency but play each scene for what it is worth. In one scene Richard is the gallant lover, in another, the solicitous brother. No-one can read

his face or predict his next move. I shall certainly be seeking something more “real” and down-to earth than my “nightmare” version and exploring how far Richard can go in his relationship with the audience, how much humour he can employ.

Humour is the most disarming of all weapons. It is still important that Richard doesn't sound too “poetic”, so I shall be cultivating a rough, almost gangster-like colloquial way of handling the verse. Richard is a monster, but a most fascinating and engaging one. His effrontery, his daring should command our admiration. He has no fear of man or God and overcomes his temporary lapse into terror – during his nightmare- with brazen resolve.

SET DESIGN



INTERVIEW

Designer Robert Kemp Bell Shakespeare's *Richard 3*

1. *What was the background research that you had to conduct to create this set and design for Richard 3?*

Research for the design of *Richard 3* included Gothic architecture, fashion of the second half of the eighteenth century, and lots of videos of horror movies.

The Director, Michael Gow, sees *Richard 3* as an early tale of Gothic horror. It is the forerunner of works such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*, and ultimately Hollywood characters such as Freddy Kruger. Consider the following words of Queen Elizabeth, Act 2 Scene 4:

Ay me, I see the downfall of our house!
The tiger now hath seized the gentle hind;
Insulting tyranny begins to jet
Upon the innocent and aweless throne:
Welcome, destruction, death and massacre!
I see, as in a map, the end of all.

Researching Gothic style – vast chambers, soaring ceilings and arches, steep winding staircase and so on brought me to the conclusion that Gothic equals extreme. This was also true of the clothes of the period in which most of these Gothic tales are set. The second half of the eighteenth century saw extremely high collars, elongated sleeve cuffs, oddly placed buttons, waistcoats cut very high or very low, coats almost to the ground with exaggerated fullness, jackets cut away at odd angles, etc. Socially, the period reflects extreme poverty or extreme wealth, also reflected in the clothes.

2. *Richard himself is often considered one of Shakespeare's best-constructed monsters. Has this concept influenced your design and, if so, how?*

The concept of Richard as a monster was a major influence on the design and largely brought about the Gothic approach as outlined above. He says of himself in his first speech (Act 1 Scene 1):

Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up.

And so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I do halt by them
Like all central characters of the Gothic horror story, he is physically grotesque, powerful, irresistible, and fatal, whilst at the same time being charismatic and attractive. Think of the Count Dracula character, for example. Richard even manages to woo Lady Anne over the body of her dead father-in-law!

He conjures up images of castles, towers, dungeons and all things damp and dismal and of there being nowhere to hide from his terror. The set is an attempt to capture this claustrophobic and oppressive atmosphere, as are the costumes by looking old and almost worn out.

3. *In Shakespeare's text, there are a variety of locations (everywhere from towers to battlefields) for the play. What were you hoping to achieve in this design for the delivery of the play and the actors' use of space?*

Because of the variation in the sizes of the venues to which this production tours and in consideration of modern theatre budgets, it is difficult and costly to produce a vast array of changing locations such as castles, towers, prisons, battlefields, etc, as required for *Richard 3*. To do so would also be rather patronising to the imaginations of the average modern theatre-goer.

I have endeavoured to provide a location, which works as a metaphor for the whole kingdom of *Richard 3*. The best clue to what form this should take I found in the following line by Queen Elizabeth in Act 2 Scene 4:

Go, hie thee, hie thee from this slaughter-house.

Consequently, the set is a claustrophobic and perilous world of damp and decay, mysterious staircases, ambiguous plumbing, old bloodstains, slippery floors, lowering ceilings and little light. Whilst provision is made for a circular flow of action across and around the set, nothing can happen very far from the central acting area, giving a sense that everything is seen or overheard by everyone else. There is no privacy and little hope of escape in this world we have created.

I also have to confess that I was, at least subconsciously, influenced by recent world events, and when I look at the design I see elements of the collapsed World Trade Centre towers and something bunker-like about it.

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