“England hath long been mad and scarred herself”: Nation and Memory in Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of King Richard the Third*

Jared Morrow

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass,
I that am rudely stamped and want for love’s majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph,
I that am curtailed of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deformed, unfinished, 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 III* 1.1.14-27)

The above excerpt from Richard’s famous “Now is the winter of our discontent” soliloquy is often cited as explanation for Richard’s “evil” that comes to fruition in Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of King Richard the Third*. Richard’s cruel actions in the play are often linked to his physical disabilities; many scholars have argued for a direct correlation between his external deformity and his internal depravity, finding evidence in the accusations of other characters, the animalistic metaphors used throughout the play, and the expectations of Shakespeare’s audience, to name a few.¹ The latter argument is historically accurate; E. Pearlman notes that it was a “commonplace Renaissance notion that bodily defects signify implicit depravity. With his withered arm and hunched back, Richard is set apart from the mass of ordinary men and considered damned from conception” (50). Michael Torrey supports this position by spending the bulk of his essay cataloguing the various statements made about the relationship between the

---

¹ E. Pearlman points out that the most common views of Richard are “a monster or creature of darkness,” “originally damned,” or “an allegorized embodiment of evil” (50). Ian Frederick Moulton complicates this idea slightly when he observes that it is an “unregulated, destructive masculine force that is personified in the twisted and deformed body of Richard III” (258). See also the opening section of Michael Torrey’s “‘The plain devil and dissembling looks’: Ambivalent Physiognomy and Shakespeare’s *Richard III*” for an excellent summary of scholarly perspectives.
soul and the body in physiognomical texts of Shakespeare’s time. However, this binary—the external reflecting the internal, and vice versa—often seems limiting as it focuses solely on Shakespeare’s characterization and his understanding of human psychology. The problem with this binary is that it excludes the historical elements of Shakespeare’s characterization. Essentializing Richard in this manner isolates him from his history, which undercuts the fact that these plays were inspired by actual history. Complicating this binary thus seems like a productive exercise. For instance, in their fascinating text *Monstrous Bodies / Political Monstrosities in Early Modern Europe*, Laura Lunger Knoppers and Joan B. Landes expand on the metaphorical possibilities inherent in the depiction of “monstrous” characters: “In particular, monstrous bodies carry the weight of political, social, sexual, or religious aberration or transgression. They link the individual body to the body politic. They offer a standpoint from which to understand the rise of individualism, modern political state structures, and national identities” (13). Even more fascinating is the origins of the word “monster,” as explained by Knoppers and Landes: “The word “monster” itself has a complex etymology: from the Latin *monere* (to warn), to *monstrum* (that which is worthy of warning), to *monstrare* (to point to that which is worthy of warning)” (3). With this critical analysis of monstrosity in mind, this paper intends to connect Richard and his deformity to the larger history of England and to the way that a nation remembers its history; in other words, to complicate traditional understandings of Richard’s deformity by suggesting that Shakespeare deliberately shaped Richard as a metaphor for the English nation.² Intertwined with this concept of nation is the importance of memory, personified by several of the female characters in the play—Lady Anne, Queen Margaret, Queen Elizabeth, and the Duchess of York. Although Richard is able to gain political and personal

² “Monstrous bodies mark the boundaries of nations and depict abnormalities in the body politic as literally grotesque and deformed” (Knoppers and Landes 13).
control over other characters in the play by making his deformed body invisible—through role-playing and rhetorical persuasion—, the audience is constantly reminded of his deformity by the female characters in the play. Acting as representatives of memory and mourning, the female characters remind the audience of the violence and bloodshed of England’s “glorious” past by drawing attention to the deformed body of Richard, representative of the deformed body politic of England.

Simon Barker makes a comment on Richard’s deformity that is particularly apt: “Whatever the prejudice of a sixteenth-century audience, the Richard they are shown seems uninhibited by his physical condition” (119). This is historically accurate—for instance, Richard couldn’t have been the soldier he was if he was actually physically deformed. It has been well established that Shakespeare’s representation of Richard’s deformity comes from the infamous Thomas More account that was entered into the Halle and Holinshed chronicles essentially as fact. Peter Saccio, who has researched the real Richard III extensively, dismisses the deformity outright: “The physical deformity, for example, is quite unlikely. No contemporary document or portrait attests to it, and the fact that he permitted himself to be stripped to the waist for anointing at his own coronation suggests that his torso could bear public inspection” (English Kings 159). And Michael Jones documents Richard’s reputation as a soldier in the field: “What is clear is that his conspicuous courage and disregard of danger encouraged his soldiers and impressed contemporaries” (96). According to these arguments, then, Richard’s deformity is historically and theatrically irrelevant.

What is even more interesting than historical and physical evidence, however, is the idea that despite so much mention of his unnatural body, especially by the female characters in the play, Richard manages to make his body invisible, to other characters and to the audience. Linda

---

3 I am indebted to class discussions in EN6215 for this observation.
Charnes, in her excellent essay “The Monstrous Body in King Richard III,” explains that invisibility is a necessary political tool for Richard—as long as others see the physical deformities as corresponding to an internal deformity, then he cannot have a legitimate authority, or for that matter, even a rightful claim to the throne. She argues that in order “to acquire [this authority], however briefly, Richard must combat the play’s politics of vision with an alternative strategy, one that negates the ideology of the visual by realigning the significance of his body with an ideology of the invisible body” (273). The ultimate goal of this act of invisibility is to “sublate his deformed body to the perfect “Body” of the king” (274). Invisibility is thus inextricably linked to traditional ideas of the body politic and the body natural, and perhaps more importantly, the idea that a deformed body can be absorbed into a monarchical body. The invisibility that is essential to Richard’s power in the play is achieved in two ways: through his role-playing and through his mastery of language.

Richard is not shy about his multiple roles; the oft-quoted example of this is his famous soliloquy from 3 Henry VI: “Why, I can smile, and murder whiles 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” (3.2.182-85). One critic lists out some of the roles that Richard plays: “Machiavellian politician, misogynist manipulator, artful assassin, beguiling uncle to his doomed nephews” (Barker 117). Generally, the multiple roles lead scholars to label Richard as the traditional character of Vice; this is strengthened by the fact that Richard at one point calls himself “the formal Vice, Iniquity” (3.1.82), after the character found in sixteenth-century morality plays. And despite the seemingly obvious falseness of the roles, they do work: think of Richard standing on the balcony with the two priests, convincing the townspeople that he has been
interrupted from holy meditation.⁴ In the next scene, the scrivener takes the role of Chorus and speaks directly to the audience in possibly the only trustworthy voice in the play: “Who is so gross / That cannot see this palpable device? / Yet who so bold but says he sees it not? / Bad is the world, and all will come to naught, / When such ill dealing must be seen in thought” (3.6.10-14). Determining the extent of Richard’s role-playing is interesting when considered in terms of the effect it may have had on Shakespeare’s audience.⁵ Pearlman points out that the “Elizabethan stage had a long tradition of characters who called attention to the often creaky mechanisms of the theatre but on the whole they were outsiders or clowns. Shakespeare conducts a daring experiment when he licenses his central figure and king to be the self-conscious commentator” (55). She argues that Richard—“simultaneously performer, director, observer, and critic”—has an “acute self-awareness” (55) that enables him to step in and out of the structure of the play at will; an outsider and an insider, if you will.

And like the Fool in King Lear, or the Chorus in Henry V, Richard uses his outsider/insider freedom to speak directly to the audience. Yet in contrast to these characters, who are recognized as the speakers of “truth” in their respective plays, there is no indication in Richard III that the audience should believe anything that Richard is saying; his interaction with the audience is arguably just another role, one that doesn’t necessarily bring the audience any closer to understanding his character. Richard perverts the conventional function of the soliloquy—he is not reliable because we are not sure of his character. If he is truly playing the

---

⁴ An interesting counterpoint to this was raised in EN6215 class discussions: it is possible that the townspeople are aware of Richard’s manipulation, but they simply enact the political ritual because that is the norm. An infinitely more depressing interpretation, in my humble opinion.

⁵ Simon Barker suggests that Richard “presides over the action in a manner that seems designed to charm, or even implicate, the audience” (117). And John W. Blanpieed supports this claim: “In truth, we are the prize, to control us the object of the larger performance. But we are approached by a villain, the machiavel’s instructor, smiling, with murder figured in his tongue: we must be sedated. Yet moral recoil is hardly warranted here, for we have shared in the process, playing our own self-protective, hence manipulating part” (72).
Vice figure, it is merely because he is a symbol. Although he may have an “acute self-awareness,” the audience is not privy to it.

This, in turn, works directly against the idea that his physical deformity represents his inner depravity. Instead, as Michael Neill asserts, the role-playing represents an inner emptiness—we simply don’t know what (or whom) Richard is. For Neill, the physical deformity “is felt as the outward manifestation of an inner formlessness” (21). The inner formlessness is a useful jumping-off point because here the acting, the role-playing, becomes “a way not of proving but of concealing the self, the void at the center of being” (Neill 16). The invisibility of the deformed body parallels the invisibility of an essential self. As Richard himself says: “None are for me / That look into me with considerate eyes” (4.2.30-31).

When Buckingham is trying to convince Richard to take the crown, he says: “The noble isle doth want her proper limbs: / Her face defaced with scars of infamy, / Her royal stock graft with ignoble plants / And almost shouldered in the swallowing gulf / Of dark forgetfulness and deep oblivion” (3.7.125-29). Here Buckingham is clearly describing a perverted body politic, yet he is also clearly suggesting that Richard, despite his perverted body natural, can bring England’s body politic back to its natural state. This statement by Buckingham is an excellent example of Richard’s invisible body, and, if Charnes is right and Richard’s ability to make people forget his deformity leads directly to his occupying the role of King and the body politic, then it makes sense that Shakespeare used Richard as a symbol of the English nation and its history. Murray Krieger goes so far as to claim that Richard is nothing more than a symbol, suggesting that in Richard III “there are no innocents; that rather than intruding himself as an

---

6 It has to be noted that after making this excellent point, Neill puts forth the following weak assertion: “And the ontological vacuum is located in a profound emotional alienation: Richard cannot know himself because he cannot love himself, and he cannot love himself because he has never been loved” (21). Addressing this is unfortunately outside the scope of this paper.
alien force into the world of the play, Richard is a purified and thus extreme symbol, a
distillation, of that world; that the evil stems not from Richard but from a history he shares with
the others even if it finds its essential representative in him” (151-52). Because the audience is
never sure who Richard really is, he cannot be an example of Shakespeare’s emerging
psychological characterization. And because he operates outside the bounds of dramatic
conventions, Richard is thus entirely a product of his environment, of his context. As Pearlman
argues:

Richard himself emerges not only from a wounded family but from the crucible of
civil and dynastic warfare; he is very much a creature of his distinct political
agenda and ambitions (on which he is always eager to expound). The
characteristics with which Shakespeare endows him—cunning, ruthlessness,
daring, wicked humor, theatricality, hazard, verbal dexterity, jealousy, daring, and
physical courage—are therefore explicable as a consequence of an environment of
absolutism as much as they are tempered by the circumstances of personal and
family history. (49)

Richard’s rhetorical persuasion, his mastery of language, is an effective tool in making
his deformity invisible, especially in his relationship to the women of the play. After the often
discussed scene in which he woos Lady Anne, in front of her dead father-in-law, Richard seems
amazed at his own rhetorical skill:

What, I that killed her husband and his father,

To take her in her heart’s extremest hate,

7 Murray Krieger makes a similar point: “Richard is surely the darling of almost a century of English history which
has seized upon him and created in him a reflection of itself: he is an incarnation of the spirit of usurpation and thus
of chaos” (157). Barker also observes “that it is in the interests of those around Richard to promote his sub-humanity
because in many ways he is representative of a collective malaise that they wish to conceal.” (119)
With curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes,
The bleeding witness of my hatred by,
Having God, her conscience, and these bars against me,
And I no friends to back my suit withal
But the plain devil and dissembling looks—
And yet to win her; all the world to nothing? (1.2.218-25)\(^8\)

Later, Richard also famously convinces Queen Elizabeth to give him her daughter, even though she knows he has murdered the two princes:

**QUEEN ELIZABETH:** Shall I be tempted of the devil thus?

**KING RICHARD:** Ay, if the devil tempt you to do good.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH:** Shall I forget myself to be myself?

**KING RICHARD:** Ay, if yourself’s remembrance wrong yourself. (4.4.349-52)

What is most interesting about both of these scenes is not just that Richard’s rhetorical ability masks his deformity, but also that his discourse is directly related to the role the women play as representatives of memory.

Memory, in *Richard III*, is manifested most prominently in the female characters, and this gendering of memory would not have been unfamiliar to Shakespeare’s audience. As Paige Martin Reynolds’ explains in her excellent essay “Mourning and Memory in *Richard III,*”

gendered memory stemmed directly from Protestant Reformation: “the Protestant spiritualization of domesticity, the changing views of ritual and redemption that so strongly impacted religiosity, and the gendering of grief as feminine made the relationship of women to memory and mourning

\(^8\) Moulton explains: “In his incredible seduction of Lady Anne, he skilfully employs the language of affection, sexual desire, and physical obsession (a language he despises as an indication of effeminate weakness) to achieve specific political ends” (267).
a particularly powerful one” (20). For example, the act of wooing Elizabeth is couched entirely in terms of memory—“Shall I forget myself to be myself?—while with Anne, Richard is convinced that she has simply forgotten: “Anne’s acquiescence by the end of the scene signals, to Richard, a failure of memory. He concludes that Anne’s behavior must mean she “forgot” her husband, specifically those things about him that should have strengthened her resolve—his bravery, his royalty, his lordship, and apparently, his murderer” (Reynolds 19). Another crucial representative of memory is Queen Margaret. She is obviously important because Shakespeare decided to rewrite the chronicles, as well as his own ending to 3 Henry VI, to spotlight her role in this play. Margaret is the memory of bloodshed. When she first bursts into the scene, she chides all those present for turning their anger on her, or in line with the argument of this paper, turning their anger on memories of the past. She lists out her own grievances: “Henry’s death, my lovely Edward’s death, / Their kingdom’s loss, my woeful banishment” (1.3.189-90) and then proceeds to curse the other characters. In one sense, this is the representative of past crimes giving, as Nina Levine puts it, “structure to the play’s cycle of retribution” (103). And in Act 4, Queen Margaret leads Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of York in lamenting past crimes: “I had an Edward, till a Richard killed him; / I had a husband, till a Richard killed him” (4.4.40-41); “Thy Edward, he is dead, that killed my Edward; / Thy other Edward dead, to quite my Edward” (4.4.63-64). Reynolds notes an important correlation between Richard and the female characters: In Richard III, whenever a female character takes the stage in lament, Richard himself is sure to follow close behind. The effect of Richard’s presence repeatedly juxtaposed alongside such forceful female expression of grief and outrage is twofold. As has been noted often, Richard’s apparent triumph with both Lady Anne and Queen Elizabeth . . . demonstrates his dexterity as a rhetorician and
actor. Yet, the frequency with which these scenes occur—scenes of lament and rage interrupted by Richard—also indicates his inability to rid himself of “these tell-tale women” whose mourning maintains the memory of the dead. (20)

This juxtaposition of Richard and the female characters is not simply relegated to a relationship between a failed king and the memory of his bloody deeds. Instead, if Richard is indeed a symbol of the English nation, then the juxtaposition becomes one of nation and memory, and more specifically, how a nation chooses to remember its history.

The first function of the women in the play, in their role as memory, is to make constant disparaging remarks about Richard’s physical stature. For example, Lady Anne exclaims: “Never hung poison on a fouler toad. / Out of my sight! Thou dost infect mine eyes” (1.2.147-48). Queen Margaret calls him an “elvish-marked, abortive, rooting hog” (1.3.225). The Duchess of York curses her own womb for delivering Richard: “O my accursèd womb, the bed of death! / A cockatrice hast thou hatched to the world, / Whose unavoided eye is murderous” (4.1.53-55). The negative comments are designed to draw attention to Richard’s physical deformity, or in the wider scope of this paper, to the deformed body politic. They deliberately work against Richard’s yearning for invisibility.

The second function of the women is to turn individual suffering into a collective understanding of trauma. The Duchess of York makes this quite clear when she connects her personal trauma to England’s: “Dead life, blind sight, poor mortal living ghost, / Woe’s scene, world’s shame, grave’s due by life usurped, / Brief abstract and record of tedious days, / Rest thy unrest on England’s lawful earth, / Unlawfully made drunk with innocents’ blood” (4.4.26-30). This, in turn, ties into Richard’s performance of nation; as mentioned before, Richard brings to light the idea of audience responsibility in remembering the past. Margaret is an excellent
example of this latter point, for while she is the primary mourner in *Richard III*, her role as memory is complicated. Laurie Ellinghausen argues that Margaret’s mourning is “predicated on historical and narrative gaps that are not immediately apparent, especially to those who experience only *Richard III* and not also the *Henry VI* plays. While Margaret curses those who killed her son at the end of *3 Henry VI*, we know that Margaret herself helped murder Richard’s father, the Duke of York, after bidding him wipe his tears with a handkerchief steeped in the blood of his own son, the Earl of Rutland” (267). Margaret thus becomes a complicated symbol of national memory. Ellinghausen explains: “The competing layers of narrative embedded in Margaret’s anger and grief invite us to situate her in a pattern of history, one in which wrongs pile on wrongs” (267). Nation and memory seem inextricably tangled; both Richard and Margaret are symbols open for interpretation—perhaps a comment by Shakespeare on the nature of history and the difficulties in performing it.

The women in the play, however, are eventually replaced. Robert Jones, in *Valiant Dead: Renewing the Past in Shakespeare’s Histories*, makes an excellent observation: it is the victims, not the heroes that ultimately preserve the memory of the nation in this play. Many scholars have noted that in the Henry VI trilogy, there are constant references to Henry V as the lost hero. He is the ballast of the plays, in many ways. In contrast, “dead victims rather than dead heroes live in memory” in *Richard III*, and “they haunt the present rather than inspiring it” (Jones 32). This is the one play where past and present are together on stage, and this culminates in the victims haunting Richard on the night before the battle: Prince Edward, King Henry, Clarence, Rivers, Gray, Vaughan, the two princes, Hastings, Lady Anne, Buckingham—the list is comprehensive, to say the least. Jones argues that this scene is unique in Shakespeare’s histories; it “epitomizes this play’s memorialisation of dead victims rather than dead heroes” as “the ghosts of those
Richard has destroyed “revive” to destroy him with their echoing refrain, heaping the burden of the past on his bunched back” (41). Several scholars insist that the victims who haunt Richard, and bless Richmond, on the night before the battle are representative of his guilty conscience. Yet as noted earlier, this would indicate a psychological understanding of Richard’s character, something that is out of the audience’s reach. Instead, if Richard is the nation, the body politic, then perhaps this scene manifests England’s conscience: the bloodshed that is a part of England’s history. Later, as Richard stands before his army, he dismisses the notion of a conscience: “Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls. / Conscience is but a word that cowards use, / Devised at first to keep the strong in awe. / Our strong arms be our conscience; swords, our law” (5.6.38-41). What Richard signifies here is the necessity of violence; as Derek Cohen contends, “though violence is constructed in the established laws and codes as anti-social, though the violent act is punishable by law and called cruel and unnatural, it is the very system that so condemns it that produces it and, occasionally, needs and depends on it” (1). The seductive power of Richard’s character is that he represents the necessary violence that builds a nation. But here, the violence is not delivered in the conventional heroic sense: it is mourned and remembered by the victims and the victimized. Quite significantly, “once the dead are able to speak for themselves, no female characters reappear. The ghosts serve, then, as the voices of memory, a metaphorical representation of the result of the female mourning that has fuelled much of the play’s action” (Reynolds 24).

The theory outlined in this paper becomes extremely complicated in the final few scenes of the play, necessitating a discussion of Tudor propaganda. Peter Saccio describes Richard in terms of this propaganda: “As myth, the Tudor Richard is indestructible, nor should one try to destroy him. This demonic jester and archetypal wicked uncle is far too satisfying a creation, and

---

9 As noted in EN6215 discussions.
the works of More and Shakespeare are far too vigorous, for us to wish them otherwise. As history, however, the Tudor Richard is unacceptable. Some of the legend is incredible, some is known to be false, and much is uncertain or unproved” (“Richard III” 18). And Philip Edwards argues that the whole concept of the overarching destructive nature of the Wars of the Roses was entirely a product of Tudor propaganda; in fact, the idea that the wars were “truly disruptive and divisive, and a major wound in English social life that took a long time to heal—this was the ‘anarchy’ propaganda view of the Tudors” (21). From this perspective, if Richard is a symbol of the unnatural, deformed, disordered state of the nation, then it can be argued that Shakespeare is buying into the Tudor propaganda.

This is strikingly clear in the finale of the play, where Richmond slays Richard and proclaims that although “England hath long been mad, and scarred herself” (5.8.23), he has united the roses and brought peace to the land. This is also affirmed by the contrast between deformity and purity in the descriptions of the nation, or body politic; for instance, when Richmond prays that God will “Enrich the time to come with smooth-faced peace, / With smiling plenty, and fair prosperous days, / Abate the edge of traitors, gracious Lord, / That would reduce these bloody days again / And make poor England weep forth streams of blood” (5.8.33-37, my italics). Levine explains: “Restoring “fair proportion” to the body politic deformed by the demonic Richard, the “courageous Richmond” (5.5.3) emerges from battle as the seemingly divinely sanctioned warrior-king who will unify the divided nation” (120). She also adds: “Within the altered landscape of the 1590s, Shakespeare’s choice to locate the Tudor body politic exclusively in the figure of the heroic male warrior—and to exclude the two Elizabeths

---

10 Also important to note is that the “material damage of the Wars of the Roses proved to be not very great or lasting. Psychological damage proved more important and permanent” (Edwards 51). And Greta Olsen also chimes in: “The historical Richard had to be depicted as ugly so as to stress the attractiveness of Tudor rule” (304).
altogether—suggests both the fears and desires of the nation itself” (121). By this theory, then, the removal of the deformed body of Richard signifies the “healing” of the body politic. Yet also importantly, excluding the women characters from this final scene also seems to suggest a censuring of the violence that led to the Tudor state. When Richmond is delivering his uplifting speech to Oxford, Herbert, and Blunt, he says: “To reap the harvest of perpetual peace / By this one bloody trial of sharp war” (5.2.15-16). He suggests that peace will come through the one act of violence, but it has been made clear throughout the play—and for that matter, throughout all of Shakespeare’s histories—that the rise of the nation, Tudors included, rests on a bloody foundation. And this is supported by Richard’s striking of the “alarum” to drown out the women’s lamentations: “Either be patient and entreat me fair, / Or with the clamorous report of war / Thus will I drown your exclamations” (4.4.152-54). The triumph of war allows for the alteration of history; it is the old adage that the winners write the history books.

It thus seems more productive to suggest that the final battle between Richard and Richmond is out of place in Shakespeare’s grander scheme. According to Ellinghausen, Shakespeare “shows that trauma does not have to be an extraordinary event that happens to a single subject. Rather, not only can trauma be collective, but it can also become normalized and thus forgotten, emerging years later to corrupt a peacetime that was really only a breach” (279). Seeing Richard as simply an evil character, strictly based on the chronicles and Thomas More’s characterization, suggests blindness to the fact that these plays were based on history, and that they directly engaged the audience in terms of their own history. One of the “roles” that Richard plays, according to Stephen Marche, is historical self-consciousness. Marche asserts that: “History, and therefore historical self-consciousness, can mean two things: the writing of history, and the events of the past that have shaped the present. Richard is aware of himself both as an
agent shaping events and as the shaper of historical narrative” (40). Charnes backs this up when she points out that Richard changes his legend of being born too late (with hair and teeth) to being born early: “Richard replaces a language of overgestation, of prodigious belatedness, with one of underdevelopment, of rude and untimely prematurity, and in doing so speaks a fantasy of preceding his own legend” (276). She finds evidence for this in Richard’s opening speech:

“Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time / Into this breathing world scarce half made up” (1.1.20-21). But this conflict between what is, and what is told, is also seen in Richard’s soliloquy immediately after he is visited by the ghosts: “What do I fear? Myself? There’s none else by. / Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I” (5.5.136-37). Some have argued that this is Richard’s conscience speaking, but it may also be the conflict between the two Richards, the one of legend and the one of reality. The “conscience” in this case is the voice of history; Richard laments that his “conscience hath a thousand several tongues, / And every tongue brings in a several tale, / And every tale condemns me for a villain. / Perjury, perjury, in the high’st degree!” (5.5.147-50).

Works Cited and Consulted

Ellinghausen, Laurie. ““Shame and Eternal Shame”: The Dynamics of Historical Trauma in Shakespeare’s First Tetralogy.” *Exemplaria* 20.3 (Fall 2008): 264-82.


Moulton, Ian Frederick. ““A Monster Great Deformed”: The Unruly Masculinity of *Richard III*.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 47.3 (1996): 251-68.


