

USURPING AUTHORS: A CASE STUDY OF AUTHORITY

DISPLACEMENT IN *RICHARD II*

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Sarah Catherine Godwin

Certificate of Approval:

---

Alexander Dunlop  
Associate Professor  
English

---

Constance Relihan, Chair  
Hargis Professor  
English

---

R. James Goldstein  
Professor  
English

---

Steve McFarland  
Acting Dean  
Graduate School

USURPING AUTHORS: A CASE STUDY OF AUTHORITY

DISPLACEMENT IN *RICHARD II*

Sarah Catherine Godwin

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THESIS ABSTRACT

USURPING AUTHORS: A CASE STUDY OF AUTHORITY

DISPLACEMENT IN *RICHARD II*

Sarah Catherine Godwin

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When a text is published, the author loses authority and the authorial message can be easily displaced and replaced by various interpreters. Playwrights have the difficulty of adding directors, actors, and audiences who will interpret the play, as well as any editors or censors. The addition of these interpreters causes the playwright's position of author to be usurped by other individuals who re-author the play.

Shakespeare's play *The Life and Death of Richard the Second* is an example of a text that has been subject to numerous replacing authors. The four most noteworthy performances are the original quarto publication of *Richard II* in 1597, Nahum Tate's publication of 1681, Lewis Theobald's production of 1719, and the Covent Garden production in 1738. Each of these publications displaces Shakespeare's authority and, instead, submits an altered interpretation of his text.

Style Manual: *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 15<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

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## INTRODUCTION

When a text is published, it enters into a state of transformation that can alter the reading of the text, the interpretation of the text, or the structure of the text all together. The primary circumstance that causes an author to lose control over a text is the publication of that text.<sup>1</sup> The author loses all authority over the work once it has become public domain, even (I would argue especially) in the case of the publication of a dramatic work. With a play, however, the author, or rather the playwright, has further difficulties to overcome in presenting the content of the play than the author of a work of literature. The author of a published book must attempt to convey his or her meaning to a reader through the limitation of words on a page; the inflection and perfect intention is ultimately lost, opening the way for interpretation and various readings. The playwright, however, must attempt to convey the play's content to a director, who in turn conveys it to the actors, who in turn convey it to the audience. The likelihood of the original playwright's meaning being lost is exponentially increased as the play must go through the hands of various interpreters before an audience is able to receive the text in performance and apply their own interpretation as well. Authorial agency, then, is displaced and replaced by several interpreters. These interpreters can be, as mentioned above, various directors and actors who may fully intend to capture the playwright's vision; however, the play's interpreters could also be censors and editors who attempt to

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<sup>1</sup> Roland Barthes' "The Death of the Author" and Michel Foucault's "What is an Author?" are the two most widely accepted works studying the connection between an author and a text.



impose readings onto the play or suppress readings from the play. In each of these cases, though, position of author is overtaken and displaced by usurping “authors.”

I present a case study of Shakespeare’s play *The Life and Death of Richard the Second*<sup>2</sup> which, from the play’s first publication in 1597, has been subject to numerous replacing authors, displacing Shakespeare and intentionally imposing interpretations and readings onto the text that were not in the originally performed version. The authors who displace Shakespeare in the several examples I cite include government censors, rebels, playwrights, columnists, producers and the audience itself. Shakespeare’s version of this play is often lost in the “corrections” made by re-writers or in the political circumstances in which the play is performed, or because the audience manipulates the interpretation of the play. Whoever the replacing authors have been, Shakespeare’s *Richard II* is a play that has had its original meaning radically altered numerous times because of the innate vulnerability in plays; the author’s authority is subdued and displaced because there are numerous opportunities for other authorities to alter it. There are at least four key instances in which *Richard II* was altered, for various reasons, but ultimately Shakespeare’s authority was displaced and replaced, instead, with another author’s authority.

The four versions of the text that I will be focusing on include the original quarto publication of *Richard II* in 1597, Nahum Tate’s publication of 1681, Lewis Theobald’s production of 1719, and the Covent Garden production in 1738. Though these are widely different time periods, each of these publications displaces Shakespeare’s authority and, instead, submits an altered text or an altered interpretation of his text. In each case, a

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<sup>2</sup> Referred to throughout as *Richard II*

displacing author edits or censors the original text, imposing a different interpretation onto the play. These four productions are the best examples of this authorial displacement because of the historical context in which the play was produced, and because of the amount of recorded information about the productions.

### Balance in Shakespeare's *Richard II*

Shakespeare's *Richard II* is a highly structured play, seemingly designed to create a balance between Richard and Bolingbroke where there is equal blame and innocence weighed on each side. This balance has been observed in various ways by Norman Rabkin, Phyllis Rackin,<sup>3</sup> and Charles R. Forker, each noting variations. Shakespeare's major source for this play was Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1587); for this history, Shakespeare deviates less from Holinshed than in any of his other histories. Where Shakespeare does deviate,<sup>4</sup> however, is when he intentionally tries to create a balance between Richard and Bolingbroke to attempt making both of them sympathetic as well as culpable in the deposition and death of Richard II, what Rabkin calls "keeping our sympathies in suspense."<sup>5</sup>

Shakespeare's play opens with Richard II unable to control two of his citizens, Bolingbroke being one of them. Richard ultimately banishes them both, though Bolingbroke's banishment is not for life. The next few scenes rapidly set up the first half of the balance in the play. Shakespeare weighs Richard and Bolingbroke against each

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<sup>3</sup> Rackin focuses on the balance as represented by the audience's involvement in the play, noting the shift in loyalties over the course of the play.

<sup>4</sup> Forker goes into great length over the instances in which Shakespeare deviated from Holinshed, 124-136.

<sup>5</sup> Rabkin, *Shakespeare and the Common Understanding*, 86.

other, making Bolingbroke highly sympathetic and patriotic, leaving English shores with the words “Where’er I wander, boast of this I can, / Though banished, yet a true-born Englishman” (1.3 309-310).<sup>6</sup> Shakespeare makes Richard highly unsympathetic when the king, in the following scene, flippantly wishes his uncle, John of Gaunt, would die because “The lining of his coffers shall make coats / To deck our soldiers for these Irish wars” (1.4 61-62). Shakespeare follows this scene with John of Gaunt’s dying words of patriotism and wisdom all of which Richard ignores. The play, then, begins with Richard II represented as almost a villain king, while Bolingbroke is the wronged son; this characterization of each, though, is only the first part of the play.

Bolingbroke returns to England in 2.3, which Rabkin calls “morally ambiguous”<sup>7</sup> because his reasons for coming sound innocent but look like rebellion. Shakespeare presents a side of Bolingbroke which is at best impulsive and at worst manipulative. Bolingbroke must talk with his uncle York, the representative of Richard’s power while Richard is in Ireland. York, who says Bolingbroke has disobeyed his monarch, is swayed to neutrality when Bolingbroke calls him “father,” saying “methinks in you / I see old Gaunt alive” (2.3 117-118) and speaks in other familiar terms in order to gain his confidence. Bolingbroke’s motivations, explicitly stated as merely returning for his inherited title, are never fully understood since Shakespeare does not give Bolingbroke a revealing soliloquy to unburden his thoughts; without Bolingbroke’s motivations fully understood, there is a growing ambivalence towards him, which Rabkin notes as well, which shifts the balance between Bolingbroke and Richard away from pure polarization.

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<sup>6</sup> All quotes from *Richard II* are from Arden’s third Series edited by Charles R. Forker, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>7</sup> Rabkin, 90.

Shakespeare creates a further shift by staging Bolingbroke's illegal trial of Bushy and Green. He accuses them of some small faults explicitly and then vaguely says they have done "This and much more, much more than twice all this" (3.1 28), yet he never says what that is before sending them to be executed. This scene is immediately followed by Richard's return to England, a highly poetic scene in which the king embraces his country and has several speeches that create a more sympathetic image of Richard that has not been on the stage previously. Shakespeare deepens the sympathy towards Richard, furthering the shift in the balance between these two men, by creating a constant bombardment of bad news, reminiscent of the biblical story of Job, in which each messenger arrives on the heels of the one before, each informing Richard that bit by bit, his hopes for returning as king of his kingdom will be unfulfilled. Shakespeare stages the fall of King Richard II in this single scene, having Richard order "That power I have, discharge, and let them go / To ear the land that hath some hope to grow, / For I have none" (3.2 211-213). Already assuming defeat, Richard meets Bolingbroke at a nearby castle. Shakespeare continues the ambiguity this play is known for by having Bolingbroke appear to give allegiance to Richard, telling Northumberland to tell Richard "Henry Bolingbroke / On both his knees doth kiss King Richard's hand / And sends allegiance and true faith of heart / To his most royal person" (3.3 35-38), yet Northumberland fails to bend even one knee to Richard; whether Bolingbroke intended this or not is unnoted in the text. Richard, as well, seems to yield for no apparent reason, agreeing to abandon his sovereignty and go to London; Bolingbroke, though not explicitly demanding the crown, does agree to let Richard give it up. Rackin notes<sup>8</sup> that

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<sup>8</sup> Rackin goes into great detail over the role of York and his connection to the audience, 273-281.

the audience at this point would be like York, lost, not knowing whom to be loyal to or whether to rejoice or mourn.

Bolingbroke, the wronged son but also the hanging judge, exercises his new authority as king, yet seems to be just as unable to control his subjects as Richard. The gage scene is even more chaotic than the opening accusation scene; Bolingbroke is only able to sit by while accusations fly as fast as the gages, though the gages run out before the accusations do. This shaky view of the kingdom is followed by the scene in which the path of Richard's descent and Bolingbroke's ascent cross on their journeys. This deposition scene is central to the balance of this play. In every scene before this one Richard is king; in this scene he shifts from unsympathetic to sympathetic while losing his kingship. In every scene after this one, Bolingbroke is king and continues his shift from earlier being the man crying for justice to becoming the king that may need justice brought against him. Richard's deposition scene, according to Rackin's study of the audience, is "crucial not only for the transfer of political power represented on stage but also for the transfer of the audience's sympathies."<sup>9</sup> This shift culminates in one of Shakespeare's most ingenious stage images, in which one king stands holding one side of the crown and the other king stands holding the other side of the crown. The crown is both given and taken, both a deposition and an abdication; even on the stage, before the eyes of the audience, there is no certainty as to what is truly happening. Following this scene, to deepen further the sympathy towards Richard, Shakespeare creates a bitter parting scene between Richard and his Queen.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Rackin, "The Role of the Audience," 270.

<sup>10</sup> Queen Isabelle is historically recorded to be eleven when Richard was deposed; the invention of a mature queen is Shakespeare's, though Forker does detail several possible influences for this change. The

Shakespeare ends the play much in the way it began; the two major male characters have merely exchanged roles. Bolingbroke, now King Henry IV, must deal with bickering citizens and corruption, much like Richard, and Richard is banished from his kingdom. Henry IV is not depicted as a stronger king than Richard II; he says almost nothing in the scene in which Aumerle's fate for treason is being decided, surrounded by the kneeling York and his Duchess and Aumerle while the first demands his son's death and the latter two plead for pardon.<sup>11</sup> Though he does pardon Aumerle, he is not stronger for it, being swayed by the Duchess to let a rebel remain in his kingdom. The former King Richard, who at the beginning of the play was disagreeable and greedy, has shifted to a poor man without a name or position and the new King Henry has shifted from a man without a title to King of England. The play ends with Richard's death and King Henry's denial of involvement in that death. Sympathies have been shifted back and forth and the play ends in this ambiguous uncertainty. There is no full blame for Richard's death and deposition placed on King Henry, since he says he never ordered Richard's death nor did he ever ask for the crown, yet he does wear the crown. Richard, as well, neither yielded nor defended his crown; he, as Harold Bloom describes Richard II, is "both his own victim...and the sacrifice."<sup>12</sup>

Shakespeare's *Richard II*, then, has a highly sophisticated balance, created to keep both characters shrouded in ambiguity, both sharing in equal guilt and blame for the action in the play. Shakespeare creates the balance by veiling the motivations of both

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major result of making Isabelle a more mature age is creating a deeper sympathy for the two as they must be parted, which further shifts Richard towards a more sympathetic position.

<sup>11</sup> Rackin notes the comic elements of this scene, which is generally disregarded and often removed from staged versions because of those comic elements, which seem out of place.

<sup>12</sup> Bloom, "Introduction," 3.

men, allowing only ambiguous suggestions of motivations to occur occasionally, but never allowing confirmation or negation of these ulterior motives. With this analysis as a basic understanding, I would like to focus on the four productions, spread out for almost 150 years, in which other usurping authors rewrote parts of this play resulting in a shift of this balance and a displacement of Shakespeare's structure, effectively removing his authority from the text and replacing that authority with usurping authors.

## **AUTHORIAL DISPLACEMENT OF ELIZABETHAN QUARTOS: 1597-1608**

The first quarto (Q1) of *Richard II* is generally accepted to have been published in 1597 from a “generally clean and unproblematic manuscript”<sup>13</sup> which was purchased by Andrew Wise from the Lord Chamberlain’s Servants and set in type at Valentine Simmes’s shop. Since the copy of Q1 is the most reliable, it is the base text for such scholarly editions as the Arden Shakespeare, the Folger Shakespeare Library, and the New Cambridge Shakespeare. However, there is one glaring omission from this quarto, and that is the deposition scene, also called the Parliament scene: 4.1. 155-318. The fact that these 163 lines are missing has never been disputed. What is debated, however, is when these lines were written; one side of this discussion believes these lines were written and performed in 1595 and only censored out of the printed quarto, and the other side of the discussion believes these lines were written somewhere between 1601-1608 and added into Q4. Though modern scholarship generally agrees that the quartos were censored, there are a few scholars like David M. Bergeron who strongly believe Q4 contains new material instead of censored material. Because of this controversy, I will take a moment and explain when the quartos were published, and how the quartos were censored, or placed under a new author’s authority, before I discuss the implications of this new authorship.

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<sup>13</sup> Forker, *King Richard II* Arden 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., 515.



## Cultural Context of the Quarto's Publication

There were several plays dealing with Richard II during Elizabeth's reign and each one was politically relevant.<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth was commonly connected with Richard II; a notable similarity between the two was each monarch failed to produce an heir. Elizabeth herself is recorded as passionately remarking in 1601 to William Lambarde, "I am Richard II. Know ye not that?"<sup>15</sup> The cause of her frustrations, partly stemming from trouble with the Earl of Essex, has never been completely understood; however, her comment demonstrates her awareness of the connection between her situation and Richard's. Forker believes her alignment with Richard II also stemmed from the perception that Elizabeth was "unusually susceptible to flattery" much like Richard II, which was traditionally viewed as contributing to his downfall.<sup>16</sup> The connections between these two monarchs sparked interest in Richard II's reign, resulting in several plays set during that reign;<sup>17</sup> every play produced, including Shakespeare's, acknowledged the corruption in Richard's reign, but each one also implicated Richard's counselors in this corruption instead of purely blaming Richard. The tendency to connect these monarchs, the clear interest in discussing the connection, and the obvious delicacy with which the comparison was handled by theatre companies demonstrate the climate in which Shakespeare was writing his version of the deposition of Richard II.

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<sup>14</sup> Information about the political relevance of a Richard II play during Elizabeth's reign has been gathered from several sources including Dollimore and Sinfield's *Political Shakespeare*, Alexander's *Shakespeare and Politics*, and the Arden edition.

<sup>15</sup> Forker, 5.

<sup>16</sup> For further references that align Elizabeth I with Richard II, see Arden 5 n1. There Forker provides several quotations from Elizabeth's contemporaries who commented on the connection between the two monarchs.

<sup>17</sup> *The Life and Death of Jack Straw (1590-3)*, *Woodstock (1591-5)*, Shakespeare's *Richard II (1595)*, and an anonymous play, now lost, described by Simon Forman when he visited the Globe.

## Proving and Explaining the Censorship of *Richard II*

The first three quartos (Q1, Q2, Q3) were published within a two-year time period during Queen Elizabeth I's reign, and each subsequent version was based on the preceding one.<sup>18</sup> As stated earlier, Q1 is a print generally considered to be closest to Shakespeare's holograph. Q4, however, was published in 1608 and is the first quarto to contain the deposition scene. Although the first recorded version of the scene is in Q4, it is considered to be an inferior version of the full text since the manuscript from which it was set has uncertain origins. For the deposition scene as it appears in modern editions, the Folio, published in 1623, is considered the most reliable text since it corrects most mislineations and verbal errors found in Q4. Although there are two more quartos published in the next twenty years and a second Folio published in 1632, I will not be referring to them since they are not involved in the controversy over the deposition scene. By the time these last few quartos were published, the deposition scene was a secure part of *Richard II*; instead I will focus on Q1, Q4 and the Folio.

There are several reasons why the deposition scene must have been censored out of Q1 instead of being a later addition, the first of which is the comment that the Abbot of Westminster makes about the "woeful Pageant." The peculiarity about this line was first noted by Peter Daniel in his introduction to the 1890 publication of *Richard II*. This line is the Abbot's, and is recorded in all quartos, just after the censored episode of Richard's deposition. Because Richard's deposition involves the spectacle of his controversial abdication of the crown, introspective speeches, and the breaking of a mirror, it is easy to see what the Abbot is referring to as a pageant in the uncensored versions; however,

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<sup>18</sup> All basic and general information about the quartos is taken from Arden's third edition, Appendix 1, unless otherwise noted.

Jowett and Taylor agree it is “difficult to apply the word ‘pageant’ convincingly to any action that has just been staged according to Q1.”<sup>19</sup> In other words, without the deposition scene, the word “pageant” is out of place. They also contend that Shakespeare does not use the word ‘Pageant’ casually; they explain that it means something “distinct, visual and theatrical: almost a play within a play.” Richard’s elaborate deposition indisputably contains a high level of performativity and therefore can be considered pageantry. Jowett and Taylor contend, and I agree, that without the deposition scene, the Abbot’s line does not make sense. However, David M. Bergeron in 1974 argued that the deposition scene was not created until Q4 when it was then inserted into Shakespeare’s pre-existing play. Bergeron believes the action before the deposition scene can be considered a pageant,<sup>20</sup> contending that with this allowance there is less reason to believe in the censorship of this play. In his Arden Appendix, Forker responds to Bergeron, allowing that, although Bergeron is “a recognized authority on pageantry,”<sup>21</sup> the word in the early modern period did not have the loose connotation which Bergeron associates with it, and therefore it could not be applied to anything but what early moderns believed a pageant to be.

Bergeron, as his second reason why *Richard II* did not originally contain the deposition scene, cites the 1601 performance of this play presented the day before the Essex rebellion. Ironically, this rebellion is another reason I believe there actually was a deposition scene performed. On February 7, the day before Essex’s abortive rebellion, a group of his supporters paid Shakespeare’s company to perform “an old play on ‘the

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<sup>19</sup> Jowett and Taylor, *Shakespeare Reshaped*, 195.

<sup>20</sup> He lists at great length in his article (37) Bolingbroke’s various actions preceding the deposition scene which Bergeron consider enough to merit the word ‘pageant.’

<sup>21</sup> Forker, 516 n1.

deposing and killing of King Richard II' at the Globe."<sup>22</sup> This play is commonly considered to be Shakespeare's, an opinion Bergeron does not disagree with. However, Bergeron believes "the abbreviated Act IV would serve the Essex rebels quite nicely"<sup>23</sup> rather than the full version of the play. He explains that the play, even without the deposition scene, still demonstrates the forcible overthrow of a monarch and that the only loss, if the scene was not there, would be Richard at "his histrionic and poetic best"<sup>24</sup> which, instead of inciting rebellion, would stir sympathy, contrary to the purpose of this performance. I disagree with this point because the deposition scene, though it does center more on Richard's laments than any bold usurping action, still contains the visual deposition of the monarch, which is more memorable than an implied one. The play was described as the "deposing and killing" of Richard which shows what the rebels were wishing to see. Both these actions, when considering the complete version of the play, are fully performed on stage, neither implied nor hinted at. Though I do concede that a censored version of the play would still suit the desire of the rebellion to see a play in which a monarch is ultimately deposed and murdered, there is no reason to believe that the play would be unappealing if performed with the deposition scene intact. Bergeron believes that a sympathetic representation of Richard would not be the best choice if the play were designed to incite the rioters. Richard Dutton also agrees that the play with the deposition scene is "hardly a rabble-rousing one"<sup>25</sup>; however, he contends the "conspirators never intended to use the play to spark off the rebellion itself."<sup>26</sup> Essex

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<sup>22</sup> Forker, 10.

<sup>23</sup> Bergeron, "The Deposition Scene," 34.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 35.

<sup>25</sup> Dutton, *Mastering the Revels*, 123.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

himself and other key conspirators were not even there for the performance; Dutton concludes that the play was commissioned, not to stir up rebellion in the audience, but to encourage the rebels for their actions the next day.

Another argument that Bergeron levels against the inclusion of this scene is its sympathetic representation of Richard. Even though Bergeron contends that this scene is grossly sympathetic to Richard, I argue that there are other scenes that were never censored out of the text that are even more sympathetic towards Richard. With the deposition scene removed, Bolingbroke's seizure of the crown is directly followed by the scene highly sympathetic to Richard, in which the king is forcibly parted from his Queen. If Bergeron believes the rebels would be negatively affected by any scene sympathetic to Richard's position, then this scene would be chief among those that needed to be cut to suit the rebel's needs. The deposition scene, containing a no more sympathetic Richard than when he is parted from his Queen, however, does contain the moment when Richard removes the crown from his head and places it on Bolingbroke's head, which should have pleased an audience interested in visualizing just that action. If that is the case, then witnessing the deposition and murder of Richard II is exactly what the rebels would have wished to see. For this reason, among others, I believe the deposition scene was performed from the play's inception in 1595 and performed as such for Essex's rebellion.

Another key reason why Q1-Q3 present *Richard II* as a censored text instead of an unfinished play, is the actual structure of the play. As stated earlier, Shakespeare's structure for this play is characterized by a balance between Richard II and Bolingbroke. The careful way that Shakespeare created this balance, in which both characters are equally culpable and pitiable, has been described by scholars such as Harold Bloom,

Earnest William Talbert, and Phyllis Rackin. Though there is disagreement on the meaning behind the structure, most scholars would agree with Forker's characterization:

Shakespeare, indeed, contrives to promote ambiguous impressions of both antagonists throughout the drama and to manipulate audience responses in such a way as to keep approval and disapproval, or sympathy and alienation, in a more or less constant state of flux.<sup>27</sup>

I believe Shakespeare created this balance because the legitimacy of Queen Elizabeth's reign was partly connected to the legitimate reign of both Richard and Bolingbroke. When Henry VII unites the Lancastrian and Yorkist lines, creating the Tudor line from which Elizabeth is descended, he does so with claims of inheritance from John of Gaunt, Bolingbroke's father. I am not considering whether Henry Tudor's claims were legitimate or not, since they ultimately were the means by which he gained the monarchy; I am, however, arguing that Elizabeth's ancestor's claims to divine right to rule were based in the same family in which Bolingbroke's were. Shakespeare acknowledges this connection and relation to Elizabeth in *Richard III* which ends with the image of Henry VII uniting the white and red rose symbolizing the Yorkist and Lancastrian lines. In *Richard II*, Shakespeare acknowledges the connection that contemporaries already made between Richard II and Elizabeth and also acknowledges the connection Elizabeth had to Bolingbroke. Janet Clare briefly touches on this concept when she notes: "Shakespeare's treatment of Bolingbroke combines a sure sense of theatre and political

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<sup>27</sup> Forker, 27.

circumspection.”<sup>28</sup> This careful balance that Shakespeare created is centered on the deposition scene, in which Richard, the waning monarch, and Bolingbroke, the waxing monarch, are placed at center stage, each holding a side of the crown between them. In this scene Richard delivers the speech that compares the two monarchs, making them equal, yet with different positions of fortune:

Now is this golden crown like a deep well  
That owes two buckets, filling one another,  
The emptier ever dancing in the air,  
The other down, unseen and full of water. (4.1 184-187)

At every moment before this point, Richard is king; at every moment after this point, Richard is no longer king and Bolingbroke is king. For such a defining moment to be absent and instead merely implied would mean Shakespeare’s design for balance would be out of balance. I believe the balance of this play, which Shakespeare constructed, would not be complete without this deposition scene, which means it had to have been completed and performed in 1595 and therefore censored, for whatever reason, out of Q1 instead of written later and inserted into Q4. If Shakespeare’s play is structured and appears to have a missing part without the deposition scene, and if there is no reason to believe the Essex rebels would have been ill-disposed towards this play if it had contained a deposition scene, and if the play demands the balance in which the deposition scene is key, then I contend that Shakespeare’s *Richard II* was fully developed and fully performed and it is only in the first three quartos that Shakespeare’s text comes under the influence of another author’s authority, in the form of censorship.

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<sup>28</sup> Clare, “The Censorship of the Deposition Scene,” 93.

## Unknown Authority's Influence in the First Quarto of *Richard II*

Having established my reasoning behind believing there was another authority other than Shakespeare involved in the publication of this play, evident by the censored quartos, I join the speculation on who was the authority involved in censoring the published play. Bergeron, in his continued defense of the incomplete play theory, compares the published play with the performed play when he raises the question that if “the ritualistic deposing of Richard was too scandalous for the printed page, how could it then be allowed on stage”?<sup>29</sup> Though Clare agrees that the play seems incomplete without the deposition scene, she echoes Bergeron’s question about the possibility of staging a censored production even though she believes the play’s “impact would have been felt across a wider range of public opinion”<sup>30</sup> when performed, therefore making it more dangerous. There were, however, different regulations for printed plays than there were for performed plays.

A performed play was regulated by the Master of the Revels. This position was “established to select, organize, and supervise all entertainment.”<sup>31</sup> Edmond Tyllney<sup>32</sup> was the Master of the Revels during Shakespeare’s time and he was responsible for the licensing of plays under the royal injunctions of 1559.<sup>33</sup> He wielded considerable power, overtaking the authority of the author with his ability to “examine, alter, and allow or suppress every play written for public performance anywhere in the realm.”<sup>34</sup> The main focus of the Master was to be sure plays did not speak against the Queen, against the law,

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<sup>29</sup> Bergeron, 32.

<sup>30</sup> Clare, 91.

<sup>31</sup> Bentley, *The Profession of Dramatist*, 147.

<sup>32</sup> For further reading on Tyllney specifically, see W.R. Streitberger, *Edmond Tyllney*.

<sup>33</sup> For a detailed explanation of printing practices in England during this time period, see Fred S. Siebert’s *Freedom of the Press in England, 1476-1776*.

<sup>34</sup> Streitberger, 44.



or against the newly established religion.<sup>35</sup> The Master, of course, only saw the play in an ideal representation which he was to license; there can be no certainty that the play the Master of the Revels saw was the same play that was performed in any of the theatres at that time. Though the position of Master of the Revels was designed to censor dangerous plays,<sup>36</sup> there is no evidence that he required the censorship of *Richard II* in performance. The regulations on printing plays were, however, more cautionary.

A published play could be influenced by a censor, the publisher, or whomever bought the rights to the play. Forker admits that “no one can be sure whether an official censor...enjoined the publisher to exclude the scene or whether Wise, or even Simmes, omitted [the deposition scene] voluntarily out of prudence or fear.”<sup>37</sup> These possibilities are, of course, pure speculation. However, James McManaway notes<sup>38</sup> the historic records of Simmes, the publisher of *Richard II*, whose types were confiscated in 1595, just two years before *Richard II*, which may have had an influence on his publication practices. McManaway also notes that Wise, the individual who held the copyright for *2 Henry IV* as well as *Richard II*, preferred to edit a play before censors had the chance to force parts removed. Wise voluntarily omitted an entire scene from *2 Henry IV* “through timidity,” according to McManaway, instead of because of pressure from an official censor. Choosing to change a text without direct political pressure, then, was not a unique concept in early modern printing houses. The deposition scene itself was probably not censored officially since other plays, like Marlowe’s *Edward II*, was printed

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<sup>35</sup> Bentley, 149.

<sup>36</sup> There is a recorded

<sup>37</sup> Forker, 516.

<sup>38</sup> “The Cancel in the Quarto,” 69-73.

uncensored “in both 1594 and 1598, with no apparent interference from any censor.”<sup>39</sup> In either case, whether Simmes or Wise felt the need to cut the deposition scene, the authority that caused the re-authorship of Shakespeare’s play was censorship due to the cultural context of the play. Because it was perceived as possibly being offensive to the monarchy, the new “author” removed the scene.

There is one other possible explanation for the missing scene and one other person who could have removed authority from Shakespeare and that is Shakespeare himself. Clare suggests that one possibility would be self-censorship by Shakespeare<sup>40</sup> in which he may have realized his play could be interpreted as a potential threat and would rather censor it himself and allow the performance to remain untouched. In this case too, the main influence on censoring the deposition scene was the fear of offending the government.

### Cultural Influence as Authority in *Richard II*

The reason *Richard II* was edited, whoever edited it, was to avoid the appearance of political dissidence. Queen Elizabeth’s reign was notorious for seeking out dissenters, or “traitors” as they were referred to at the time, and publicly punishing them as a deterrent to future traitors. Although it appeared two years after the publication of Q1, Sir John Hayward’s volume, *The First Part of the Life and Reign of King Henry IV*, shows the influence of fear in re-authoring the text. Hayward’s volume was dedicated to Essex, saying in Latin “great thou art in hope, greater in the expectation of future time”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Dutton, 125.

<sup>40</sup> Clare, 92.

<sup>41</sup> Forker, 12 n1.

which Forker notes is ambiguous, even during this time period, but could be interpreted as “suggesting him as heir apparent to the throne”<sup>42</sup> if the future hope referred to the throne. Hayward does not clarify his meaning, leaving interpretation open to other possible readings. Elizabeth read Hayward as a dissenter, and despite Essex’s repudiation of the dedication, Elizabeth was infuriated by what she saw as a “sign of intolerable presumption and disloyalty on the Earl’s part.”<sup>43</sup> Hayward was tried twice for his publication, once before Essex’s rebellion and once immediately following the rebellion. Despite Hayward’s indefinite publication and later conviction, Forker and Margaret Dowling believe that Hayward was a loyal subject, whose ill-timed publication unjustly aligned him with Essex’s rebellion, resulting in Hayward’s imprisonment through the rest of Elizabeth’s lifetime.<sup>44</sup> Hayward’s volume, taken grossly out of context and placed in conjunction with Essex’s rebellion displaced the author of the text and created a meaning in the text that was not originally there; with this in mind, it is easy to see why someone might decide to censure the publication of the deposition scene of *Richard II*. In print, the scene could be used against Shakespeare by taking it out of the balanced context and imposing interpretations onto the text. Though cultural influence acted as the replacing author in the publication of the quartos, Shakespeare’s production was allowed to maintain his original structure throughout his lifetime. It was not until several years later that new authors displaced Shakespeare entirely and imposed new structures and new meanings onto the play in attempts to suit the culture of the new authors.

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<sup>42</sup> Forker, 12.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Forker, 14 n2.

## NAHUM TATE AS AUTHOR OF *RICHARD II*: 1680-1681

Nahum Tate is another example of an author displacing the authority of the original author in order to impose new meaning onto the text. Tate, assuming the role of author, greatly altered Shakespeare's *The Life and Death of Richard the Second* and attempted to have it produced in December of 1680. Tate's major alteration was to upset the balance of the play, creating a clear hero and a clear villain. This version, though, was officially banned by censors on 14 December 1680. There is no record from the censors declaring what exactly was politically offensive in Tate's edition, nor is there a record of the actual content of his first attempt at staging the play. Tate says in his prefatory Epistle that it was "supprest, first in its own Name," after which he made some shallow alterations and produced a renamed, or in his words an "in Disguise"<sup>45</sup> version of this play under the title *The Sicilian Usurper*, also called *The Tyrant of Sicily*. If the original production was not clearly slanted against Bolingbroke, then this version, naming Bolingbroke "the usurper" marked a much clearer divergence from Shakespeare's balanced play. In this version, Tate moved the play to Sicily and changed the names of the major characters, changing King Richard's name to Oswald.<sup>46</sup> These changes, though mostly surface-level ones, apparently so greatly changed the performance of the play that Tate says "many things were by this means render'd obscure and incoherent that in their

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<sup>45</sup> From Prefatory Epistle.

<sup>46</sup> For further changes in character names, see Timothy J. Viator, "Nahum Tate's *Richard II*."

native Dress had appear'd not only proper but gracefull."<sup>47</sup> Timothy J. Viator sums up the confusion by saying the play must have been "strange if not incomprehensible."<sup>48</sup> This second version of the play was performed for two nights without license at Drury Lane theatre by the King's Company before being banned again, resulting in the cancellation of all performances of this play and the forced closure of Drury Lane for ten days as a penalty. As a last effort to present his play, Tate had his edition published in 1681 with a "Prefatory Epistle in Vindication of the Author" in which he sought to explain the injustice of the play's censorship and to ultimately vindicate himself from the suspicion he had been "[compiling] a Disloyal or Reflecting Play."<sup>49</sup> Ironically, Tate's version, which imposed a new reading onto the original text, disrupting the balance between Richard and Bolingbroke, was banned because the censors imposed their own reading onto the text, though it was not the reading Tate claims to have intended.

Just as with the publication of Shakespeare's quartos, Tate's authorship of *Richard II* was compromised when censors re-authored the text, imposing their own interpretation onto it. There are several reasons why Tate's version of Shakespeare's play was never allowed to be presented on the stage; the biggest reason was that Tate chose an inauspicious time to produce a play that included the staging of usurpation, deposition, and regicide. There is no definitive evidence on whether Tate intentionally chose this play for political motivations or if he simply was insensitive to the tensions of the volatile time in which he was working. The political context, though, involved a monarchy in a vulnerable situation, as in Elizabeth's situation, in which there was

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<sup>47</sup> Quote from Prefatory Epistle

<sup>48</sup> Viator, 112.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

concern for the throne's succession; the context also involved the Exclusion Bill of 1680 which was a push towards strengthening Parliament and discrediting notions about the divine right of kings. In the midst of this political controversy, Tate's attempt at authorship of *Richard II* was suppressed because of possible other readings that could be applied to the play. Despite Tate's alterations creating an idealized image of Richard, government censors controlled the ultimate authority over the text.

### Tate's Level of Awareness of Political Implications

Scholars debate the level of Tate's awareness in trying to present such a politically controversial play during the controversy over of Charles II's successor. Forker believes Tate chose this play strategically because he "foresaw profits in a drama that could be taken to imply analogies between Richard's fabled luxury and the Merry Monarch's well-known licentiousness."<sup>50</sup> Forker also sees Tate as a thoughtful and scheming author who "took pains to protect himself"<sup>51</sup> by renaming the play and changing the names and location. George Odell also briefly comments on whether Tate was aware of the political implications of the production; Odell says he finds the prefatory Epistle characterized by "disingenuousness"<sup>52</sup> and, with all the declarations of innocence and disbelief, Odell believes "the gentleman doth protest too much." However, Forker and Odell's claims give Tate more credit for conscious strategy than is his due. His history of revising tragic plays shows that his character was more romantically than politically minded. In his own words and by his own admission, he was

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<sup>50</sup> Forker, 51.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Odell, *Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving* Vol. 1, 57.

“charmed” with the potential for sentimentality of *Richard II* and this is what began his interest in working with it:

I fell upon the new-modelling of this Tragedy, (as I had just before done on the *History of King Lear*) charm'd with the many Beauties I discover'd in it, which I knew wou'd become the Stage.<sup>53</sup>

Tate's version of *Richard II* was as sentimentalized as Tate's edition of *King Lear*, published later in this same year (1681). This edition is infamous for Tate's very liberal revisions; as Barbara A. Murray says, it was “Tatefied,”<sup>54</sup> which include letting Lear live at the end.<sup>55</sup> His interest in rewriting plays follows these same sentimental to create an idealized version of a tragic story. On this position, I agree with Timothy J. Viator, Barbara A. Murray, and Christopher Spencer in saying Tate's actions were less strategy and more simple thoughtlessness. Murray says it was perhaps “fundamentally silly” to produce *Richard II* at this time and Viator quotes Spencer asserting that “Tate's unpolitical mind failed to grasp the danger in the story of *Richard II*.”<sup>56</sup> Robert Müller also speculates on the possibility of Tate being influenced by his re-invention of *King Lear*, though there are not many scholars who emphasize this connection.<sup>57</sup> Though Forker believes Tate is feigning ignorance of the political connections of his actions, I believe Tate's history of idealism and sentimentality, as evident by his drastic re-authored version of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, are demonstrative of his character and that he is

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<sup>53</sup> From Prefatory Epistle.

<sup>54</sup> Murray, *Shakespeare Adaptations from the Restoration*, 153.

<sup>55</sup> Murray has a chapter (153-166) devoted to the other alterations Tate makes to this play, the most amazing being “a love affair for Cordelia and Edgar, the Fool omitted, and a happy ending” (153).

<sup>56</sup> Viator, 111.

<sup>57</sup> Müller, “Nahum Tate's *Richard II*,” 41.

incapable of an action both politically shrewd and ultimately naïve. Other individuals associated with producing the play, though, may have been aware of the political ramifications of the play. Viator believes the King's Company, concerned with financial problems, decided to perform this play because its controversial nature was potentially profitable. If this is true, then the Company decided to perform the play without license because the censors would be sure to recognize the play as politically seditious.<sup>58</sup> Murray agrees and asserts the acting company's production of this play was a "desperate, and disastrously misjudged, effort...to draw back its dwindling audiences."<sup>59</sup> Tate, apparently oblivious to the political turmoil his play might cause, was limited to simply authoring his own version of the text and publishing it, confiding in his friend in the prefatory epistle, "this unfortunate Offspring having been stifled on the Stage...will survive in Print, though forbid to tread the Stage."

#### Authority of the Censors: Political Climate of 1680-1681

Tate's biggest mistake in attempting to have his version of this play produced was a mistake in timing. There were several heated political debates during the late 1670s and early 1680s, and the theatre was not excluded from restriction; Edwin Arlington and Charles Killigrew, the censors for Charles II, "banned or prohibited six plays and censored or held up three other[s]"<sup>60</sup> during the years 1680-82. Because of the political context in which Tate was writing, censors operated under a heightened awareness of

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<sup>58</sup> Viator believes the resulting closure of Drury Lane for ten days was the event that finally led to the King's Company's bankruptcy, the final closure of Drury Lane in 1682 and the union of the King's Company with the Duke's Company in 1683.

<sup>59</sup> Murray, 146.

<sup>60</sup> Viator, 110.



possible interpretations of plays and exercised their authority over plays more persistently. With so many plays being censored or banned, *Richard II's* connection with political sedition such as Essex's attempted rebellion would not make it a favorable selection for this monarch's censors.<sup>61</sup>

One of the main reasons this play had been controversial was Elizabeth I's uncertain succession, and in Charles II's case the play was controversial because of common disapproval of his heir apparent, James, Duke of York, Charles II's brother. Most, if not all, of the disapproval of this choice was centered on James's devotion to Catholicism, which was highly unpopular in the late 1670s and early 1680s. The anti-Catholic sentiment, which was once again raging in England, was encouraged by several different events. One source for this rage was Titus Oates's fictitious Popish Plot of 1678, in which he purported to have evidence of a Catholic plot to murder Charles II and crown James as king.<sup>62</sup> Another event that fed the growing anti-Catholic sentiments was Charles II's alliance with France, which was possibly made under the understanding that the king would reintroduce Catholicism into England. The anti-Catholic fervor, though, was ultimately fed by the controversy over the uncertain succession to the throne, and especially when it appeared Charles II would choose a Catholic successor.

The controversy began only two years before Tate's play, in 1679, when questions were raised as to who would be named the successor to the throne since Charles II's marriage of seventeen years had not produced an heir. With Charles II's illness in August of 1680, the threat of a childless monarch and a subsequent questionable

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<sup>61</sup> Although, as noted earlier, the rebellion was not successful, *Richard II* was still associated with the rebellious attempt, making it seem more dangerous than it was.

<sup>62</sup> For more information on Titus Oates's plot, see Caroline M. Hibbard's *Charles I and the Popish Plot*.

succession was too great; Charles II was forced to consider naming an heir, and he showed his favoritism towards his brother. Parliament obstinately opposed James, the devout Catholic; even in public places there was common disapproval for his choice. Parliament sought a Protestant contender for the throne, and decided to favor Charles II's illegitimate son, who was a practicing Protestant, instead of James. This heated controversy over Charles II's successor became even more heated over the next two years; it was in this volatile state that Tate attempted to re-author and produce this play. The censors, however, would not allow the production of a play about the successful deposition of a monarch whose situation bore any resemblance to Charles's. The connections between Charles II's and Richard II's reign are indeed minimal, but the simple comparison between Richard II's inability to produce an heir and Charles II's similar inability might have been too great a connection for the censors to let it be performed. The question of succession was only the beginning of the controversy of this time, however, as the question of how much power Parliament should have also connected *Richard II* and Charles, affecting any interpretation the staging of this play would have.

#### The Exclusion Bill Crisis: Continued Political Climate of 1680-1681

In both 1679 and 1680, Parliament sought fundamentally to increase its power by forcing upon the king their choice for succession. In the wake of the strengthening anti-Catholic movement, Parliament sought permanently to restrict all Catholics from public office, and ultimately James, Duke of York, from the monarchy. Parliament's solution

was to create the Exclusion Bill,<sup>63</sup> which led to what has been called the Exclusion Crisis; though it was designed to prevent any Catholic from serving in public office, the timing of the Bill and the controversy over succession made it clear that the Bill was chiefly intended to exclude James from becoming king. It was introduced by the Earl of Shaftesbury in late 1679 and Charles II, furious at the intentions of the Bill, dissolved Parliament in December of 1679. When Parliament was called again in 1680, passage of the Exclusion Bill was attempted again, which was forced through the Commons on November 12, 1680; though the House of Lords defeated the Bill, the point Parliament was trying to make was clearly made: they thought they had enough power to control the actions of the monarchy, even to determine who should succeed the present monarch. Charles II, who still had more power than Parliament, dissolved the Parliament in 1681 and never summoned it again during his reign. The major controversy in this case was not based on Catholicism versus Protestantism, but was instead based on the power of the monarchy. With Charles I's regicide only forty years in the past, the question of the right of kings and the power of Parliament was a question that Charles II did not want brought up. Viator called the Exclusion Bill an "infringement upon the monarchical prerogative"<sup>64</sup> and Charles said it "smacked of insult to the monarchy."<sup>65</sup>

The Bill raised the question whether the royal line of descent was in fact a divine right or whether it was a debatable matter, a question very similar to that brought up during Richard II's time. Charles II had regained the throne due to his claims of his divine right, and to acquiesce to Parliament would have shown that his absolute power

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<sup>63</sup> Information about the Exclusion Bill was taken from Antonia Fraser's *Royal Charles*, 354-375, and David Ogg's *England in the Reign of Charles II*, 589-617.

<sup>64</sup> Viator, 110.

<sup>65</sup> Fraser, *Royal Charles*, 372.

relied, not on God's choosing, but on the will of Parliament. These controversies created an environment in which people were suspicious of any attack on the power of the monarchy, and this is the environment in which Tate attempted to produce his *Richard II*, a play in which Bolingbroke's path to the throne was not due to his legitimacy as an heir but to his popularity with the common man. The parallels between this Exclusion Bill Crisis and Richard II's issues with Bolingbroke are enough to make it appear more politically seditious than it would be in other time periods.

There are several clear parallels that Restoration audiences would draw, if they thought at all of drawing parallels, or if they were "parallel-hunting," as Forker calls it; especially since this play was forced into censure, audiences (or ultimately readers) would draw more parallels than if they were unaware of its potential for containing seditious material. Müller cites several examples of clear parallels to Charles II's predicament, specifically what has become known as the Deposition or Parliament scene in *Richard II* in which, even in Tate's version (though he moves it to 4.2), Bolingbroke announces "Richard Consents, and Lords I have your Voices, / In Heav'ns Name therefore I ascend the Throne,"<sup>66</sup> committing what Müller calls "heresy against the monarchical doctrine"<sup>67</sup> by claiming Heaven's authority to break the line of kings. Most lines that could be considered against the monarchy, however, must be taken out of context since the play is ultimately supportive of the divine right of monarchs, ending with Richard's heroic death and King Henry IV's questionable involvement in Richard's murder. However, the plot of the play, from which Tate could not deviate unless he

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<sup>66</sup> Tate, 42; the parallel line from Shakespeare reads "In Gods name I'll ascend the regal throne" (4.1 114).

<sup>67</sup> Müller, 48.

wanted to ignore all counts of historical accuracy, still results in the king's deposition, and this play was too similar to current political controversy to gain any license. Antonia Fraser believes that this play was censored, not so much for its intentional political relevance, but more to serve as an example of Charles II's power and control, adding another level to which Shakespeare's authority as the author is suppressed, not just by the censors, but by the king that commanded the censors. Fraser calls Tate's play the "victim"<sup>68</sup> of Charles's campaign, along with the several other plays that were censored or banned during this time of political unrest. Between the controversy and instability of the succession and Parliament's attempt at gaining power over the monarchy, Tate's *Richard II* would never be allowed to be performed, no matter how many alterations he made to the presentation of Richard II's character. Since Tate was not able to change the main points of the historical plot, Tate's editorial authority focused on changing the presentation of Richard II's person, making him an ideal monarch removed by an ambitious villain. Although these changes were not enough for the censors to allow it to be seen, they are worth noting since Tate did believe they should have been enough to permit the play's performance.

#### Tate's Authorship of *Richard II*

Though he could not have it performed, Tate's authorship of *Richard II* does survive in his edition's publication. In his Prefatory Epistle, Tate explains his actions in attempt to justify his play, claiming his version was not dangerous because of the

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<sup>68</sup> Fraser, 370.

alterations he made to it. Based on the places he made alterations, Tate believed the danger in this play centered on Shakespeare's presentation of Richard II's character:

Our Shakespeare in this Tragedy, bated none of his  
Characters...he took care to see 'em no worse Men than  
They were, but represents them never a jot better....  
[Shakespeare's] King Richard Himself is painted in the  
worst Colours of History. Dissolute, Unadviseable,  
devoted to ease and Luxury.<sup>69</sup>

Based on Tate's reasoning, Richard II should be played as a more amiable king. To demonstrate his actions of fixing the king's character, Tate quotes his own alterations and sets them against Shakespeare's to show the difference he was trying to make. One example he cites is when instead of Richard II growing angry at his dying Uncle's lectures, to the point of threatening to behead him for insolence, as in Shakespeare's 2.1, Tate's Richard II is "neither enrag'd with the good Advice, nor deaf to it" and answers calmly and thoughtfully. Tate's Richard acknowledges to his uncle that he is one of "Youthful Blood" and he commits himself to redressing the "State's Corruptions" and purging the "Vanities that crowd our Court." This notable shift of character gives Richard an awareness of the flatterers that surround him that, in Shakespeare's version, was key in Bolingbroke's claims of corruption in the court. Tate goes further in sentimentalizing Richard II's fall by expanding the role of the Queen, letting her speak with her husband when he returns from Ireland and at Flint Castle before he is deposed as well as where Shakespeare originally had their meeting in the street; Tate also adds one

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<sup>69</sup> Tate, Prefatory Epistle.

more reference to the Queen by having the imprisoned Richard read letters from her, right before he is murdered.<sup>70</sup>

Tate further displaces Shakespeare's authority of this text by completing the shift toward making Richard sympathetic by making Bolingbroke a plain villain. The scenes in which Shakespeare's version remained ambiguous, keeping both Bolingbroke and Richard equally culpable as previously demonstrated; Tate's heavy handed influence makes Bolingbroke's intentions explicitly ambitious. Instead of Bolingbroke leaving England nobly as a "true-born Englishman" (1.4 309) after his banishment, Tate's Bolingbroke leaves England, declaring his designs towards the crown as he goes:

I feel my veins work high  
And conscious glory kindling in my brest  
Inspires a Thought to vast to be exprest;  
Where this disgrace will end the Heav'ns can tell,  
And *Herford's* Soul divines, that 'twill be well!  
A Beam of royal splendor strikes my Eye,  
Before my charm'd sight, Crowns and Scepters fly;  
The minutes big with Fate, too slowly run,  
But hasty *Bullingbrook* shall push 'em on.<sup>71</sup>

In a solid break from Shakespeare, Tate writes these lines for Bolingbroke that reveal his thoughts and motivations in a way to upset the balance of the original play. His ambition is not hidden from the audience, nor from the other characters since York tells Gaunt he

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<sup>70</sup> This information and more instances of changes between Tate and Shakespeare's version can be found in Arden's introduction.

<sup>71</sup> Tate, 11.

“lik’d not the manner of [Bolingbroke’s] departure, ‘twas the / very smooth smiling Face of Infant Rebellion.”<sup>72</sup> Tate also weakens Bolingbroke’s claims of injury by having Richard II say he is borrowing the revenues of Lancaster, instead of taking them under the king’s possession, as in Shakespeare’s version. One of Tate’s other major changes was to make York’s alliance with Bolingbroke involuntary. In Shakespeare’s version, York is almost an accomplice to the usurpation by the admission that he remained “as neuter” (2.3 159) during Bolingbroke’s march into England; Tate’s version of York makes him instead the first one to name Bolingbroke a traitor and, when Bolingbroke returns to England, Bolingbroke takes York under his guard’s custody to which York defiantly responds, “mayst thou be more Plagu’d with being King, than I am with being Deputy.”<sup>73</sup> Though Bolingbroke repents Richard’s murder at the end of the play, as in Shakespeare’s version, Tate’s version has Bolingbroke almost incriminate himself:

Wake *Richard*, wake, give me my Peace agen,  
 And I will give Thee back they ravisht Crown.  
 ... O tort’ring Guilt!  
 In vain I wish The happy Change cou’d be,  
 That I slept There, and *Richard* Mourn’d for Me.

Shakespeare’s Bolingbroke also uses the word “guilt” in his closing lines and mourns Richard’s untimely death, but Bolingbroke’s professing that he would return the crown if he could is Tate’s invention. Tate’s conclusion that Bolingbroke is guilty of Richard’s murder is much clearer than any conclusion that could be drawn from Shakespeare’s play. Tate takes these strides to alter the balance in the play, turning Richard into an

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<sup>72</sup> Tate, 12.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 20.



innocent monarch who is defenseless against Bolingbroke's pure greed and displacing Shakespeare's structure as Tate usurps Shakespeare's authority and re-authors the text.

## THEOBALD AS AUTHOR OF *RICHARD II*: 1719

Theobald's production of *Richard II* reflected his intentions of creating a version of Shakespeare's play that was more sentimental than Tate's. Theobald's version, produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1719, was based on Tate's version of the text,<sup>74</sup> but it carried Tate's extremes to a further sentimentalized version, making it an "even more radical adaptation"<sup>75</sup> than Tate's. At this time in British history, the monarchy was relatively stabilized and England was enjoying a time of peace, making this production of *Richard II* uneventful; there were no political protests nor was the monarchy in a transition. With no political strife interfering with his production, Theobald displaced Shakespeare as the author in order to "conform to the aesthetic tastes that could lead to commercial success,"<sup>76</sup> ultimately making the play more sentimental or, as Brian Vickers characterizes it, Theobald created a "one-dimensional hero, and a 'more regular Fable'."<sup>77</sup> The reception of sentimentalized plays during Theobald's time period must have met with some success, as Odell remarks that Theobald's production was kept in the company's "repertoire for a season or two."<sup>78</sup> There is not much written about

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<sup>74</sup> For this production, I have relied most heavily on the accounts given by Forker and Margaret Shewring.

<sup>75</sup> Forker, 52.

<sup>76</sup> Shewring, *King Richard II*, 36.

<sup>77</sup> Vickers, *Shakespeare: the Critical Heritage*, 14.

<sup>78</sup> Odell, 242.

Theobald's production, but his text remains to demonstrate the steps he takes in gaining authorial agency in Shakespeare's *Richard II*

### Political Climate of the Early 1700s

Theobald's production of *Richard II* received no political attention from censors or rebels because of the time in which he produced it. Unlike earlier and later productions that were entrenched in political battles, this production was produced during a reign that can be described as secure and uneventful. George I<sup>79</sup> reigned from 1714-1727, gaining the throne through a distant relation to Queen Anne, his predecessor. King George's mother was the grand-daughter of James I and when Queen Anne grew deathly ill, Parliament concluded that George Lewis of Hanover, Germany was the heir-presumptive instead of choosing James Francis Edward, who was a Stuart, a Catholic, and living in France, three counts against him that would keep him from the throne. Believing that a Stuart successor would cause civil war, and despite "at least fifty-seven cousins [who] actually had a better claim"<sup>80</sup> to the throne, Parliament believed George was the best choice for king, making him the first British monarch ordained by Parliament. George was also a secure choice for Parliament since his marriage to Sophia Dorothea in 1682 produced a son within the first year of their marriage, and therefore an heir to the throne, the future George II of England.

George I's accession was smooth and uneventful. He took several months to secure his Hanover estates before moving to England and he was greeted by a large

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<sup>79</sup> All information about King George I is taken from Joyce Marlow, *George I*. For further reading, she provides a selected bibliography

<sup>80</sup> Marlow, *George I*, 9. (From the Introduction, written by Antonia Fraser).

enthusiastic crowd. Early in his reign there was a small uprising behind James Francis Edward, or James III of Britain as his supporters would have liked to have called him; he is commonly known now as The Old Pretender. The uprising in 1715 lasted only until 1716 and caused no great panic in England; the stock-market remained strong, reflecting the lack of interest in this brief rebellion. Upon the final battle at Sheriffmuir, James returned to France where he was swiftly rejected from the French court; after this failure to support James, the French Regent recognized George I as King of England.

Though George I was England's king, he did not bother to learn much English, and frequently left England to return to Hanover; he visited his old estate in "1716, 1719, 1720, 1723, and 1725."<sup>81</sup> In 1727, George departed again for Hanover, his last trip across the North Sea since he would soon die of heart complications. There is not an exact account of his death; he either died in the coach on the way to his estate or fainted in his coach and arrived at his estate where physicians could not aid his recovery. The English people mourned for the passing of their king, but his body was never brought back for burial. He was buried, not in England but in Hanover which "caused little stir in England."<sup>82</sup> His son became King George II without protest.

This is the cultural and political time in which Theobald re-authored *Richard II*. There was no possible comparison between King Richard II *or* Bolingbroke with George I, unlike the comparison with Richard that troubled Elizabeth I. There was also no political scare about the succession, as with Charles II in Tate's time; despite Parliament choosing the new monarch, much like the Parliament that chose Bolingbroke, the English populace agreed with Parliament; therefore, there was no rebellion against their choice.

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<sup>81</sup> Marlow, 204.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 212.

Theobald's production was not a commentary on political circumstances but was instead the realization of what Tate had desired his production to be: a romanticized, sentimental depiction of a heroic monarch's fall.

### Theobald's Authorship of *Richard II*

Theobald's *Richard II* begins with the play out of balance. He begins with Richard II already gone for Ireland, and Bolingbroke already raising an army against the monarchy. Act one opens with York, Salisbury, Ross and Willoughby discussing Richard's rule as they wait for his return; the line, which Shakespeare has Northumberland say in 2.1, "The King is not himself, but basely led / By Flatterers," Theobald puts in the mouth of Willoughby on the second page of the play. Negative lines like this one, which Shakespeare had rebels say, are, in Theobald's version, said by Richard's friends; the change makes the lines sound more like concern from loyal citizens about Richard's welfare rather than any encouragement towards rebellion. Another change in the balance is that the audience hears about Bolingbroke's rebellion in the first act before Richard returns. The first time the audience sees Richard is the scene in which he returns from Ireland; he salutes the earth of England with his hands and speaks the entire first speech that Shakespeare wrote for his return. The effect of this opening is to characterize Richard as a good king with a few issues, while Bolingbroke is characterized even more villainously, to be raising an army against such a gentle and good king. The Queen, whose presence in the play is increased even more than in Tate's version, greets Richard in the opening scene along with Northumberland's daughter, Lady Percy, a character invented by Theobald purely as the love interest for Aumerle.

Although the play contains several images gleaned from Shakespeare, including Richard and Bolingbroke grasping either side of the crown during the deposition scene, Theobald's version does not hold the balance that Shakespeare's did. The rapid progression of the play after the deposition scene spirals into unabashed sentimentalism as Theobald's authorship marks the play as his own. Richard has a scene with his Queen, although not Shakespeare's scene of their parting, dedicated completely to lamenting the loss of his crown. This scene is followed by the discovery of Aumerle's conspiracy. Instead of York discovering his son's letter and then demanding his own son's execution, as Shakespeare stages it, Aumerle is discovered by Northumberland. In a stunning reversal from Shakespeare's play, the next scene does not involve York begging for his son's death and the Duchess of York begging for her son's life; instead, York alone begs for his son's life, using much of the same lines spoken by the Duchess in Shakespeare's play. In another stunning reversal, Bolingbroke does not pardon Aumerle, but sentences him to death and will not yield to the pleading of York.

Act V, containing only three scenes, ends with a rapid succession of the deaths of many major characters. The first scene of this act contains the tearful parting between Aumerle and Lady Percy; the second scene is Aumerle's journey to the executioner, in which he speaks parts of John of Gaunt's famous speech, only slightly altered:

I paus'd not, *Salisbury*, to defer my Doom,  
But mourn my suff'ring King and Country's Fate.  
This Royal Throne of Kings, this little World,  
This Earth of Majesty, this Seat of *Mars*,  
This Fortress built by Nature for her self,

Against Infection, and the Hand of War;  
This Land of Liberty, this dear, dear, Land,  
Dear for her Reputation thro' the World,  
This *England*, that was wont to conquer Others,  
Has made a shameful Conquest of it self.  
Our forfeit Lives how gladly should we pay,  
If that our Blood could wash its Stains away!<sup>83</sup>

These, his last words on stage, continue to sentimentalize the play by having this “traitor” give a patriotic speech. The next and last scene of this act begins with Richard’s farewell to Queen Isabelle, which is interrupted by Exton who enters and slays Richard as the Queen is rushed away. Bolingbroke and several lords enter upon hearing the noise and watch Richard die as he speaks his last word, Isabelle. The last rush of action happens in the space of a page; Northumberland learns that, after Aumerle was executed, Lady Percy slew herself and he rushes offstage screaming “My Daughter! Fate pursues my Guilt too fast,”<sup>84</sup> York, hearing about his son’s death, slays himself on stage, leaving Bolingbroke on stage at the end of the play with Ross and the bodies of York and Richard. The play ends with Bolingbroke lamenting, “Tho’ Vengeance may a while withhold her Hand, / A King’s Blood, unatton’d, must curse the Land.”<sup>85</sup> With such a drastic change in characterization of Bolingbroke and in the structure of the play, the balance of Shakespeare’s play is in no way present in Theobald’s version. There are only a few lines that remain Shakespeare’s and they are spread throughout the text, placed in the

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<sup>83</sup> Theobald, *The Tragedy of Richard II*, 54-55.

<sup>84</sup> Theobald, 59.

<sup>85</sup> Theobald, 60.

mouths of different characters, and altered in their original situation in such a way as to make the play not Shakespeare's anymore. The original author was fully displaced and the play effectively usurped by a different author.



## **AUTHORSHIP OF THE COVENT GARDEN PRODUCTION: 1738**

In 1738 a version of *Richard II* was produced at Covent Garden that, although more similar to Shakespeare's original text, still displaced Shakespeare's authority. The production, produced by John Rich, used Alexander Pope's version. Instead of taking sweeping liberties with the text, Pope attempted to return to Shakespeare's original construction, basing his version on Shakespeare's quartos and folios, to which he had access.<sup>86</sup> Pope's return to a more Shakespearian version was the first attempt at a revival of Shakespeare in more than a hundred years.<sup>87</sup> Although his version still edited parts of Shakespeare, in the case of this production it was Rich and the audience who displaced Shakespeare's authority and projected their interpretation onto the text because of their anticipation of the play's meaning.

### **Political Climate of the 1730s**

In 1733 the House of Commons introduced the topic of regulating theatres.<sup>88</sup> The topic was proposed because the methods that traditionally had worked to regulate theatres were no longer working due to lax application of the regulations. Public concerns about the influence of theatres included the issues of "immorality, violence, and the decay of

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<sup>86</sup> For more about Pope's version of the play, see Marcus Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton, and eighteenth-century literary editing*.

<sup>87</sup> At this time period there was a group of unidentified women who called themselves the Shakespeare Ladies Club. These women petitioned for an increase in Shakespearian performances, and they are generally credited as being the source of the revival in productions that restored Shakespeare's original texts in their performances. McManaway, "Covent Garden," devotes some space to explaining their significance and in 163 n9 lists his several sources for this information.

<sup>88</sup> I am indebted to Vincent J. Liesenfeld, *The Licensing Act of 1737* for all material referring to this Bill.

neighborhoods”<sup>89</sup> as well as involvement in the corruption of London’s lower classes in general because theatres brought “higher rents, liquor, and prostitution into their neighborhoods.”<sup>90</sup> Because of the public criticism of theatres, their regulation became a matter of parliamentary control; however, although concern was growing about the theatres’ supposed contribution to corruption, “Parliament did not consider legislation dealing with the theaters until 1735.”<sup>91</sup>

In 1735 Sir John Barnard proposed a bill to the House that would restrain the number of playhouses permitted to be in existence; according to his parameters, only Drury Lane and the Covent Garden would be allowed to have licensed performances. In an attempt to further increase governmental control over the theatres, Robert Walpole, the Prime Minister, attempted to add a provision to Barnard’s Bill that would require plays to be approved by the Lord Chamberlain before they could be performed. Disliking Walpole’s proposed addition, Barnard preferred to discard the bill, and it was set aside for several more years.<sup>92</sup> Because of Walpole’s apparent defeat, managers and playwrights seemingly felt encouraged to voice their opinions in the theatre; they produced a number of satires based on the political tension, which only increased the political tension. By 1737 plays were often written as allusions to contemporary political controversies, increasing the seditious nature of theatres in general; the government began to believe more and more that the plays were encouraging riots, a belief not unfounded since a riot had occurred in Covent Garden on at least one occasion when the

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<sup>89</sup> Liesenfeld, 24.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Liesenfeld, 24-25, notes that this conclusion about the motivation behind dropping the bill is not recorded information, but he asserts that unofficial reports of the action support the conclusion that Walpole’s addition was the main reason the bill was not supported.

prince was present in the audience. Liesenfeld states the reason is not clear why there was a riot, but it served as an example of the theatre's state during this volatile time.<sup>93</sup> In reaction to these satires, those offended by them sought legislative action to permanently remove the perceived threat of the theatres. A bill that was almost an exact replica of Barnard's Bill was proposed in late May of 1737, and Walpole, again, moved to add a clause to the bill that would require plays to be licensed before they could be performed at the two playhouses.

As this bill was debated in the House during the summer of 1737, newspapers and journals began to openly argue about the bill, creating a public awareness of the growing threat of censure. The *Daily Gazetteer* published six essays in defense of the bill, explaining that this new bill was reasonable and even necessary. The *Gazetteer* claimed that "modern dramatic performances were directly related to, and in fact were a primary cause of, the disturbances and unrest that had prevailed in the capital."<sup>94</sup> Leading the other side of the debate was the newspaper *The Craftsman*; this newspaper often published essays and letters explaining their apprehensions about this bill. They argued that the bill was "a Point of much greater Consequence than it seems to be generally imagined"<sup>95</sup> arguing that the same manner of man that could restrain the theatres would also see fit to eventually restrain the freedom of the press as well. An essay published on June 4 of that year in *The Craftsman* states that there is a connection between censoring the theatres and eventually restraining the freedom of publication in the press; the essay

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<sup>93</sup> Liesenfeld, 70.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

said the censorship of the press was “too natural a Consequence of the other.”<sup>96</sup> Through all the controversial popular debate about the bill, the House of Lords continued to debate it as well, and, after a third reading of the bill on June 6, approved it; in the next Parliament’s session on June 21, the king gave the bill his royal assent, turning the bill into law and it became officially known as the Licensing Act of 1737. The *Gazetteer* responded to the House of Lords’ approval with a publication on June 9 insisting on the necessity of the measure, saying the nation would be more secure with the ability to censor revolution out of volatile situations. Another essay in *The Craftsman* published on June 25 in response to its royal approval continued expressing concern:

There is not one argument for restraining the *one* [theatre], which will not equally extend to the *other* [the press]; for if the *Stage* is shut up, on *one Side*, Men will naturally resort to the Press.<sup>97</sup>

Through this bill’s difficult journey into law, the concern over how plays were to be licensed grew stronger and, in response to this concern, the same newspapers that were combating the bill began to print protests in the same satirical manner that they protested the bill itself.

### Projecting an Interpretation: Amhurst’s *Richard II*

One of the most well-known printed protests of the Licensing Act was printed in *The Craftsman*. This protest was printed on July 2, 1737 and written in the form of a letter purported to be from Colley Cibber, Poet Laureate, but was actually written by

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<sup>96</sup> Liesenfeld, 148.

<sup>97</sup> As printed in Liesenfeld, 152.

Nicholas Amhurst.<sup>98</sup> This publication would ultimately result in the seizure of the printer's premises and account books, the closure of *The Craftsman* for one week, and the imprisonment of several individuals involved in the publication. The letter is written as if it were an application for the new job of Theatre Censor, arguing that the new Licensing Act should be enforced since it had been made into law, and, as "the best Judge in England of all dramatical Performances,"<sup>99</sup> Amhurst, posing as the poet laureate, proceeds to cite examples of how certain plays should be censored, saying he will "set my Mark upon a Multitude of Passages in Plays now in Being, which will be proper to be left out in all future Representations of them." He argued that plays were most often to offend in the areas of Politics, Divinity, and Bawdry, of which he chose to specialize in Politics.

One of the plays given as a prime example of one in need of a great amount of censorship is Shakespeare's *Richard II*. The play apparently had not been performed in over forty years and Amhurst adds that it never should be performed again, at least not without "considerable Castrations and Amendments." The chief reason he gives for its inherent offensiveness is that King Richard is "an obstinate, misguided Prince depos'd by his People" which anyone interested in revolution would find most agreeable to their cause; it is not clear, since the play had not been performed for so long, which version of the play Amhurst is referring to, but his assessment of the play demonstrates the longevity of the stigma attached to it after so many authors had displaced Shakespeare's

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<sup>98</sup> James McManaway, "Covent Garden," acknowledges that there is no certainty that Amhurst was the definitive author, but he says it is almost certain that it was Amhurst; most modern references to the letter are written with the assumption that Amhurst is unquestionably the author.

<sup>99</sup> 2 July 1737 of *The Country Journal: or, the Craftsman*. All quotes that follow from this journal or Amhurst are from this day's publication in this journal.

original structure. In Amhurst's professional opinion, Richard is so offensive as to make the play almost incapable of salvaging; in an effort to make the play palatable to the new Licensing Act, he attempts to cut out the most offensive lines and scenes. The first passage that he believes should be completely removed is the scene in 1.4 in which Richard complains of Bolingbroke's popularity with the base commoners. Amhurst says this passage could be applied to other Princes, which he considered politically dangerous; he then leaves off his argument by saying, "I need say no more; but shall leave it to your Judgement whether this Passage ought to be expunged, as well as the whole first scene of the second Act." This second passage that Amhurst sees as offensive is Gaunt's lamentation over England's conquest of itself, selling the land for bonds which Amhurst calls a comment on the "Mystery of Treaty-making." Amhurst reacts very strongly to this section, saying "it ought not to be suffer'd to appear in Print, much less to be pronounced upon the Stage." His strongest reaction, however, is to the "intolerable" section in which Northumberland, Willoughby, and Ross discuss the influence of flatterers on King Richard who had influenced him to avoid wars and increase taxes. Amhurst refuses to interpret these remarks, instead letting his readers come to what he believes is the obvious conclusion saying simply that "This wants no Comment." These observations are left open to interpretation, allowing, even encouraging his readers to see the connections between Richard's government and Walpole's. The "letter" continues by discussing other plays and recommending other passages to be censored, remaining in the same sarcastic tone as when censoring *Richard II*, making sure to apply his censures to no one in particular, but leaving the implied interpretation that all speeches removed were to apply to Walpole.

Within less than three weeks of this publication, *The Craftsman* was prosecuted by the government for “abusing the liberty of the press;”<sup>100</sup> in the official account of the newspaper’s faults, references were made to Amhurst’s sarcastic letter. Amhurst himself was imprisoned for a short time, but Henry Haines, the printer, was “found guilty of printing a libel and sentenced to imprisonment for a year”<sup>101</sup> and was required to pay a fine for his offense. This prosecution, though, became a prime example for those who argued the government was “bent on suppressing all criticism and dissent”<sup>102</sup> and figured into several debates of press censure.

#### Audience Authority: The Covent Garden Production of *Richard II*

After all this controversy over censorship of the theatre and attempts at limiting the power of performance, John Rich, the manager of the Covent Garden theatre, capitalized on this political dissonance by producing a play on February 6, 1738 that was considered to be very offensive and was therefore also very profitable: Shakespeare’s *Richard II*. Shewring agrees that Rich probably chose this play because it was “dangerously topical in the context of contemporary politics.”<sup>103</sup> To add to the supposition that Rich produced this play because it was complementary to the political protests of the time, all the scenes that Amhurst’s sardonic censorship had removed because of politically offensive content were included in this version, except for Richard’s comments on Bolingbroke’s popularity with the commoners. Because of the timing, which is too convenient to be an accident, McManaway contends that Rich

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<sup>100</sup> Liesenfeld, 153.

<sup>101</sup> McManaway, “*Richard II* at Covent Garden,” 168.

<sup>102</sup> Liesenfeld, 154.

<sup>103</sup> Shewring, 44.

strategically chose this play to be performed at this time; with the recent political publications about censorship that included several references to this play, plus the subsequent arrests involved with that publication, Rich rightly expected audiences to be highly intrigued about this play and probably very willing to pay to see what all the political hype was about. With the audience's appetite already whetted for a seditious play because of the discussion of its possible need for censure, the perspective through which they interpreted the speeches prepared them to read many parallels between the political issues of Richard's time and their own political issues with Walpole.

Although there are no immediate reviews of this production, Thomas Davies's report in his *Dramatic Miscellanies* of 1784 records the reactions of the crowd to this play. Davies's record of the audience recognizes their political mindset as they perceived political parallels in the play and projected their interpretations:

The writing is not singularly good, but it was greatly distinguished by the particular behavior of the audience, on the revival of this play, who applied almost every line that was spoken to the occurrences of the time, and to the measures and character of the ministry.<sup>104</sup>

The audience, already prepared to be a part of a political protest due to the ongoing heated discussion being published in their journals, applied a slanted interpretation to the political references in the play. The audience exercised their authority and linked their discontent with Walpole to the play's discontent with Richard II. Since the play spoke tangentially of Richard's tendency to spend more money on peace than on war, the

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<sup>104</sup> Davies' *Miscellanies*, 84, and quoted in McManaway, 171.



audience mentally wrote in the reference as a parallel to Walpole's distaste for warring with Spain. Davies explains that *Richard II* was revived at the same time when "the cry for war was the highest"<sup>105</sup> and the audience, therefore, was most prepared to find "political innuendo and application"<sup>106</sup> in these references to war. When Northumberland spoke of the king being led by flatterers, the audience again imposed their interpretation and demonstrated both the connection they made along with their approval; Davies' *Miscellanies* notes "the noise from the clapping of hands and clattering of sticks was loud and boisterous"<sup>107</sup> at the time this line was spoken. Continuing the interpretation the audience was eager to read into the play, the crowd was equally excited with Ross's statement that the earl of Wiltshire had leased out the realm; Davies remarks that the quote was "immediately applied to Walpole, with the loudest shouts and huzzas."<sup>108</sup> Despite the loose connections between the government of Richard's time and the government of Walpole's time, the audience was able to apply their own authorship onto the interpretation of the play because they were predisposed to read the play as seditious. Shewring makes a key observation that the "political parallels were far from direct,"<sup>109</sup> and I believe the success of this play was dependent on the audience's ability, or in this special case their high expectancy and desire, to see a protest on the stage. Because they were poised to see political innuendo, they re-authored political references to mean what they expected them to mean, displacing Shakespeare's meaning and replacing it with their own.

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<sup>105</sup> Davies, 85, and quoted in McManaway, 171.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Davies, 86, and quoted in McManaway, 171.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Shewring, 45.

## CONCLUSION

Shakespeare's *Richard II*, because of its many versions and the vast differences between those versions, serves as a case study of an author's inability to control a text once it is published and released into public domain. Shakespeare's original balance between Richard II and Bolingbroke was lost once Richard became sentimentalized or was exploited for political rebellion. The replacing authors that encountered Shakespeare's play had different motivations for changing the text: some were cultural, some were political, and some were personal. In each case, though, Shakespeare lost his authority and, instead, another individual, or an audience as in the case of the Covent Garden production, gained control of the text's structure and meaning.

The new authors also could be in the form of censorship and political sedition, which affected the culture's reception and interpretation of the play. In the case of the quarto's publication, most of the play's content was kept intact, but the structure and balance was altered. Tate's and Theobald's production changed the structure and meaning entirely, but the changes were due to differences between the culture in which it was originally produced and their own. The Covent Garden production pursued Shakespeare's structure and content, but because the audience, as the replacing author of the text, imposed a reading onto the text, the original meaning was altered. It was not until the Victorian era that the political aspect of *Richard II* was minimalized; Victorian

productions, however, like Charles Kean's in 1857,<sup>110</sup> focused on the pageantry of the play, making elaborate sets and costumes more memorable than the play itself. By the mid-to-late nineteenth century, focus returned to the character of Richard, but instead of over-sentimentalizing him, productions began to focus on presenting the king's struggle with being both divine and human. As an example of the thought put into Richard's character, Shewring notes Ian McKellan's performance in which he based Richard on the isolation and humanity of the Dalai Lama.<sup>111</sup>

Shakespeare's structure that balanced the presentation of Bolingbroke and Richard, though, was the focus of John Barton's Royal Shakespeare Theatre production of 1973/74.<sup>112</sup> Barton emphasized Shakespeare's balance by having the two main actors switch roles every other night. He also created a dumb show to be performed before the first scene; in this show the two starring actors, Ian Richardson and Richard Pasco, would enter dressed in black robes while a "Shakespeare" character would indicate which one would play the role of King Richard. Barton does re-author the original play by omitting lines, writing some of his own, and altering a few character roles;<sup>113</sup> however, Barton also attempts to capture Shakespeare's balanced presentation of the rising and falling monarchs. Although each of these productions were based on Shakespeare's *Richard II*, Shakespeare lost his authority as an author once his play was published and his power to change the text was replaced by usurping authors.

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<sup>110</sup> Shewring, 48.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 81-90.

<sup>112</sup> For further reading on this production, see Shewring, 117-137.

<sup>113</sup> The most striking and controversial addition is Barton's replacing the groom who visits Richard in prison with Bolingbroke; this alteration was created to further emphasize the connection and balance between the two.

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