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The Medieval Influences of Shakespeare's Richard III: Morality Plays, Miracle Plays, and The Chronicles

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Abstract

There are many striking similarities between Shakespeare's The Tragedy of King Richard III and several types of medieval works. The morality play genre is most distinctly represented by Richard's representation as the Vice, a popular figure first characterized as the devil's helper who eventually eclipsed the devil and became the sole figure of evil. Richard also shares characteristics with the miracle or mystery play figures of Cain and Herod, figures who commit evil deeds and are rightly punished by God. Shakespeare was also strongly influenced by the chronicle accounts of Raphael Holinshed and Edward Hall, who base their accounts of Richard's fight for the crown and subsequent reign on Sir Thomas More's The History of King Richard the Third. It is from More's work that Shakespeare heavily borrows for the events and occurrences in his Richard III.

Chapter 1: Introduction

There has been extensive scholarship on the sources that Shakespeare may have used to write his plays. For example, it is well known that he drew from the chronicles of Edward Hall and Raphael Holinshed when writing his English history plays. It is less well known that Hall and Holinshed borrowed their chronicle accounts of Richard III from Sir Thomas More's The History of King Richard the Third. Another influence that has been examined is that of the medieval morality and miracle plays on Shakespeare's work, but this is limited, and scholarship on the medieval plays' influences on The Tragedy of Richard III is negligible. This thesis is not merely a compilation of sources; it is an examination of evidence and opinions that I have used to support my hypotheses about Shakespeare's sources for Richard III. The purpose of this study is to understand the extent to which Shakespeare was influenced by the characters of the morality and miracle plays, in what ways he borrowed from Thomas More, and how these sources were integrated to create Richard III.

Richard III could not have been as profoundly and distinctly original if it had been written in any other time because its brilliance is dependent upon the influences on the author. It is profound because it is a new, unique integration of sources. Because Richard III is a historical drama, it is important to examine both the drama leading up to the time of Shakespeare and the chronicle accounts that Shakespeare would have had access to. If written earlier, the play would not have had the English dramatic influences, such as the morality and miracle plays, and Shakespeare would only have had access to less complete and more poorly written chronicle accounts of the reigns of Edward V and

Richard III, which were the historical accounts he used for Richard III.[1] If he had written later, the miracle and morality traditions would have been too far removed to have had an influence, and the importance of More's work might have been lessened by chroniclers who used different sources for their history of Richard III.

It is believed that Richard III was first performed in 1592 or 1593 (Shakespeare, Norton 507). Though the exact date is not known, these potential dates are supported with the evidence that we have. Shakespeare must have written Richard III in the late 1580s to early 1590s. There is evidence that he used the revised 1587 edition of Holinshed's chronicles, which used Hall's work and Sir Thomas More's The History of King Richard the Third. Evidence of the chronicles in Shakespeare's play is easier for readers to see than evidence of the medieval plays because events, action, and sometimes phrases from the chronicle accounts are mirrored in the drama. Shakespeare needed to have access to, having either seen, heard about, or read, morality and miracle plays of the preceding generation. Though there is no direct evidence linking Shakespeare with any performances or written editions of the morality and miracle plays, it seems likely that he would have been well versed in them because he spent so much of his life in the theater. Stephen Greenblatt suggests that Shakespeare likely witnessed several of the traveling troupes of actors who would have stopped to perform in Stratford-upon-Avon and says the plays in a company's repertoire in the 1560s-70s would have been comprised primarily of morality plays. Greenblatt also reports that it is likely that the Shakespeare family "could also have seen one of the great annual Corpus Christi [miracle play]

[1] Polyldore Vergil began the Anglica Historia in 1505 and completed it between 1534-55. Hyder Rollins and Herschel Baker write that "Vergil cannot be said to rise far above the low level set by the chronicles of John Harding (1378- ?1465) and Robert Fabyan (d. 1513)" (19). These earlier chronicles would have been of little use to Shakespeare because Hall and Holinshed were the first to incorporate More, who was published much later than Harding and Fabyan, and whose work was essential to Shakespeare's play.

pageants, plays presenting the whole destiny of mankind from the creation and the Fall to the redemption. These so-called mystery cycles, among the great achievements of medieval drama, had survived into the later sixteenth century in Coventry and in several other cities in England" (37).

From a young age, William Shakespeare had likely formed an impression of how he would create works of drama, based on what he witnessed. Greenblatt writes, "When Shakespeare sat down to write for the London stage, he drew upon those rather creaky entertainments that must have delighted him as a child" (32), but, what's more, "Shakespeare had as much to free himself from the old morality plays as to adapt them. He felt free to discard many aspects of them altogether and use others in ways their authors could never have imagined" (34). Shakespeare frequently utilizes aspects of the stock characters of the medieval plays and blends them with the realism developing in the Renaissance. It is a combination of this adapting what he learned from other plays with the use of the chronicles that helped Shakespeare create The Tragedy of Richard III.

Richard III is built on the austere foundations of medieval drama and the developing idea that history could be altered and adjusted to create good theater. A certain sophistication is apparent in Richard III's expanded characters; they contain more substance than the characters described in the chronicles of Hall and Holinshed and are more enlivened than the comparatively stark figures of the morality dramas.

Shakespeare blended the characterizations of the Vice and miracle play biblical tyrant with the contents of the chronicles to create a world that surpassed anything he had created prior to the writing of Richard III. There are striking similarities between Richard and the Vice character of the morality plays, which can be seen in an

examination of the development of the Psychomachia genre plays through the sixteenth century morality plays. Additionally, Richard shares many features with the wicked characters in the miracle plays, such as Cain and Herod. Also discussed here is the demonstrable connection between passages from Thomas More in Hall's and Holinshed's chronicles and Richard III.

First, I will look at Richard III and its morality play influences, beginning with Prudentius' work, the Psychomachia (c. 400). The Psychomachia led the way for the English morality genre beginning with The Castle of Perseverance (1400-25). Characters such as Patience and Generosity battle with the World, the Flesh, and the Devil for the possession of the soul of Mankind. During the next one hundred fifty years, the plot of the emerging morality plays changes very little. The most significant development is the creation of the vice figure as both helper and tormenter of the devil. The Vice eventually eclipses the devil, and the devil's role is made obsolete. Though the generic Mankind figure fades from the stage after 1500, the Vice character remains strong, and it is from this Vice that the character of Richard III emerges. Richard's characteristics can often be likened to those of the Vice. Like the Vice, Richard talks to the audience of his future plans and his past misdeeds. He also fools and corrupts the people around him and pursues villainy for the sake of his own gains.

The second dramatic influence on Shakespeare's Richard III was miracle or mystery plays. These plays present biblical stories, such as Adam and Eve, Noah and the Flood, and The Crucifixion. There are several textual similarities between some of the miracle plays and the text of Richard III. For example, when examining the various Herod plays, we can see that Richard shares many characteristics with the biblical tyrant,

such as the massacre of innocents and the bullying of subordinates. However, one of the most important lessons that Shakespeare may have learned from these plays is that historical events can be used as a plot for a play. Miracle play authors used the Bible and frequently supplemented it with their own imaginations to dramatize historical stories. Shakespeare did the same with Richard III. The chronicles were his Bible, from which he chose a story and proceeded to dramatize it.

The chronicles were, perhaps, the greatest influence on Shakespeare's writing of Richard III. The characters and plot had already been chronicled by Sir Thomas More. Shakespeare borrowed events, major and minor, for his play about the tyrant king, and sometimes phrases are eerily similar. Shakespeare altered some events and deepened characters, but the blueprints had been prepared. He picked and chose which events to dramatize, for there was simply too much information for him to be able to use it all. For example, the majority of the play shows Richard's attempt to gain the crown. Richard III ruled for two years, but the play seems to jump from Richard's coronation to his death. Shakespeare also created events in order to further his telling of the story. Queen Margaret is Richard's nemesis in the play, but history shows that she was not in England when the play took place. For Richard III, Shakespeare added and eliminated certain events, but through it all, the tyrant he created is clearly recognizable as the Richard depicted in Hall and Holinshed, created by Thomas More.

Thomas More still harbored a medieval mindset regarding history, that it should teach a lesson. Its principal feature was its didacticism not its accuracy. Because of his genre, Shakespeare had an advantage over the morality and miracle play authors and Thomas More. He was not as limited by conventions because conventions were

changing. These changing conventions in drama that were occurring and the new freedoms that accompanied them in the mid-sixteenth century were the impetus for the creation of new types of plays. One of these types was the history play, and created early in the tradition was Shakespeare's Richard III.

Chapter 2: The Morality Play and Richard III

The Psychomachia

The Psychomachia style laid the groundwork for the morality play tradition. The Christian writer Prudentius (348- c. 405) wrote the poem the Psychomachia, which means "Battle of the Soul." In 915 verses, the poem portrays literal combat between allegorical figures of good and evil for possession of man's soul. One allegorical virtue is matched up against a vice, and they battle until there is a winner. This continues for six rounds until the virtues have defeated the vices. The virtues return to their camp but are ambushed by Discordia (Dissention) who wounds Concordia (Harmony) before being killed with a javelin down the throat.

Prudentius' Christian allegorical epic is the first of its kind, and Bernard Spivack, author of Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil, praises his achievement and skill, writing, "He is first of all a moralist, but a moralist with a literary sense strong enough to recognize the homiletic value of concrete image and continuous story" (81). As a pioneering work of allegorical poetry, it became very popular in the next millennium. In the hands of Prudentius, prosopopoeia, or personification, becomes "an independent genre; and his poem, the Psychomachia, supplies the generic name for the most common form of medieval allegory" (Spivack 78-79).

Several forms of the Psychomachia developed, specifically texts and dramas depicting a battle siege, a tournament, a debate, or a perilous journey. "In its several forms it provided a moral definition of life, a psychological method, and an artistic motif; and in the art and literature of the Middle Ages it is usually all three at once. The conflict of the vices and virtues became the familiar subject of the pulpit sermon" (Spivack 82).

The genre was well known to many, and over three hundred manuscripts of Prudentius' poem survived into the Middle Ages.

Characteristics of the Morality Genre

The Castle of Perseverance (1400-1425) is a work that builds on the traditional battle Psychomachia to create the English morality play. The Psychomachia style is shown when, near the end of the first half of the play and after Mankind has been won back to the side of the virtues, there is an attempt by the vices to take back Mankind. A battle erupts in which the virtues are able to beat back the vices and protect the newly repentant Mankind. The variation occurs when Covetousness approaches the castle and speaks to Mankind. "He advances with polite, solicitous address, proclaims himself Mankind's 'best frende,' and invites him with alluring words out of 'that castel colde' into the world where wealth and pleasure await him. His enticement is skillful and his success complete" (Spivack 85). Covetousness lures Mankind out of the castle with words that sound like good advice to Mankind who is so susceptible to sin.

The seduction that Covetousness uses on Mankind is familiar in the drama of Richard III, for how else does Richard win the crown except through sly seduction? He manipulates his brother, King Edward IV, into signing the order to execute Clarence and quickly dispatches murderers to perform the task even though the king had repealed the order (II.i). He wins Lady Anne with pleasant words and seemingly noble actions, though he admits to the audience that he will not keep her long now that he has won her (I.ii). He succeeds later with the assembled crowd because he appears pious, though we know that it is a ruse that Buckingham conceived (III.vii). Richard is triumphant because of his skillful mastery in the art of seduction. He knows what to say to get what he

wants, and just like Covetousness in The Castle of Perseverance, he has no intention of keeping his word or continuing to play the trusted advisor or pious ruler.

Prudentius' Psychomachia gave way to medieval allegory. Spivack explains the appearance of the morality tradition:

> Out of the medieval allegory came the morality play, which for two centuries provided a type of drama whose purpose and method were homiletic, whose structure was schematic and rigid, whose characters for the most part were personified abstractions with names that expressed the motive and predetermined the nature of their actions. (56)

Shakespeare did not completely abandon this structure. It was a known and comfortable genre that was still popular but needed some renovation. The plots of plays became less obviously homiletic and characters received actual names rather than allegorical attributes. Drama for this new age of theater in Early Modern England needed to show signs of development in order to be successful, and Richard III shows evidence of this evolution, while at the same time retaining and adapting many qualities that the morality plays established.

Robert Potter, author of The English Morality Play: Origins, History and Influence of a Dramatic Tradition, states that characters such as Macbeth, Iago, Cordelia and "dozens of other Elizabethan stage figures, inherit the functions of conventional morality characters: the central and mutable hero, the agent of sin and temptation, and the agent of repentance and good counsel" (Potter 124). It is clear that Richard III is an agent of sin, but he can also be the "central and mutable hero," though not in typical "heroic" fashion. He fulfills the role of Humanum Genus or Mankind because he is the

protagonist and he is changeable. In the typical morality play, the hero is good in essence, but he makes some mistakes and later is redeemed. Richard is evil in essence but is generally able to portray himself as good. Just as we would the hero in a morality play, we watch Richard's downfall; in fact, Richard is the commentator on his own downfall: he gives the audience comments on events as they occur. He believes he is guiding himself to the throne and to greatness, but like Mankind in The Castle of Perseverance, he received help from the agents of evil to become a king, and in doing so caused his own ruin. The tactics Richard employs to become king can be likened to the way the agents of evil aid Mankind in the fulfillment of his desires. Therefore, he is the agent of sin and the central and mutable hero.

Potter describes several other characteristics of morality plays, including "the instruction of the hero by good council," for example Gloucester to Henry VI, and "virtue unjustly cast out," as happens to Edgar and Kent in King Lear (Potter 124). These are only two examples of morality play characteristics. Richard III more visibly demonstrates two other characteristics. The first is "the conspiracy of vice, disguising itself as virtue" (Potter 124). In Richard III, both Richard and Buckingham are evidence of the veracity of the statement. Richard spends the entirety of the play masquerading as many types of virtue, though most frequently as humility. Buckingham encourages this ruse, urging Richard to seem unwilling to take the crown when offered to him. Buckingham sets up the scene as he instructs Richard how to proceed once the mayor arrives at his door with a crowd of people. Buckingham says,

> The mayor is here at hand. Intend some fear;
> Be not you spoke with, but by mighty suit;

And look you get a prayer book in your hand,

And stand between two churchmen, good my lord,

For on the ground I'll build a holy descant.

And be not easily won to our request.

Play the maid's part: still answer 'nay'—and take it. (III.vii.45-51)[2]

With this ruse, Buckingham is able to persuade the mayor to support Richard's attainment of the throne. It is with the mayor's help that the crowd is won, and Richard feigns reluctance in accepting the people's will. Richard's pretended piety is, perhaps, the strongest example of "the conspiracy of vice."

The second characteristic that applies to Richard III is "the delinquent hero's recognition of his state of sin" (Potter 124). Though Richard never properly comes to this realization, his brother Clarence does. While locked in the tower, Clarence has a dream that prompts this confession to his jailer:

Ah, Brackenbury, I have done these things,

That now give evidence against my soul,

For Edward's sake; and see how he requites me.

Oh God! If my deep prayers cannot appease thee

But thou wilt be avenged on my misdeeds,

Yet execute thy wrath in me alone.

O spare my guiltless wife and my poor children. (I.iv.66-72)

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[2] The Norton Shakespeare is the version used for this work. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean Howard, and Katharine Maus. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997.

Clarence's dream of his own death frightens him into this acknowledgment and repentance. Similarly, in The Castle of Perseverance, when Mankind is about to die, he utters his speech of repentance.

> Now, alas, my lyf is lak!
>
> [.....]
>
> Now, good men, takythe example at me!
>
> Do for youre self whyl ye han spase!
>
> For many men thus seruyd be
>
> Thorwe the Werld in dyuerse place.
>
> [.....]
>
> To helle I schal bothe fare and fle,
>
> But God me grauntë of his grace. (Adams, Castle 2983, 2996-99, 3002-03)
>
> Now am I sorry for my life!
>
> [.....]
>
> Now, good men, take example by me:
>
> Provide for yourself, while you have space—
>
> For many men thus served be,
>
> By the World in diverse places!
>
> [.....]
>
> To Hell I shall both go and flee
>
> Unless God grant me of his grace. (Johnson 2813, 2839-42, 2845-46)

Both Clarence and Mankind expect to be condemned to hell, but both also hope that God will hear their remorse and grant them mercy. Another similarity is that both

acknowledge their actions but shift the blame elsewhere. Clarence professes that what he did, he did for his brother, Edward. Mankind warns the audience that the World is responsible for his sins.

There are other delinquent characters who recognize their states of sin. When facing death, Edward IV, Hastings and Buckingham all realize that they have not lived in a proper way; they have made many mistakes. According to Robert Turner, author of "Characterization in Shakespeare's Early History Plays," "The speeches of regret [in Richard III] are Shakespeare's first steps in changing his personae from moral categories to flexible characters with internal motives capable of acting in a literal world of historical events" (258). But Shakespeare took other steps toward avoiding moral categories. Turner further states, "In [Shakespeare's] tentative movement to break through the close relation of character and action, he provided in the fashion of his time external causes for introspection in the form of curses, oaths, dreams, or ghosts" (258). As yet, characters had not been created to independently come to realizations of conscience; there had to be an externally motivating trigger, such as the remembering of a once-uttered curse or the appearance of a ghost.

During Act V, scene v, Richard and Richmond see ghosts in their dreams. By this time, Richmond has been shown to be the virtue figure. The ghosts of those whom Richard killed have wished him to "despair and die" and have reassured Richmond of victory. If Richard is the Vice or devil, the winner of the battle between the two cannot be he, and this idea is reinforced by the ghosts weighing in with their judgments, which are unanimously in favor of Richmond and a new regime.

Shakespeare was eventually able to give sufficient dramatic integrity to what a character reveals on stage, so that the external causes for introspection were no longer necessary. For example, in King Lear there are no ghosts, curses, or dreams, yet the audience knows character motivations and personal struggles by those characters' soliloquies and asides. However, Shakespeare did not abandon these medieval traditions; at the end of his career ghosts, dreams, and curses were still frequently used. Throughout his career he shows that he does not need to use the external causes for introspection but that they are useful devices in certain circumstances.

Qualities of the Vice

Charles M. Gayley states that the devil in morality plays is a mythical character, whereas the vice "is allegorical, --typical of the moral frailty of mankind. Proceeding from the concept of the Deadly Sins, ultimately focussing them, he dramatizes the evil that springs from within" (qtd. in Spivack 132). Mathew Winston explains the development of the Vice as being "very likely derived from the Latin *vices*, meaning a change or turn, as in the phrase vice versa. This derivation of the Vice's name helps us to see that his chief characteristic is his changeability" (232). This allegorical Vice must possess a certain changeability, for his job is to provide action for the devil's will. The devil desires the soul of Mankind, and whether the play contains a Devil, Satan, Belial, World, or Flesh, the Vice serves the Devil's purpose by corrupting Mankind. He shows his changeability in his ability to effectively manage the devil character, to coerce the Mankind figure, and to trick or mislead the virtues.

In order to corrupt Mankind, the Vice uses many techniques and tricks, including pretending to be a virtue. Winston notes John Pikeryng's Interlude of Vice, a play in

which the Vice goes by such names as "Patience," "Courage," and "Revenge." The play Lusty Juventus (1457-53) shows Hypocrisy pretending to be Knowledge. And the play Respublica (1553), written for Queen Mary, shows Avarice, Oppression, Adulation, and Insolence playing the respective roles of Policy, Reformation, Honesty and Authority to the queen, Respublica. These characters go by different names in order to mislead their victim or target. Though Richard goes only by his given or bestowed names, Richard or Gloucester, he proves himself to be such vices as Hypocrisy, Pride, Envy, Cruelty and Ambition. In different scenes he is different vices. In many medieval plays, the actors had to play multiple roles so that all of the parts could be filled. This is how plays such as Thomas Preston's Cambises (1558-69), a play with thirty-eight roles, could be performed by a troupe of eight. In the moralities, several men would play vices in one scene and virtues in another. Though the actor playing the role of Richard Gloucester would have had only one role to play, it looks as if he assumed multiple roles, for he seems to be the one playing the roles of the vices.

In "Homilies and Anomalies: The Legacy of the Morality Play to the Age of Shakespeare," Alan Dessen says, "The stock morality device of Humanum Genus torn between good and evil angels, for instance, could easily be translated into terms of a king torn between good and evil counselors" (244). In the case of Richard III, he is his own evil counselor or bad angel. Because he is king, evil counselor and Humanum Genus he is able to remove any influence of good from his vicinity. These influences and their subsequent removal include the young princes with their youthful innocence and their gruesome deaths, the wife he charmed into marrying him and quickly disposed of, and his

mother whom he keeps at a distance because she clearly does not like him or approve of what he has done.

None of the moralities attempt to save or redeem the soul of the vice; the attempt is to save Mankind from the vice(s). In this way, Richard is paired more closely with the Vice than Mankind because no one tries to save his soul. In this way he is skillfully portrayed as the Vice; he is meant to be thwarted, and he is. By creating such a vice, Shakespeare gains a character who seeks no redemption and offers no apologies for his evildoing. This is unexpected in a protagonist because he, historically, must repent and hope to be saved.

Turner believes that even though the Vice found a larger role in the late moralities, it doesn't necessarily mean that the Mankind figure was vulnerable to extinction. Instead, he believes that the focus changed from one victim of vices or the Vice to multiple victims. He terms this class of plays "estates" morality plays, from the medieval term referring to different parts of society. In them, "a cross section of social types (a lawyer, a courtier, a farmer, a scholar, a soldier), [are] all subject in some way to a Vice who represents a corrupt force within society as a whole, [and] can act out the state of a kingdom rather than that of an individual soul" (Turner 253). Richard is certainly that Vice. He assumes the role of the most powerful man in England and quickly corrupts the divine succession of kings by disregarding law and justice in his endeavor to attain the throne. Richard appears to be a man who loves his brothers, but he actually wants them dead and arranges the murder of one of them. He seems to want what is best for his country, but he really just wants to rule it by whatever means he can. He gives the false impression that he does not want to be king and that taking the job had

never occurred to him (III.vii). His quest represents a perversion of the order of succession for the English throne; what had seemed like divine right is shown to be corruptible. In the action of the play, we see the effect of evil and corruption on the upper echelon of a kingdom.

Though we see the effects on this upper echelon, Richard acquires the authority to affect the entirety of the kingdom. In the manner of an "estates" morality play, he affects every level of the society. The audience hears from three citizens who discuss the effects of the death of King Edward IV (II.iii). Though they assume the offspring of Edward will inherit the throne, they worry about Richard's authority over the boy king. Third Citizen says, "O full of danger is the Duke of Gloucester" (II.iii.27). It is not just Hastings, the Duchess of York, or Queen Margaret who fear the reign of Richard III; the common man holds those fears, as well.

The Transformation of the Vice

By Shakespeare's adolescence the popularity of the morality play had declined and a new form of drama began to replace it. The vices, however, were still in demand. Spivack says of the morality vices, "The source of our trouble with them is that by Shakespeare's time they had lost their original import without losing their dramatic popularity, so that they had to undergo a gradual reprocessing to meet the demand of his age for what in our own is called 'realism'" (44). Audiences still craved the artistic criminality that vices brought to the stage but were less and less interested in the homily of the allegorical virtues. Thus, the drama adapted to the changing desires of audiences, audiences that no longer "sought their moral improvement through formal homily" (Spivack 59).

The popularity of the Vice made him hard to expel from the stage. "Reluctantly draping his allegorical nakedness, he persisted in his allegorical function. Having refurbished himself with the name, the clothing, the motives of a 'formal man,' he conducted in Elizabethan tragedy a Psychomachia without benefit of allegory" (Spivack 59). The archaic remnant of medieval drama was reinvented for the new age of drama. The Vice was born with an essence of evil because he was created as the devil's helper, but drama eventually expelled the devil in favor of a more evil Vice, so that evil became its function in the play. That function, the moral bankrupt, liar, joker, or trickster, was popular with the playgoers and became indispensable to the theater industry.

The Castle of Perseverance shows many vices, most under the control of a superior vice. For example, the Seven Deadly Sins are figures who do the bidding of a superior. The World is in charge of Greed; Belial (the Devil) is in charge of Pride, Wrath and Envy; Flesh is in charge of Gluttony, Lechery and Sloth. Richard seems to encompass the qualities and vices of the World and Belial, but he lacks those of the Flesh. Greed is seen in Richard's need to have ever-increasing power. If he had allowed his nephew to become king, he would have been named Lord Protector, and would, in essence, have ruled the country at least until the boy king's eighteenth birthday. But being Lord Protector was not enough for Richard; he wanted to be king. Richard also exhibits Envy, in that he envies he who has the throne or he who has a legitimate claim to the throne. His Wrath becomes evident as he kills anyone who stands in his way (Clarence), who may stand or seemingly stands in his way (the princes, Hastings, Rivers, Dorset, Vaughan), and who openly oppose him (Buckingham).

The three vices of the Flesh, however, do not seem to have a considerable part in Richard's make up. We see no evidence of Gluttony, and Sloth would be counterproductive to his aims. A claim might be made for Lechery because of his brilliant wooing of Anne and his later desire to make his niece his wife, but these were not meant to be sexual conquests. He describes these women in terms of their strategic value. He is interested in the alliances, not the sex. It is possible that Richard is the visualization, the appearance, of the Flesh. He does not harbor fleshly passions, but his physical portrayal gives clues to his evil nature. He describes himself as ugly and misshapen, and dogs bark at him when he limps past, but he is also powerful and seemingly built for war. Richard seems to emotionally personify the vices of the World and Belial and physically personify the Flesh.

Richard III as the Vice

In "Some Medieval Concepts in Shakespeare's Plays," Krystyna Sierz writes that as the era of the morality play wound down comedy and tragedy became independent genres. "The figure of Vice, however, with equal facility moved into both because of its great popularity. It outlived by many years the dramatic convention that had created him for homiletic purposes" (237). Abstract concepts were developed into stage characters in order to teach a lesson. As the genre of theater developed, so did the characters. Some new characters were given names, generally of historical figures, while those they shared the stage with still had names like Diligence, Cruelty and Murder. Of the morality characters, the Vice remained the longest. This is because the Vice, due to his popularity, had the opportunity to evolve. With smaller roles and a less defined character, the smaller vices of early moralities developed into a single character who could share the

stage with virtues and have the audience rooting for him. In Richard III, Shakespeare created a Vice that had progressed from scene-stealer to villainous main character.

That Richard can be considered a vice is not a new thought. The first known mention of it is in Lewis Theobald's edition of The Works of Shakespeare in Seven Volumes, printed in 1733. Theobald speculates about the following passage: "Thus, like the formal vice, Iniquity, / I moralize two meanings in one word" (III.i.82-83) that, "By Vice, perhaps the Author may mean not a *Quality* but a *Person*. There was hardly an old Play, till the period of the *Reformation*, which had not in it a Devil, and a drole character, a Jester; (who was to play upon and work, the Devil;) and this Buffoon went by the name of a *Vice*" (qtd. in Potter 196). Potter presumes that the source from which Theobald acquired his information was a passage from Bishop Harsenet which described how "the nimble Vice would skip up nimbly like a Jack-an-apes into the Devil's necke, and ride the devil a course... whereat the people would laugh to see the Devil so Vice-haunted" (qtd. in Potter 196). Though it is unlikely that Theobald knew specifically any of the "old Plays" to which he referred, he apparently knew of them and what they were about. He writes,

> The Master Devil then was soon dismissed from the Scene [during the Reformation]; and the Buffoon was chang'd into a subordinate Fiend, whose Business was to range on Earth and seduce poor Mortals into the personated vicious Quality, which he occasionally supposed; as, *Iniquity* in general, *Hypocrisy, Usury, Vanity, Prodigality, Gluttony &c*... he must certainly put on a *formal* Demeanour, *moralize* and prevaricate in his

> Words, and pretend a Meaning directly opposite to his genuine and primite Intention. (qtd. in Potter 196-97)

This passage is especially remarkable because Theobald knew little about the homiletic plays that featured the devil and the buffoon. That he could extrapolate so accurately about the transition of the Vice from buffoon to principal evildoer is noteworthy. But the passage that sparked his interest and provoked his thought was a two-line passage from Richard III.

Unfortunately, the next editor of The Works of Shakespeare in Eight Volumes, William Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, saw things differently than Theobald. In the 1747 edition of The Works, he wrote,

> That the buffoon, or jester of the old English farces, was called the Vice is certain: and that in their moral representations, it was common to bring in the deadly sins, is as true. Of these we have yet several remains. But that the Vice used to assume the personages of these sins is a fancy of Mr. Theobald, who knew nothing of the matter. (qtd. in Potter 202)

However, it was not enough for the bishop to refute Theobald, with scant contractions cribbed from the preface from Don Quixote; he also changed the text of Richard III for his edition (Potter 202). The text, from the 1747 edited works reads, "Thus like the formal-wise Antiquity [sic]/ I moralize. Two meanings in one word" (qtd. in Potter 202).

Two hundred sixty years later, scholars have recognized several other ways we can see Richard as a vice figure. Darryll Grantley, author of "The Winter's Tale and Early Religious Drama," says, "It is a common characteristic of the vice to make a bold entry proclaiming his identity, often in a direct address to the audience and frequently

introducing a note of bawdy, comedy or irreverence" (26). In The Castle of Perseverance, Belial's first words are: "Now I sytte, Satanas, in my sad synne, / As deuyl dowty, in draf as a drake!" (Adams, Castle 170-71) ("Now sit I, Satan, Steadfast in my sin, / As devil doughty, like a dragon on my sack"; Johnson 40-41). A few lines later, he introduces bawdiness and irreverence:

> Bothe the bak and the buttoke brestyth al on brenne;
> With werkys of wreche, I werke hem mykyl wrake;
> In woo is al my wenne.
> In care I am cloyed
> And fowled I am a-noyed
> But Mankynde be stroyed
> Be dykes and be denne.... (Adams, Castle 202-8)
> Both the back and the buttocks burst burning unbound,
> With works of vengeance, them wretched I make:
> My delight is in woe!
> In care I am cloyed,
> And foully annoyed
> Unless Man be destroyed,
> And in ditch laid right low. (Johnson 46-52)

It was easy for Belial to introduce himself. In a country full of churchgoers, everyone knew the role Belial would play. Richard, the Duke of Gloucester, has only a slightly more difficult time in explaining himself when he appears to the audience. In Queen Elizabeth's time there were legends of Richard III, though he certainly didn't have the

reputation of Belial. Though he does not specifically say, "I am Richard Gloucester," he gives enough self-description in his first speech that the audience would recognize him as Richard III:

> I that am curtailed of this fair proportion,
> Cheated of feature by dissembling nature
> Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
> Into this breathing world scarce half made up—
> And that so lamely and unfashionable
> That dogs bark at me as I halt by them. (I.i.18-33)

With this description of a deformed creature, the audience can be fairly certain that the man on stage is the notorious Richard III. He can later be recognized or identified as Richard III by his despicable actions. His irreverence is shown in several ways. First, he does not respect the peace that has developed in England since his brother, Edward IV, acquired the throne. Without a war Richard is bored. He says, "To entertain these fair well-spoken days, / I am determined to prove a villain/ And hate the idle pleasures of these days" (I.i.29-31). He also lacks reverence for his king and his family. Richard hopes that King Edward IV will soon be dead, but not before he arranges the death of his other living brother, Clarence, who is ahead of him in line for the throne.

Another way to identify Richard as the Vice is described by Emrys Jones. In The Origins of Shakespeare, Jones refers to Nicholas Brooke when he says, "Richard is 'more real' than the other [characters]: 'This sense of him makes everyone else mere actors in a play'; like the Vice in the moralities, 'he alone has any direct contact with the audience'" (Jones 195). Though other characters are occasionally left alone on stage, Richard, like

the Vice, is the only one who speaks with the audience. Jones says, "He [Richard] acts like a Presenter or Master of Ceremonies, mediating between the audience and the other characters, interpreting the action for us, preparing us for the next moves in the plot and seeing to it that we savour to the full the roles we have just seen him perform" (195). It is through his addresses to the audience that we have any idea how evil he is. But he also plays the role of the narrator. Like Belial or Titivillus, he tells the audience things we would never know if he did not tell us. Richard says,

> Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
> By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams
> To set my brother Clarence and the King
> In deadly hate the one against the other. (I.i.32-35)

Through speeches like this the audience is informed that what appears to be coincidence is actually contrived. Richard continues to inform the audience in asides as his plans develop and succeed.

Sierz claims that there is a psychological inconsistency between the deeds of such characters as Iago from Othello, Aaron from Titus Andronicus, and Richard III and their alleged reasons for doing them. They behave like the characters of the Psychomachia who do evil for the sake of doing evil (Sierz 235). It seems like Richard's reason for his evil doing is that he seeks the throne. Though this is the outcome, this is not the rationale he originally states. Richard opens the play with the admission that since he cannot prove to be a lover, he is "determined to prove a villain" (I.i.30). He uses his ugly frame and features as an excuse for the evil he is to perpetrate; however, the next scene shows his ability to woo Lady Anne. He knows that this is no small feat, as he is able to charm her

while she is mourning, as she accompanies her future father-in-law's corpse to his tomb. He marvels at his victory and brags to the audience.

> Was ever woman in this humour wooed?
> Was ever woman in this humour won?
> I'll have her, but I will not keep her long.
> What, I that killed her husband and his father,
> To take her in her heart's extremest hate,
> With curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes,
> The bleeding witness of my hatred by,
> Having God, her conscience, and these bars against me,
> And I no friends to back my suit withal
> But the plain devil and dissembling looks
> And yet to win her, all the world to nothing? Ha! (I.ii.215-225)

Richard admits to the murder of her fiancé and his father. He acknowledges that she hates him and that this is the most unlikely time and place to successfully entice a grieving woman. But he is successful, and his success makes him boastful. He has proven himself to be a lover, which is what he said he could not do. His wooing is unrelated to his quest for the throne and is therefore unrelated to his reason for pursuing villainy. His villainy is innate. There is no true motive for his evil doings except that it is how his character was created: to be a villain.

Richard constantly shows his proclivity for villainy. "He can not help boasting about his mastery in the art of deceit. No 'formal Vice' weeps more often or more convincingly than Richard when pretending virtue, or enjoys greater intimacy with his

audience" (Sierz 240). His deceit, though not always well planned, is always well executed. When he discovers that Hastings will not back his claim for the crown, he quickly devises a plan. At the meeting to determine when the young Edward V should be crowned king, he lays a trap in which he asks the group of counselors what the punishment should be for anyone who conspires against him. Hastings boldly answers that the punishment should be death. Richard then reveals his arm, "like a blasted sapling withered up" and "exposes" Hastings to be a conspirator with a witch in a plot against him (III.iv.69). Hastings is promptly taken into custody with orders to be executed before dinner. Richard thereby removes the potential impediment to the throne with a rather hasty but effective strategy.

In her discussion about the vice-like villainy of Iago, Sierz says, "The medieval pattern in the play is clearly discernible by the fact that Iago is able to deceive absolutely everybody—all the major characters are his dupes and his victims...He invites them to participate in his 'game' just as Tittivillus [sic] and the Vices did" (243). This very much applies to Richard Gloucester. He, like Iago, uses the other characters as pawns in his personal game. They, Richard and Iago, are able to fool nearly everyone around them. "In scene after scene he works upon them, at the same time cynically inviting the audience to admire his skill and dedication" (Sierz 243). Though written about Iago, this statement also fits Richard. However, there are two people he can't fool or win over: his mother, the Duchess of York and the Dowager Queen Margaret. Both women doubt his sincerity and believe him to be a power-hungry thug. Queen Margaret tries to warn Edward IV's court about the dangers of Richard's friendship. She says,

Look when he fawns, he bites; and when he bites,

His venom tooth will rankle to the death.

Have naught to do with him; beware of him;

Sin, death, and hell have set their marks on him,

And all their ministers attend on him. (I.iii.288-292)

Richard's mother, the Duchess of York considers how she mothered such an evil man. She laments,

Ah, that deceit should steal such gentle shapes,

And with a virtuous visor hide deep vice!

He is my son, ay, and therein my shame;

Yet from my dugs he drew not this deceit. (II.ii.27-30)

Even his mother recognizes the vice in him and sees that he is able to hide it from nearly everyone.

After his success in wooing Anne (and disposing of her), Richard attempts to win a second bride. But he does not woo this second potential mate himself; he woos her mother. Just as the devil or bad angel tries to corrupt Mankind, Richard attempts to entice his sister-in-law into delivering her daughter, his niece, to his marriage bed. In both cases, the audience sees the deception as it occurs and watches as Mankind/ Lady Anne and perhaps Queen Elizabeth flounder under the spell of the devil/Richard.

The Minor Vices of Richard III

The morality plays generally portray a major villain who is aided by lesser vice helpers. The minor vices are often tormenters, as well. They will do the bidding of the Vice or the Devil, but also provoke him, for example by riding on his back, as mentioned earlier. The Castle of Perseverance shows the World, Belial and the Flesh being aided by

lesser vices such as Covetousness, Envy and Lechery. They are servants who carry out the tasks that they have been assigned by their masters. But The Castle of Perseverance also has characters who are not controlled by the World, Belial or the Flesh. Bad Angel is led by his desire to do evil and corrupt Mankind. The play Mankind (1461-85) shows Titivillus, who is the devil or controller of evil. Mischief is the head vice who is the leader of Nought, New-guise, and Nowadays. Though Mischief is under the ultimate control of Titivillus, he is not afraid of him, though his minions quake with fear when the devil approaches.

Richard III has several of these minor vice characters who are both helpers and tormenters of Richard. Their roots are in the allegorical figures of the morality plays. Edward IV plays the role of Lechery or Lust, a historic morality character. He is a helper vice: without Edward's command, Richard would not have been able to have Clarence executed. We know that King Edward IV is Lechery because Richard explains that he "capers nimbly in a lady's chamber / To the lascivious pleasing of a lute" (I.i.12-13). Also, when Buckingham tries to convince the citizens that Richard will be an honorable king, he compares him with his brother, the late king. He says that Richard is currently meditating, "Not dallying with a brace of courtesans" (III.vii.74). Lust is a historic morality character. The Trial of Treasure[3] (1567) features Lust who plays one of the Mankind figures, opposite his counterpart, Just. Henry Medwall's play Nature (1490-1501) shows Bodily Lust who tries to interest Man in a new whore. John Skelton's

[3] The play, The Trial of Treasure, is a late medieval play that eliminates the traditional Mankind figure. The main characters are allegorical opposites, Lust and Just, and the audience watches their separate actions (Turner 253). The Trial of Treasure gets mid way to where Shakespeare progresses with Richard III: the Mankind role has been eliminated, but virtue, Just, still has an equally prominent role on the stage as vice, or Lust. In Richard III, vice has taken over the stage and has all but eliminated virtue.

Magnificence (1513-16) presents a vice figure named Courtly Abusion who chooses Lusty Pleasure as an alias. His job is to tempt the king, Magnificence, into gratifying his sensual desires by taking women.

Another of the minor vices in Richard III is Margaret, who plays the roles of Wrath, Vengeance and Covetousness. She offers curses to the House of York and delights in their misfortunes. She rejoices in Queen Elizabeth's losses and says, "Thou didst usurp my place, and dost thou not / Usurp the just proportion of my sorrow?" (IV.iv.109-110). The plays Nature and The Longer Thou Livest, the More Fool Thou Art (1560-68) show Wrath as one of the vices that Man and Moros, respectively, frequently visit. Mind, Will and Understanding (1561-85) introduces the three powers of the soul and how the vices help turn them into Maintenance, Perjury and Lechery. Vengeance is one of the followers of the newly made Maintenance. Covetise is the Vice in Enough is as Good as a Feast (1560-69). Covetise has many underlings to help him convert Worldly Man back from virtue, for what he wants is the soul of Worldly Man. These allegorical characters set the precedent for Margaret's actions and reactions.

Margaret shows her Wrath in her sneering asides to the audience and the detailed and malicious curses she offers to the assembled party. She is Vengeance in Act IV, scene iv when she says to Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of York, "Bear with me. I am hungry for revenge, / And now I cloy me with beholding it" (61-62). Margaret shows that she is Covetousness but not in her desire for money; she wants her assemblage of enemies in Act I to bow down and call her queen again. She says, "To serve me well you all should do me duty. / Teach me to be your queen, and you my subjects: / O serve me well, and teach yourselves that duty" (I.iii.249-251).

Buckingham is any of a number of helpers of the Vice. He does exactly as the Vice bids until the Vice betrays him. Richard promises to make him important and wealthy, and Buckingham is ready to help him to the throne. However, once on the throne, Richard breaks his promise, and Buckingham sheds his allegiance to the king and attempts to join forces with Richard's enemy, Richmond. Spivack says that the Vice "is captain of the forces of evil and they [the lesser vices] are his privates. When they contest his supremacy or show him insufficient deference, he puts them down with threats and blows, producing the inveterate quarrel of the vices along with its homiletic purpose, the exposition of who is top dog in the hierarchy of evil" (141). Buckingham is quickly found, captured, and executed, thus showing Richard's power as the head vice in the play.

The Psychomachia and Shakespeare

Spivack explains that some characters eventually outgrew their Psychomachia roots. "The virtues, no longer warriors in a military Psychomachia, are reduced to solemn, pontifical, lifeless homilists; whereas the vices monopolize the theatrical life of the play—its diversified intrigue and its humor" (Spivack 126). Richard has done this; he has completely monopolized the play as the Vice and the personification of evil. He makes any figure of goodness seem forgettable and boring when compared with the excitement he brings to the stage. Richard seems to be constantly asking the audience to watch and admire his evil and brilliant deeds, just as the morality vices did. Spivack continues,

> Such a role, in short, is characterized by an expository relationship with the audience that has already been defined as its *homiletic dimension*, by a

> unique fusion of serious purpose with comical method that creates a *comedy of evil*, and by a metaphorical aggression through *deceit* that represents the evolved form of the Psychomachia. (126)

Though it is easy to see the "serious purpose" and "deceit" that Richard brings to the stage, it's not as easy to see the humor he brings with it. But Richard really is magnificently, and often subtly, comedic. For example, Richard disrupts Queen Margaret's curse of him in Act I, scene iii. She ends her curse,

> QUEEN MARGARET. Thou slander of thy mother's womb,
>
> Thou loathed issue of thy father's loins,
>
> Thou rag of honour, thou detested –
>
> RICHARD. Margaret.
>
> QUEEN MARGARET. Richard.
>
> RICHARD. Ha?
>
> QUEEN MARGARET. I call thee not.
>
> RICHARD. I cry thee mercy then, for I did think
>
> That thou hadst called me all these bitter names.

This, of course, was her intention. However, by inserting her name at the end of her curse, Richard has effectively made Margaret curse herself. Another example of his humor is in Act III, scene vii, in which the mayor and townspeople arrive with Buckingham to ask the seemingly reluctant Richard to take the throne. His appearance between two clergymen, holding a prayer book, and certainly looking solemn and averse to the suggestion, is extremely amusing. In general, a show of sincere seriousness by Richard can be considered a comic event.

Not only had the morality tradition not been extinguished, but the Psychomachia tradition had also not disappeared, even within the plays of Shakespeare. It emerges within Richard III, especially in Act V. The most apparent use of the Psychomachia is the battle between Richard's and Richmond's forces, and then the battle between the two men. The audience is aware that Richmond is the driving force of good in the play and that Richard is evil; thus Richmond and his forces are the virtues while Richard and his troops signify the vices. In the Psychomachia genre, virtue conquers, so it is no surprise that Richard is defeated by Richmond in their one-on-one fight.

Another occurrence of the Psychomachia is in the conversation between Clarence's two murderers before Clarence is killed. Though "Second Murderer" has a pang of conscience, he cannot be a virtue figure; his name contradicts such a theory. The debate, however, can bring the audience to wonder if conscience will really win out, so resolute the Second Murderer seems:

> SECOND MURDERER. The urging of that word 'judgment' hath bred a kind of remorse in me.
>
> FIRST MURDERER. What, art thou afraid?
>
> SECOND MURDERER. Not to kill him, having a warrant, but to be damned for killing him, from the which no warrant can defend me.
>
> FIRST MURDERER. I thought thou hadst been resolute.
>
> SECOND MURDERER. So I am—to let him live.
>
> FIRST MURDERER. I'll back to the Duke of Gloucester and tell him so.

SECOND MURDERER. Nay, I pray thee. Stay a little. I hope this passionate humour of mine will change. It was wont to hold me but while one tells twenty. (I.iv.102-14)

However resolute he appears, his conscience cannot prevail. Moments later, with the mention of the reward, his mind is changed. Though he did not perform the killing, he is repentant that he has been part of the crime. This debate Psychomachia is foreshadowing for a future, more sophisticated Psychomachia debate between Richard and himself.

This more subtle appearance of the Psychomachia in Act V occurs when Richard has just awakened from his dream about the ghosts. He has a discussion with himself that shows an introspection that has not been seen before in Shakespeare's dramas (Turner 257). The internal division shows, for the first time, Richard's conscience pitted against his justifications.

What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by.
Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am.
Then fly! What, from myself? Great reason. Why?
Lest I revenge. Myself upon myself?
Alack, I love myself. Wherefore? For any good
That I myself have done unto myself?
O no, alas, I rather hate myself
For hateful deeds committed by myself.
I am a villain. Yet I lie: I am not.
Fool, of thyself speak well.—Fool do not flatter.

My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,

And every tongue brings in a several tale,

And every tale condemns me for a villain. (V.v.136-49)

This is set up in the form of the debate Psychomachia, mentioned above. There are even glimpses of the murderers' debate within Richard's speech. The voice of conscience is a rarity in Richard III and rarer when it comes from its protagonist. The internal division shown in the speech is what sets it apart from any of the types of Psychomachia seen before and a step beyond the debate between First and Second Murderer. In Shakespeare and the Late Moral Plays, Dessen writes, "The moral dramatist's breakdown of a major decision into visible component parts therefore seems distant from this climactic speech couched in terms in tune with our sense of psychological realism" (145). In the morality plays, to demonstrate an internal struggle was to have a debate between at least two characters. For example, in The Castle of Perseverance, after Mankind has died and become Soul, Good Angel and Bad Angel argue with each other, with the Soul, and with other characters about the value of the Soul and whether the virtues should plead Mankind/Soul's case before God. There are many characters having this debate on stage. Richard, on the other hand, has the sophistication to have the debate with himself about the value of his soul. In this case, Richard is both Vice and Mankind as they battle each other. The Vice wins because Mankind is unable to admit his mistakes and goes to his death unrepentant. The dramatic evolution of which Richard III is a part is shown by Shakespeare's creation of an internal stage dialogue for Richard.

Prudentius' Psychomachia laid the groundwork for the morality play tradition which used allegorical figures to show the battle between good and evil. The morality

play genre became a very influential dramatic style. Though some types of characters came and went, such as the devil or Belial, the figure of the Vice entered the theatre and would not be expelled. In time, the allegorical shells that housed characters were shed and characters received names and varied character traits, rather than the one trait for which the character was named. Through these changes, the Vice still carried out the role for which he was designed, to corrupt Mankind.

The Vice's essence of evil found its way into the character of Richard III. From feigned sincerity to lying and making phony accusations of treason to plotting the deaths of young princes, Richard is every inch a villain with vice-like qualities. He speaks to the audience to keep them up to date on what is happening on stage by narrating events, but he also speaks in asides to the audience so that they know what he is thinking and planning, just as the medieval Vice does. Richard is so full of deceit that he is even able to deceive himself. He is unsuccessful in convincing himself that he is a villain. Because he does not admit it, he cannot ask for forgiveness and be forgiven. There is no chance for his salvation. And this is one of the aims of the moral dramas: to teach the audience a lesson so that they will continue on the righteous path.

Chapter 3: The Miracle Play and Richard III

The term "mystery play" or "miracle play" refers to a play written in the vernacular about a religious topic that was performed outside the church. Very few plays survive as individual works; most have been preserved as a part of a cycle of plays. These plays are referred to by several terms, including mystery and miracle cycles, Corpus Christi cycles or pageants (one play within a cycle), and Passion plays. Scholars have not settled on a preferred term, for few seem to agree. Only four cycles are extant: Towneley (many written by the Wakefield master), Chester, York and N- Town. Emrys Jones states, "All four surviving mystery cycles trace the history of the world from the Creation to the Last Judgment; certain episodes are obligatory, others optional, but all four present a full and detailed dramatic narrative of the life of Christ" (47).

Because of their religious nature, several of the terms that refer to the plays seem to make sense. Miracles, Corpus Christi, and the Passion are easily identifiable as religious terms. However, there has been disagreement as to the validity of using the word "mystery" in connection with the plays. The word was first used in 1744 in reference to a kind of play and was a theological term referring to the "mysteries" of religion, those things for which the truth seemed hidden (from the Latin word *mysterium*). In the nineteenth century, scholars changed the etymology to "service, occupation" (Mills xi). The term "mystery play" was then used as a descriptor for who put on the plays, because it is well documented that the different guilds of the city were responsible for different pageants within the cycle. The term has remained popular, but David Mills, editor of The Chester Mystery Cycle, disagrees with its use. He says, "Although this etymology is firmly denounced as 'erroneous' by the OED, it has proved

persistent and continues to colour our preconceptions about the plays and the appropriate means of producing them" (Mills xi). Mills seems to object to the use of the term on the grounds that the nineteenth century scholars, in using the term "mystery" to refer to the craft and trade guilds, were attempting to liken the guilds to modern trade unions. He sees this as a primarily political alteration of the meaning, which he feels is a misapplication of the term. However, it is accurate to say that the guilds were the groups that presented the plays.

The term "Corpus Christi cycles" comes from the time of year in which the plays were performed. The feast of Corpus Christi is celebrated on the Thursday following Trinity Sunday, which occurs eight weeks after Easter. Corpus Christi means "body of Christ," which Catholics celebrate by partaking of the Eucharist during mass. The feast of Corpus Christi turned into the Corpus Christi festival, which was eventually celebrated with plays. Miracle plays became associated with Corpus Christi Day when the Corpus Christi festival was recognized in 1311. This was chosen as an optimal time of year for the plays because there was the best chance for good weather for the outdoor performances, as the date can fall between the end of May and the end of June (Cawley xvi).

The term "Passion plays" comes about, not because of the time of year when they were performed, but because of the time in Christ's life that the majority of the cycle depicts. Only the plays that depict parts of the Passion are referred to as Passion plays; those such as Adam and Eve, Noah and the Flood, and The Judgment are not properly called Passion plays because they do not portray the suffering leading up to the death of Jesus.

Shakespeare's Familiarity with Miracle Plays

It is likely that Shakespeare encountered miracle plays at some time in his youth. Though the performance of the plays was terminated during the reign of Elizabeth I, "it was not because they had lost their popularity but because they were suppressed by Reformist zeal, reinforced by state opposition to their alleged 'idolatry and superstition'" (Cawley xxi). Greenblatt believes that because the plays were so popular and instilled such a sense of community they remained in performance until the 1570s or 1580s. He says, "In 1579, when Will was fifteen, he and his family could still have seen them performed at Coventry" (Greenblatt 37).

It can be argued that Shakespeare only needed to read the Bible in order to know the stories that the miracle plays portrayed; he did not need to witness the plays. But there are clues that seem to indicate that Shakespeare had encountered miracle plays and had not just read the Bible. For example, before the play within the play in Hamlet, when Hamlet is instructing the lead player about the lines he has written for the play, he instructs him to not become too passionate. Hamlet says, "It out-Herods Herod. Pray you avoid it" (Ham. III.ii.12-13). Shakespeare apparently knew of the raging Herod of the miracle plays because the biblical representation of Herod is not a seething monster.

Cain and Abel

Biblically, the first play that relates to Richard III is Cain and Abel or The Killing of Abel. Knowledge of the biblical story supplies key themes: jealousy and fratricide. These are also themes of Richard III. Each of the four extant cycles presents a version of the biblical events; some vary widely. The one that relates most closely to Richard III is the Towneley Killing of Abel. In this play Abel takes the best tenth of his crop and burns

it as an offering to God. Though Abel encourages Cain to do the same, Cain chooses the best shafts for himself and gives God some of the worst. When Abel's fire burns brighter and without black smoke, Cain is angered and says, "We! theyf, whi brend thi tend so shyre, / Ther myne did bot smoked, / Right as it wold vs both haue choked?" (Cawley, Wakefield, Abel 317-19) ("Wei! Why was thy tenth so bright in fire, / Whereas mine only but smoked, / Right as it would us both have choked?"; Brown, Abel 317-19). Cain seems to think that he was not capable of producing a clean-burning fire, that Abel was luckier or more loved by God. This is rather like Richard's claim in Act I, scene i when he states that, "therefore since I cannot prove a lover / [...] / I am determined to prove a villain" (I.i.28-30). Richard is going to be a villain because he believes he is incapable of doing something that everyone else can do: be a lover. Cain kills his brother because his brother was able to accomplish something that he could not. Ironically, each of them is capable of doing what he doesn't believe he can do. If Cain had sacrificed his best tenth his fire would have been bright, like Abel's. Likewise, in the following scene in Richard III (I.ii), we see Richard prove to be a lover.

After Cain has struck Abel with a jawbone, Abel falls and says, "Veniance, veniance, Lord, I cry! / For I am slayn, and not gilty" (Cawley, Wakefield, Abel 328-29) ("Vengeance, vengeance, Lord, I cry! / For I am slain, and not guilty"; Brown, Abel 328-29). Traces of this can be found throughout Richard III, as many characters die by Richard's hand or on his behalf. However, Buckingham's lament before he dies mirrors Abel's most closely. He says,

> Hastings, and Edward's children, Gray and Rivers,
>
> Holy King Henry and thy fair son Edward,

Vaughan, and all that have miscarried

By underhand, corrupted, foul injustice:

If that your moody, discontented souls

Do through the clouds behold the present hour,

Even for revenge mock my destruction. (V.i.3-9)

Buckingham imagines that all of those whom Richard murdered are, out of vengeance, laughing at his fate. They have cried, "Vengeance," and Buckingham is being punished for his role by Richard's side. However, Buckingham is also calling for vengeance against Richard, for he knows that it is by Richard's orders that he meets his destruction.

Finally, when God confronts Cain about his brother's whereabouts, he says,

The voyce of thi brotherys blode,

That thou has slayn on fals wise,

From erth to heuen venyance cryse.

And, for thou has broght thi brother downe,

Here I gif the malison. (Cawley, Wakefield, Abel 351-55)

The voice of thy brother's blood

That thou has slain in false wise,

From earth to heaven for vengeance cries.

And, for thou hast brought thy brother down,

Here I give thee malediction. (Brown, Abel 351-55)

This raises images of the ghosts in Richard's and Richmond's dreams. They each condemn Richard and assure Richmond of victory. Many are in some way related to Richard, so they can be seen to be what God earlier called the "voice[s] of thy brother's

blood." They cry for vengeance because each was wrongly killed. Each victim was slain by or for Richard, and during the dream sequence, each curses Richard. Like Cain, Richard is cursed for life, but Richard's life is much shorter, so he has much less time to suffer from his curses.

Richard III as Herod

Scott Colley states, "Shakespeare knew about Herod from the Bible, from sermons, and from Corpus Christi plays which he either witnessed in his youth or knew by reputation" (452). Since church attendance was mandatory and the Corpus Christi plays were still being performed in Shakespeare's time, Colley's assertion is reasonable. Colley relates that the glossa ordinaria, the medieval commentary on the Bible, states, "Herod promises devotion, but sharpens his sword; covering up the malice of his heart with the colour of humility. He feigns in words and means to worship Him Whom he secretly intends to kill" (qtd. in Colley 452). This is the beginning of the similarities between Herod and Richard. Like Herod, Richard pretends to be devoted, to his brothers and his soon-to-be bride, but what he wants from each of them is their death. Both rulers flatter and deceive to get what they want.

In his essay "The Winter's Tale and Early Religious Drama," Darryll Grantley compares Leontes with Herod by noticing "a tendency to threaten and bully inferiors. Herod frequently threatens messengers, counselors, and his soldiers in his rage...." (30). No one dares to resist Herod. Though Grantley focuses on Leontes, Richard can also be used as a comparative figure. One example comes from Act IV, scene iv, after Richard has apparently just convinced Queen Elizabeth to let him marry her daughter. Stanley enters with news of Richmond's sailing to England to claim the crown. The very

(rightly) paranoid Richard does not believe that Stanley actually plans to bring his troops to his king's aid during the battle. He says, "Go then and muster men—but leave behind / Your son George Stanley. Look your heart be firm, / Or else his head's assurance is but frail" (IV.iv.425-427). Because he is unsure of Stanley's loyalties, he bullies and threatens him into compliance.

Along with issuing threats and bullying, each of the kings strikes a messenger who brings him bad news. In the Towneley Herod the Great Herod's knights have come to tell him that the Magi have slipped past them and are now far away. He chides them and then beats them. The knights cower and plead with him to stop. The 3rd Knight says,

> Why put ye sich reprefys
> Withoutt cause?
> Thus shuld ye not thrett vs,
> Vngaynly to bete vs;
> Ye shuld not rehett vs
> Withoutt othere sawes. (Cawley, Wakefield, Herodes 157-162)
>
> Why make ye such reproofs
> Withouten cause?
> Thus should ye not treat us,
> And ungainly so beat us;
> Ye should not rebuke us
> Withouten wiser words. (Brown, Herod 157-6)

After hearing the bad news, Herod's temper has flared up, and he is still angry about the Magi evasion when he meets with his two counselors. One tells him "Sir, peasse this

outrage!" (Cawley, Wakefield, Herodes 246) ("Sir, quieten this outrage!"; Brown, Herod 245). The other tries to calm the incensed Herod by explaining a plan that involves the killing of all male children under the age of two to eliminate the prophesied baby king, which Herod thinks is a excellent idea, and he proceeds to order this slaughter.

Similarly, in Act IV of Richard III, messengers enter to tell the king that some of his nobles have taken to arms. As the Third Messenger approaches with news of Buckingham's army, the stage direction reads, "*He striketh him*" (IV.iv.before 439).[4] Surprisingly, when Richard hears the messenger and realizes that he brings good news, he says, "I cry thee mercy.-- / Ratcliffe, reward him for the blow I gave him" (IV.iv.444-45).[5] The messenger is offered an apology only because his news is favorable to Richard not because the ruler is remorseful.

Another similarity between the two men is their depiction as cripples. Near the end of his life, Herod describes himself.

> My legges roten and my armes;
>
> that nowe I see of feindes swarmes—
>
> I have donne so many harmes—
>
> from hell comminge after me. (Lumiansky and Mills, Innocents 422-25)
>
> My legs rotten and my arms,
>
> That not I see of fiends swarms—
>
> I have done so many harms—

---

[4] The Norton Shakespeare, The Arden Shakespeare, and The Signet Shakespeare all indicate that *"He striketh him"* was written by Shakespeare and was not an editor's addition.

[5] Colley also makes this argument. He writes, "When Herod hears news about the insecurity of his reign, he rants and raves, threatens to beat his messengers, and nervously calls for wine...Richard similarly strikes a messenger in IV.iv, and later says, "Give me a bowl of wine. / I have not that alacrity of spirit / Nor cheer of mind that I was wont to have (V.iii.73-75)" (455).

From Hell coming after me. (Mills, Innocents 421-24)

This fits with the historical belief that Herod was crippled. The historical accounts of Josephus indicate that Herod was likely dying of kidney failure and gangrene and was probably an invalid for the last few years of his life. Colley states, "While the posture [of a contorted Herod in medieval art] may be a stylized depiction of a raging tyrant, it is remarkable how closely the morally and physically twisted Herod suggests the crippled, withered tyrant Richard III" (456). Though Queen Margaret and Queen Elizabeth each refer to Richard as a "bunch-backed [sic] toad (I.iii.244; IV.iv.81)," and Lady Anne calls him a "lump of foul deformity," (I.ii.57) when other characters describe Richard they generally remain focused on his evil deeds and nature. It is, again, from the tyrant himself that we hear the most about his physical appearance. In Act I, scene i, Richard says that he is "rudely stamped" and was

> Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
> Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
> Into this breathing world scarce half made up—
> And that so lamely and unfashionable
> That dogs bark at me as I halt by them. (I.i.19-23)

He also gives this as the reason why he cannot prove a lover, which, in turn, he gives as the reason for his decision to be a villain. In Herod's case, however, it is often thought that he did not become a cripple until later in life, as a result of his many battles and injuries.

In the plays, both Herod and Richard are paranoid rulers. Each king has heard a prophecy that someone will take the throne from him. For Herod, the Magi have arrived

and announced that they seek the Christ. They are following a star in the east because, as the 3rd King says,

> By prophecye well wotten wee
> that a child born should bee
> to rule the people of Judee,
> as was sayd many a yeare. (Lumiansky and Mills, Three Kings 221-224)
> By prophecy well wotten we
> That a child born should be
> To rule the people of Judee,
> As was said many a year. (Mills, Three Kings 221-224)

Herod's counselor confirms the prophecy, and Herod rants about being the true and rightful ruler of his kingdom. He then devises a plan to help secure his throne, historically known as the Slaughter of the Innocents. The historical Herod was also paranoid that one of his sons would have him killed in order to assume the throne; he had three of his sons put to death for these suspicions and had two others removed from his will (Bromiley 693). Richard's son, however, died before Richard took the throne, so there was no danger of his son usurping.

Richard's prophecy occurs in Act IV, scene iv, when Richard feels that he has lost Buckingham's support, and he has hired Tyrrell to kill the princes in the tower. Amid his uncertainty of reign and his desire to eliminate every possible heir, Richard remembers a prophecy,

> I do remember me, Henry the Sixth
> Did prophesy that Richmond should be king,

When Richmond was a little peevish boy.

A king...perhaps...perhaps. (IV.ii.98-101)[6]

He did not remember it earlier, but as he moves down the list of those with a claim to the crown he suddenly remembers Richmond. It seems a bit like paranoia, for we have just seen the king hire a thug to kill two children because he felt insecure about his reign. Richard next says, "How chance the prophet could not at that time / Have told me, I being by, that I should kill him?" (IV.ii.102-103). This is the position that Herod is in when the Magi arrive. They have told him and his counselor has confirmed that the Christ has been born and will be king. Herod's reaction to the news is distressing He tells the Magi that it is impossible, but he then wishes them luck on their journey. As they leave, he reveals his plan. Though he is angry that these kings are going to find this infant king, and he would have preferred to kill them before they left, he has a different plan,

For I shall knowe nowe which is hee
when the commen agayne.
Then will they tell mee in what contrey
that this boye then borne is hee;
then shalbe taken both they and hee,
and that will make mee fayne. (Lumiansky and Mills, Three Kings 392-97)

For I shall know now which is he
When they comen again.

[6] Colley also notes that both Herod and Richard have heard prophesies about who will be the next king (454).

Then will they tell me in what country

That this boy then born is he;

Then shall be taken both they and he

And that will make me fain. (Mills, Three Kings 592-97)

Herod has the benefit of nearly limitless power and believes that when the Magi return they will tell him where the child is. He will then be able to find and kill Jesus and will kill the Magi. He believes this plan will solve his problem; he is unwilling to take a chance and see if the prophecy is wrong.

When the Magi do not return to Herod, he decides to take drastic measures. Because he does not know who or where the Christ child is, he makes the decision to kill all boys under the age of two in Bethlehem. In the Towneley play, Herod the Great, he orders three knights, who seem eager to please, to kill the infants. The Chester play, The Massacre of the Innocents, shows Herod ordering two reluctant knights to perform the same duty. The Towneley cycle knights were promised wealth for their deeds, while the Chester cycle knights were convinced to execute the same orders by Herod's persuasive explanation alone.

Richard is also guilty of ordering the murder of innocents. Clarence claims innocence when his murderers appear in his cell. He says, "Are you drawn forth among a world of men / To slay the innocent? What is my offense?" (I.iv.169-70). However, the audience has just heard of Clarence's dream and his admissions of guilt. Clarence is not an innocent. The only true innocents in the play are the princes, the sons of Edward IV. Richard hires Tyrrell to kill the young nobles, and Tyrrell hires two others to commit the crime. After it has been accomplished, Tyrrell says, "The tyrannous and bloody act is

done-- / The most arch deed of piteous massacre / That ever yet this land was guilty of" (IV.iii.1-3). Even the foul Tyrrell admits that the crime was abominable.

The Massacre of the Innocents from the Chester cycle shows a remorseful Herod, but only because his son was killed in the slaughter. He questions why his son was among the children killed. He notes his son's rich clothing and jewelry and says,

> They might well knowe by this daye
> he was a kinges sonne.
> What the divell is this to say?
> Whye weare thy wyttes soe farre awaye?
> Could thow not speake? Could thou not praye
> and say yt was my sonne? (Lumiansky and Mills, Innocents 411-16)
>
> They might well know by this day
> He was a king's son.
> What the Devil is this to say?
> Why were thy wits so far away?
> Could thou not speak? Could thou not pray,
> And say it was my son? (Mills, Innocents 411-16)

Herod blames his son's nurse and the knights for his son's death, but later he blames himself. Hey says, "I have donne so much woo / and never good syth I might goo" (Lumiansky and Mills, Innocents 426-27) ("I have done so much woe / And never good sith I might go"; Mills, Innocents 425-26). He then indicates that he knows he will go to hell, for "my soule to be with Sathanas" (Lumiansky and Mills, Innocents 431) ("my soul to be with Satanas"; Mills, Innocents 430).

Others also lay blame on Herod and mourn their lost children. The mothers in the Herod plays bemoan the deaths of their children. The 2nd Woman in the Chester cycle Massacre of the Innocents says, "My love, my lord my life, my leife, / did never man or woman grieffe / to suffer such torment!" (Lumiansky and Mills, Innocents 330-332) ("My love, my lord, my life, my lief, / did never man or woman grief / to suffer such torment!"; Mills, Innocents 330-32). The noblewomen in Richard III have similar reactions to the deaths of the young princes. Act IV, scene iv, of Richard III shows the mourning Queen Elizabeth and Duchess of York entangled in a competition of grief with Queen Margaret. Queen Elizabeth exclaims, "Ah who hath any cause to mourn but we?" (IV.iv.34). Each of these mourning women believes her grief to be unique to her and very few others.

Another wailing mother is 2nd Woman from the Towneley cycle Herod the Great, who says,

> My luf, my blood, my play, that neuer dyd man grefe!
> Alas, alas, this day! I wold my hart shuld clefe
> In sonder
> Veniance I cry and call
> On Herode and his knyghtys all:
> Veniance, Lord apon thaym fall,
> And mekyll warldys wonder! (Cawley, Wakefield, Herodes 363-69)
> My love, my blood, my play, that never did man grief!
> Alas, alas, this day! I would my heart should cleave
> In sunder!

Vengeance I cry and call

On Herod and his knights all.

Vengeance, Lord upon them fall,

And mickle world's wonder! (Brown, Herod 363-69)

Like this woman, the Duchess of York, Richard's mother, knows whom to blame for the deaths of her grandchildren. But she does not cry out and curse an unknown, faceless king who she has likely never met; it is her son, the king, who is the offender. As King Richard approaches her at the palace she identifies herself as, "O, she that might have intercepted thee, / By strangling thee in her accursed womb, / From all the slaughters, wretch, that thou hast done" (IV.iv.137-39). Rather than cry for vengeance, she wishes that Richard had died in her womb. She is not content to simply inform Richard that she is disappointed that he lived to his adulthood; she offers a curse as well, which serves to be an accurate prophecy of Richard's death. She says,

My prayers on the adverse party fight,

And there the little souls of Edward's children

Whisper the spirits of thine enemies,

And promise them success and victory.

Bloody thou art, bloody will be thy end;

Shame serves thy life, and doth thy death attend. (IV.iv.191-196)

Not only is the curse a terrible thing for a mother to utter, but worse, it is exactly what happens. Ghosts of those whom he killed whisper to him and his enemy, and they promise his enemy victory.

Another grieving mother is the 3rd Woman from Herod the Great, who exclaims,

I cry and I rore,

Out on the, mans mordere!

Alas, my bab, myn innocent, my fleshly get! For sorow

That God me derly sent, of bales who may me borow?

Thy body is all to-rent! I cry, both euen and morow. (Cawley, Wakefield, Herodes 386-90)

I cry and I roar,

Out on thee, Man-murderer!

Alas, my babe, my innocent, child of my flesh! For sorrow

That God has dearly sent, what pain may I ever borrow?

Thy body to pieces is all rent! I cry both eve and morrow. (Brown, Herod 386-90)

Likewise, Queen Elizabeth expresses her anguish at her sons' deaths and talks to their spirits. "Ah, my poor princes! Ah, my tender babes! / [...] / Hover about me with your airy wings / And hear your mother's lamentation" (IV.iv.9, 13-14). These mothers cry out in anguish and try to find comfort in their attempts to speak with the dead.

There is another scene of lamentation in the miracle plays. James Royster compares the previously mentioned Act IV, scene iv of Richard III to "the *planctus* of the three Marys before the tomb of Christ in the 'Resurrection' of the cycle plays" (173). In much the same way that has been described above, the three Marys, Mary Magdalene, Mary Salome, and Mary Jacobi, mourn and wail over the death of Jesus. Each woman has a lyric stanza or two to express her sadness and to question why he had to die. The similarities are readily apparent, as the three mourning women in Richard III are doing

the same thing. Queen Margaret, Queen Elizabeth, and the Duchess of York are all bemoaning the deaths of husbands and sons and questioning why they needed to die.

The cycle plays of the Middle Ages used biblical events to educate an audience about biblical content and correct ways of living. The writers of these plays used the Bible as a primary source. Though the plays had been outlawed by the time Shakespeare reached maturity, he certainly knew of them. There are many similarities between some of the individual cycle plays and Richard III, including Cain's jealousy of his brother's fire and Richard's jealousy of his brother's crown or Herod's slaughter of the innocents and Richard's murder of the innocent princes. Shakespeare also used the technique of the miracle play writers. He understood that history could be dramatized, and he further advanced the idea. The skill he developed with this technique served him well, as we will see in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: The Chronicles and Richard III

The Morality Drama and History

"To understand the history play we must recognize first that it is a highly didactic vehicle, and secondly that it is not a unique and independent phenomenon; it is deeply rooted in English stage tradition extending back to Medieval times" (Ribner 21). The morality and miracle plays of medieval times were dramas that sought to teach lessons to their audiences. Whether one was watching a professional troupe perform The Castle of Perseverance or a guild's production of Cain and Abel, the audience was aware that there was good conduct and bad conduct on the stage, and bad conduct would certainly be punished. Popular entertainment was designed to enrich the soul and instruct about virtues and vices. The histories of the Renaissance also sought to instruct. Ribner continues, "The history play developed naturally out of the Medieval morality, for in the morality was a structure ideally suited to the didactic functions of Renaissance history" (Ribner 22). History was used, and reused, in a way that presented the past very subjectively. Renaissance history was not as concerned with historical accuracy as it was with teaching a lesson. Histories were nationalistic and sought to use past events as tools for teaching correct political conduct.

For over 100 years there have been books about how and where Shakespeare's history plays coincide with the chronicles that were available in his time. It is well known that Shakespeare's information was not original and that his sources held detailed accounts of historical rulers and events. His indebtedness for Richard III is directly traced to Edward Hall's The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancaster and York, originally published in 1548, and Raphael Holinshed's Chronicles of England,

Scotland, and Ireland, first published in 1577.[7] Each of these men is directly indebted to the English version of Sir Thomas More's The History of King Richard the Third for his material for the years 1483-1485.

Thomas More wrote his account of Richard III in both Latin and English between 1510 and 1520, in nearly identical texts except for the ending point of each text.[8] Richard III's rise to the throne is documented in detail and with great flourish; however, the history was left unfinished. The Latin version ends with Richard's coronation, while the English text continues to the murder of the princes in the tower and the betrayal of Buckingham, at which point it abruptly ends.

Elizabeth Donno says that the critics in the last fifty years who admire More's History, "pin their interpretation to its representing a stage in English historiography when moral and didactic motives outweighed any pretence to objectivity" (408).[9] In the era of the morality and miracle plays, the way to impart moral knowledge was with didacticism. Perhaps it was automatic for More to write in this fashion because he would have been surrounded by it from church sermons and the theater. Whether it was

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[7] Joseph Satin notes that Holinshed is the general source for all of Shakespeare's histories. He writes, "For his history of Richard III, Holinshed varied his usual practice of adapting from several sources and instead copied almost verbatim from two successive sources. The English version of Sir Thomas More's History of King Richard III, 1513, provided all of his material up to Richard's coronation; the coronation was adapted from the histories of Edward Hall and Richard Grafton; then More's unfinished manuscript was used up to the falling out between Richard and Buckingham; after that Holinshed relied mainly on Hall, who in turn had taken the remainder of Richard's history from the Historia Anglica of Polydore Virgil, 1534" (2).

[8] More's History is thought to have been written between 1510-1520, but it may have been continued into the 1520s. The 1557 edition of More's works, published by his nephew, William Rastell, dates the work at 1513. However, it is believed that several passages could not have been written prior to 1513 and that Rastell's date is only an approximation (More xxii).

[9] Because scholars have shown the inaccuracies and exaggerations in More's work, it does not hold to modern standards of history. However, this paper is concerned with Shakespeare's sources, which include More's History. Though modern scholars question its truth and offer other, non-damning evidence in favor of Richard III, in Early Modern England, the chronicles of Hall and Holinshed were two of the best histories of the country (and both included More's work). Therefore, for the purposes of this paper, More's History is considered to be authentic history.

automatic or not, More wanted his History to contain a moral. He creates a portrait of Richard as a villain and tyrant who is introduced early, and More shows how bad he is. Richard possesses the qualities of the devil and vice of the stage, and he is easy to recognize as such in the History. Characters other than Richard are also depicted by More. Donno writes, "In developing his individual portraits, More skillfully emphasizes the physical and mental attributes of his characters that conform with his projection of their moral qualities" (426). More made judgments about those whom he wrote and wrote those moral judgments into their characters in his History. The character foundations that Shakespeare seemingly created are actually the foundations that More created.

Arthur Kincaid, in "The Dramatic Structure of Sir Thomas More's History of King Richard III, notes, "The History is similar to a morality play, using an *exemplum* to show how the violation of natural order, particularly on the part of a monarch, whose function should be to uphold and protect order, brings consternation and woe upon the land, and God's punishment on the offender" (231). The story of Richard III is an ideal choice to transform into a play in Early Modern England. Morality plays had not yet outlived their usefulness, but they needed a new method of construction. And since the Vice was still a popular character in stage presentations it was important to include him prominently. The era of Richard III's reign contains the requisite material; he is an evil monarch whose depravity helps him to attain the throne and is punished at the end for his wickedness.

Shakespeare uses More, but he is able to take his characters farther than More because of his medium. He is able to do this with a "dramatist's freedom, making

explicit much of the moral weakness of his *dramatis personae* that More, because of his vituperative emphasis, muffles or suppresses" (Donno 443). Shakespeare can create extremes in character and behavior based on how he wants the play to proceed. This is more apparent in Shakespeare's other history plays because in them he followed the chroniclers less closely and did more of his own creating.[10]

Another way in which More and Shakespeare share the same dramatic technique is in the use of asides. Kincaid writes, "[Thomas] More occasionally assumed the customary habit of the morality actor in stepping downstage to the audience to comment on the characters and action, and to state moral messages, in order to be sure that the instructions which the drama conveys are kept constantly in mind" (235). Kincaid notes More's speech about Hastings as an example. More delivers a brief eulogy about Hastings' downfall in order to teach a moral. He writes, "O good god, the blindness of our mortall nature, when he most feared, he was in good suerty; when he rekened him self surest, he lost his life, & that w'in two howres after" (More, Complete Works 52) ("O good God, the blindness of our mortal nature! When he most feared, he was in good surety; when he reckoned himself surest, he lost his life, and that within two hours after"; More, History 61). Shakespeare also employs this technique. His characters' moral revelations come when they are on stage alone or with a minor character. Two of these characters are Hastings and Buckingham. They each express a level of remorse that can be seen as a moral revelation. Before being led to their deaths they realize their mistakes and lament their fates. As he is being led away, Hastings says,

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[10] Satin writes, "Acts II-V trace the events of 1483-1485 in detail and closely follow historical chronology. Shakespeare includes almost everything from Holinshed's account of those years—trifles, gossip, rumors, orations, even jingles. In his later plays he will use Holinshed more selectively and deviate more freely from Chronology, but here he relies so minutely on his central source that Holinshed becomes a kind of program needed to follow the play" (1).

> Woe, woe for England! Not a whit for me,
>
> For I, too fond, might have prevented this.
>
> [.....]
>
> O Margaret, Margaret! Now thy heavy curse
>
> Is lighted on poor Hastings' wretched head. (III.iv.80-81, 92-93)

Just as More tells us of Hastings' downfall, Shakespeare's most notable defeated nobles tell the audience of their own downfalls.

Literature, not History

Arthur Kincaid has noted that More's History of King Richard the Third is written in a dramatic fashion, rather than a dry historical manner:

> More uses characterization, dialogue, oration and action to bring the narrative into dramatic focus for the reader-audience, and like an actor in a morality play, he addresses them sometimes directly, guiding their response by stressing moral points and using an ironic tone first playful then increasingly bitter as Richard's actions become more criminal. (Kincaid 223)

In this way, More writes in a literary fashion rather than as a historian. Some question the validity of More's work as a work of history but will still credit it as a brilliant literary text.

E.E. Reynolds also discusses More's literary qualities, writing, "The narrative moves easily but an occasional unevenness comes when a long involved sentence is used in explaining policy or the significance of events. It soon becomes clear that More is happiest when he is recording action or writing dialogue, when, that is, he is writing

dramatically" (qtd. in Kincaid 225). Shakespeare has a definite advantage in his choice of genres. Long sentences explaining policies and events are scarce, and dialogue abounds. But it seems true that More's manner of retelling events lends itself better to dramatic writing than history because of the freedom allowed in dramatic writing.

The most compelling argument for treating More's History as literature rather than history comes from A.F. Pollard. His four reasons are: "the introduction of *dramatis personae* in the opening pages; numerous speeches and dialogues; avoidance of dates and constitutional and social details; the development of Richard as a villain figure" (qtd. in Kincaid 225). For a history book, More's work does contain an immense amount of dialogue, which he could not have witnessed. There is certainly a decided lack of dates in the text, which generally makes using another source imperative for verifying an accurate date in the account. And More's account is not unbiased. He largely creates his villain figure just as dramatists do. There may be too much embellishment in More's text to make it a true historical account. Fortunately, even if the work is considered a work of literature rather than history, it is still a magnificent example of early modern writing and one of the few secular examples of Sir Thomas More's writing.[11]

Striking Similarities to Chronicles

Because Hall and Holinshed often follow More's report to the letter, it is More's account that will be used for the years 1483-1485. Because More is the original source, his is the primary text. It is interesting to see the extent to which Shakespeare borrowed

[11] George Logan writes that from 1521 (the year More was knighted) on, More's time was "largely or entirely given over to the production of religious works, especially a series of anti-Lutheran treatises in which he was involved both as Henry VIII's editor and collaborator and, partly at Henry's instigation, as the author of several [anti-Lutheran] works of his own" (xl).

from More. Though Shakespeare is undoubtedly a literary genius, it is astonishing how heavily Shakespeare relied on More's work.

Close readings of both More and Shakespeare reveal similarities that could not be ascribed to a general borrowing of ideas. Literary features that seem likely to be from the mind of Shakespeare are clearly shown to be from the mind of Thomas More. The first and most striking of these instances upon reading More's text refers to "sanctuary children." After the queen's sons and brothers are arrested, she takes the new king's brother, the Duke of York, to sanctuary because she realizes that they are in danger. Richard desires custody of both boys, King Edward V and young Richard, Duke of York, but he and Buckingham must convince the archbishop of York to retrieve the young duke from sanctuary and his mother. Near the end of his lengthy oratory, Buckingham persuades the archbishop. He says,

> And verelye I haue often heard of saintuarye menne. But I neuer heard erste of saintuarye chyldren. And therefore as for the conclusion of my minde, who so maie haue deserued to neede it, yf thei thinke it for theyr suretye, lette them kepe it. But he canne bee no saintuarye manne, that neither hath wisedom to desire it, nor malice to deserue it, whose lyfe or libertye can by no lawfull processe stande in ieopardie. And he that taketh one oute of saintuary to dooe hym good, I saye plainely that he breaketh no saintuary. (More, Complete Works 33)
>
> And verily I have often heard of sanctuary men. But I never heard erst of sanctuary children. And therefore, as for the conclusion of my mind, whoso may have deserved to need it, if they think it for their surety, let

> them keep it. But he can be no sanctuary man that neither hath wisdom to desire it nor malice to deserve it, whose life or liberty can by no lawful process stand in jeopardy. And he that taketh one out of sanctuary to do him good, I say plainly that he breaketh no sanctuary. [12] (More, History 38)

Likewise, Shakespeare's Buckingham must convince the cardinal to retrieve the child so he can, supposedly, be the king's playfellow. He argues,

> You break not sanctuary in seizing him.
> The benefit thereof is always granted
> To those whose dealings have deserved the place,
> And those who have the wit to claim the place.
> This prince hath neither claimed it nor deserved it,
> And therefore, in my mind, he cannot have it.
> Then taking him from thence that 'longs not there,
> You break thereby no privilege nor charter.
> Oft have I heard of 'sanctuary men',
> But 'sanctuary children' ne'er till now. (III.i.47-56)

The similarities are more than coincidence. Some of the phrasing is nearly exact. Though Shakespeare moderately rearranged the structure and placed the speech in blank verse, More's handiwork is apparent.

More's work is also apparent in Shakespeare's account of Lord Stanley's dream. Shakespeare frequently uses dreams as dramatic devices, but in this case the dream was

[12] See Hall (254-44) and Holinshed (373).

not originally introduced by Shakespeare. More writes that Lord Stanley sent a messenger to Lord Hastings to ask him to ride away with him because,

> He was disposed vtterly no lenger to bide: he had so fereful a dreme, in which him thoughte that a bore [Richard's emblem] with his tuskes so raced them both bi the heddes, that the blood ranne aboute both their shoulders...[he] had his horse redy, if y^{e} lord Hastinges wold go w^{t} him to ride so far yet y^{e} same night, that thei shold be out of danger ere dai. (More, Complete Works 49-50)
>
> He was disposed utterly no longer to bide; he had so fearful a dream, in which him thought that a boar [Richard's emblem] with his tusks so razed them both by the heads that the blood ran about both shoulders...[he] had his horse ready, if the Lord Hasting would go with him, to ride so far yet the same night that they should be out of danger ere day. [13] (More, History 57)

In Richard III, the messenger who arrives at Hastings' house at four in the morning says,

> Then certifies your lordship that this night
> He dreamt the boar had razed off his helm.
> .....
> Therefore he sends to know your lordship's pleasure,
> If you will presently take horse with him,
> And with all speed post with him toward the north
> To shun the danger that his soul divines. (III.ii.7-8, 12-15)

[13] See Hall (360) and Holinshed (381).

The substance of the passages is the same, along with the order of it and some phrasing. However, the dream is not the creatively developed foreshadowing that Shakespeare had used in previous plays and in many that follow. Thomas More places the episode directly after the account of Hastings being accused of traitorous activities. Chronologically (and dramatically), Shakespeare's ordering of events makes more sense: he presents it in the order it would have really happened. Stanley has a prophetic dream and a few hours later the prophecy is proven to be true.

One might expect that the scene involving Hastings being accused of treason was embellished, so farfetched does it seem in Shakespeare's play. However, from the beginning of Act III, scene iv, Shakespeare follows More remarkably closely, beginning with Richard's showing up late to the council meeting and then his asking the Bishop of Ely for strawberries from his garden at Holborn (More, Complete Works 47; More, History 54).[14] In More, Richard re-enters the council meeting and asks what the punishment for conspiring against him should be. More writes, "Then the lord chamberlen [Hastings], as he y^{t} for the loue betwene them thoughte he might be boldest w^{t} him, aunswered and sayd, y^{t} thei wer worthye to bee punished as heighnous traitors whatsoeuer they were" (More, Complete Works 47) ("Then the lord chamberlain [Hastings], as he that for the love between them thought he might be boldest with him, answered and said that they were worth to be punished as heinous traitors, whatsoever they were"; More, History 55).

In Shakespeare's text, after Richard has left and re-entered the meeting room Hastings says,

> The tender love I bear your grace, my lord,

[14] See Hall (359) and Holinshed (380) for the account.

Makes me most forward in this princely presence

To doom th'offenders, whatsoe'er they be.

I say, my lord, they have deserved death. (III.iv.63-66)

The substance of each is the same: Hastings feels confident in answering that a strong punishment is in order. He has, of course, fallen into the trap laid by Richard. Shakespeare's Richard casts further blame on Queen Elizabeth and Edward IV's mistress, "that harlot, strumpet Shore, / That by their witchcraft thus have marked me" (III.iv.71-72). He then reveals their crime; he says, "behold mine arm / Is like a blasted sapling withered up" (III.iv.68-69). More's influence is visible. More's Richard says, "Ye shal al se in what wise that sorceres and that other witch of her counsel shoris wife w^{t} their affynite, haue by their sorcery & witchcraft wasted my body. And therw^{t} he plucked vp hys doublet sleue to his elbow vpon his left arme, where he shewed a werish withered arme and small, as it was neuer other" (Complete Works 48) ("'Ye shall all see in what wise that sorceress and that other witch of her counsel, Shore's wife, with their affinity, have by their sorcery and witchcraft wasted my body.' And therewith he plucked up his doublet sleeve to his elbow upon his left arm, where he showed a wearish, withered arm and small (as it was never other)"; History 55).[15] More reveals here and later that no one in the room believed the accusation of treason, for everyone knew that Richard's arm had been like that since birth. The assembled men also knew that the two women would never have conspired together; it was well known that Queen Elizabeth hated Mrs. Shore because she was Edward's mistress (More, Complete Works 48; More, History 56).

Additionally, like Herod Antipas, Herod the Great's son who demanded the head of John the Baptist, Richard demands to see Hastings' head. In More, Richard says, "for

[15] See Hall (360) and Holinshed (381).

by saynt Poule (quod he) I wil not to dinner til I se thy hed of" (Complete Works 49) ("'for by Saint Paul,' quod he, 'I will not to dinner till I see thy head off'"; History 57). In Shakespeare, Richard says, "Off with his head. Now by Saint Paul I swear, / I will not dine until I see the same" (III.iv.76-77). This is another example of something that seems to be Shakespeare's creativity, but the source is clearly Thomas More.

Another instance of Shakespeare closely following More's History is when Buckingham speaks to the people about Richard's claim to the throne. Buckingham attempts to sway the crowd with stories of illegitimacy, of both Edward IV and Edward V, and of Richard's piety. When the assembled crowd fails to respond to the tales, Buckingham repeats them. Again there is no response. In Shakespeare's work, Buckingham is retelling the story to an anxious Richard. Buckingham says, "[I] asked the Mayor, what meant this willful silence? / His answer was, the people were not used/ To be spoke to but by the Recorder" (III.vii.28-30). This seems like an extraneous detail that simply heightens the suspense in the waiting Richard. It seems likely that Shakespeare added it because it is so absurd; it certainly doesn't seem like a historical detail. Yet More relates, "When the Mayer saw thys he wyth other pertiners of that counsayle, drew aboute the duke and sayed that the people had not ben accustomed there to be spoken vnto but by the recorder, which is the mouth of the citie, and happely to him they will aunswere" (Complete Works 75) ("When the mayor saw this, he with other partners of that counsel drew about the duke and said that the people had not been accustomed there to be spoken unto but by the recorder, which is the mouth of the city, and haply to him they will answer"; History 88).[16]

[16] See Hall (372) and Holinshed (394).

In some cases, the similarities between Shakespeare's work and Thomas More's are astounding, by the use of certain events, the manner in which they are used and often in the wording of the dialogue. Sometimes Shakespeare used relatively inconsequential events that were related by More in order to fill out the story more completely. These striking similarities confirm Shakespeare's indebtedness to More's work.

Distinct Differences

In "Thomas More, the Tudor Chroniclers, and Shakespeare's Altered Richard," Joseph Candido writes that, though Shakespeare was strongly influenced by other sources for Richard III, he certainly did not follow them blindly. Rather, he suggests that "the strange literary alchemy that mixed More with Hall presented to Shakespeare not only a source for his play but also a perfectly workable moral and dramatic shape for the fortunes of its most compelling character" (Candido 141). Shakespeare certainly did use his creative license in the writing of the play; chronology is often rearranged and certain scenes are added.[17] Each of the chronicles contains a great deal of information; not all of it could be used and not all of it was dramatic enough for Shakespeare to use. Kenneth Muir believes, "With Richard III Shakespeare had to construct his own plot, selecting some historical events and rejecting others for dramatic effect, and emphasizing the pattern by continual reminders of the past and ironical foreshadowings of the future" (37). He had to choose the events that would make the most compelling drama and elaborate when necessary.

Shakespeare's use of his creative, dramatic license is often found in the timeline. A.P. Rossiter notes, "Shakespeare rearranged the chronology of events to bring out their

[17] The time covered in Shakespeare is 1471 to 1485. Only Act I deals with anything prior to 1483, and "its two chief scenes, Richard's wooing of Anne and the curse of Margaret, are not in Holinshed [or Hall or More] and seem to be Shakespeare's own invention" (Satin 2).

moral pattern" (qtd. in Turner 243). In order for the moral pattern to develop more dramatically Shakespeare kept Buckingham in the play much longer than he actually survived. The Duke of Buckingham was executed on November 2, 1483, yet Shakespeare has Buckingham die the day before the battle at Bosworth Field, which actually took place August 22, 1485. Buckingham's death in Shakespeare's Richard III is November 2, 1485, All Soul's Day. Shakespeare keeps the day of Buckingham's death the same and changes the year; he alters the month and day of the Bosworth Field battle in order to suit a purpose. All Soul's Day is a brilliant choice of days for the eve of the battle. It is during this night that Richard and Richmond have their dreams about the ghosts of those whom Richard murdered. There is no better day for a ghostly visit than All Soul's Day.

Another change in the timeline is that Shakespeare uses old Queen Margaret as a thorn in the Yorks' side. However, Margaret had long been banished from England and did not return during this period. She died on August 25, 1482 in Anjou. She was not even alive for most of the scenes in which Shakespeare includes her. She is an important character in the play, though. She matches wits with Richard as no one else can. She is created as a verbal rival for Richard. Donno says,

> To Richard's reliance on verbal skills to achieve his ends, Shakespeare adds echo, recapitulation, and prophecy, thus intensifying the concern with language that runs throughout the play. But such concern is evidenced most sharply by his giving the central character an antagonist [Margaret], introduced in defiance of chronology, who is nearly his equal. (444)

Another of Margaret's functions is to recall the past. She is the last of the wronged Lancastrian monarchy, and part of her function is to explain that Richard is guilty of more sins than we witness in the play that bears his name. He started committing wrongs in Henry VI, Part III. However, we are also informed that Margaret is no innocent. As much as she blames the Yorks for her misfortunes, "she is shown to be quite as blood-guilty as anyone there" (Jones 203). Jones continues, "she also wields an authority which, in the history plays, is given only to those who have been finally defeated and are unquestionably out of the running" (Jones 203). She poses no real danger to the Yorkist throne, but those she curses are left unsettled. Her most unsettling curse is clearly meant for Richard, but he substitutes her name at the end of the curse. Jones says, "Since both are guilty, both are cursed. But in her clamour for what she sees as justice she has appealed to a supernatural order ('O God that seest it, do not suffer it...!'), and for the first time in the play Richard has met a will as immovable as his own" (Jones 203). Margaret has a role in this play because Richard needs an opponent, and Richmond does not appear until Act V. She is able to battle him with words until it is time for Richmond to battle him with a sword.

It is with these additions that Shakespeare creates a cohesive whole, a play that can stand alone. Shakespeare's additions to the history that he found in the chronicles of Hall and Holinshed help to create a story rather than recount history. The changes in the timeline make the story Shakespeare's own and help him accomplish his own purpose: to entertain an audience.

Clarifications Offered by More's Text

Because of the constraints of performance times Shakespeare had to choose and exclude many events that the chroniclers record. There are several episodes in Shakespeare's work that can be better understood with the help of More's text. For instance, Shakespeare decided not to mention that Buckingham had a legal claim to the earldom of Hereford. According to More, the duke requested it from Richard as a condition of helping him attain the crown. Richard also offered Buckingham "a great quantite of the kinges tresure & of his howsehold stuffe" (More, Complete Works 44) ("a great quantity of the king's treasure and of his household stuff"; More, History 50) or "all the movables / Whereof the King my brother was possessed" (III.ii.192-3). According to More, the gift of the earldom was not actually Richard's idea, nor was it truly a gift since Buckingham had a claim to it. Shakespeare indicates that Buckingham was not rewarded with the earldom or the movables because he was unsupportive of Richard's decision to execute the princes; thus Richard was "not in the giving vein" (IV.iii.119). However, according to More, Richard denied the request of the earldom because it was "somewhat enterlaced with the title to the crowne by y^{e} line of king Henry [VI] before depriued: y^{e} protector conceiued such indignacion, y^{t} he reiected ye dukes request w^{t} many spiteful & minatory wordes" (Complete Works 89) ("somewhat interlaced with the title to the crown by the line of King Henry [VI] before deprived, the protector conceived such indignation that he rejected the duke's request with many spiteful and minatory words"; History 104). In each of these cases, though, Buckingham quickly leaves Richard's service, afraid for his life.

The difference in these two versions of the events is noteworthy. In More's account, Buckingham requests that the king repay his loyalty with an earldom that was already partly his. For Richard not to honor the request after agreeing to it shows a mistrust of or a displeasure with Buckingham. Shakespeare's account makes the earldom a total gift, as it was unrequested and unclaimed by Buckingham. The fact that Richard is not disposed to give what he had promised shows the arbitrariness of the gift and of the giver. The offering of the earldom and the arbitrary taking away of it makes for a more dramatic story because it shows the audience much more about the giver—he cannot be trusted to make good on his promises.

More's work provides explanation in another instance, as well. At the beginning of Act III, scene v, Richard and Buckingham enter the scene in "rotten armour, marvellous ill-favored." Richard asks Buckingham, "Come, cousin, canst thou quake and change thy colour?" (III.v.1). Buckingham assures Richard that he is an accomplished actor. But these are only clues as to what the two are planning. Thomas More lends invaluable clarification. After Hastings is executed,

> The protector immediatelye after diner, entending to set some colour vpon y^{e} matter, sent in al y^{e} hast for many substauncial men out of the city into the Tower. And at their coming, himself w^{t} the Duke of Buckingham, stode harnesed in old il faring briginders, such as no man shold wene y^{t} thei wold vouchsafe to haue put vpon their backes, except that some sodaine necessitie had constrained them...[for] sodain fere draue them to put on for ther defence such harneis as came next to hande. (More, Complete Works 52-53).

> The protector immediately after dinner, intending to set some color upon the matter, sent in all the haste for many substantial men out of the city into the Tower. And at their coming, himself, with the duke of Buckingham, stood harnessed in old ill-faring briganders, such as no man should ween that they would vouchsafe to have put upon their backs that some sudden necessity had constrained them...[for] sudden fear drave them to put on for their defense such harness as came next to hand.[18] (More 61)

The explanation is that Richard, because of the traitorous activities of Hastings, is afraid for his life and has to attire himself in whatever armor he could find, even though it is old and dilapidated. Richard's cunning is remarkable and cleverly complete, down to his very wardrobe. The simple act of wearing old armor lends credence to the authenticity of his fear. The old armor suggests a hastiness in dressing that shows the fear that this powerful duke and Lord Protector must feel in order to induce him to wear armor so beneath his station.

More's work is like a handbook for the modern reader of Shakespeare's Richard III; several events are easily glossed over when reading or watching the play because they seem insignificant or inconsequential. However, upon further investigation we can see the larger purposes for these brief accounts, such as Buckingham's request for Hereford and Richard's plan to appear frightened for his life.

Shakespearean Character Development and Thomas More

Robert Turner opines that Richard III is far superior to Shakespeare's earlier history plays, the Henry VI trilogy. He notes that the characters in the Henry VI plays

[18] See Hall (362) and Holinshed (381).

seem flat, but that beginning with Richard III it is clear that Shakespeare has grown as a playwright (Turner 258). Characters have added dimensions that have been unseen until now. This is a fair assertion; however, it wasn't Shakespeare who invented the multidimensional characters for Richard III. The credit for the character creation belongs to Thomas More.

Kincaid says that More's Richard III is so well created with

> Such vividness, detail, complexity, and unity that it has remained with us, sharing the stage only with Milton's Satan, as the prime villain of literature. More, not Shakespeare, was the originator of this portrait, and although Shakespeare heightens it by adding lines and shading, most of his notable additions to More's portrait are at least inspired by More's implicit suggestions. (228)

One could argue that the Henry VI plays are lesser works because Shakespeare had lesser sources. In comparison with the chronicles written for Edward V and Richard III (the accounts that Hall and Holinshed based on More's work), the accounts of Henry VI seem lifeless and uninspired. In many ways the trilogy of plays involved more creativity from Shakespeare because he had less information from his sources. It was necessary for him to invent more: plot devices, characterizations, and timelines. Based on the evidence presented here, a case can be made that Richard III would not be the great work that it is without the influence of More's biography.

A Change in Tone

Although there were other early modern chroniclers besides Hall and Holinshed it has been shown that Shakespeare had access to and used Hall and Holinshed, and those

are the texts that remain integral to the study of Shakespeare's histories. Because More is the primary source for much of what Hall and Holinshed wrote on Richard III, his History is also essential.[19] Though More gave future chroniclers a magnificent source, they needed another source in order to complete the chronicle of Richard III's reign because More does not finish his account. Joseph Candido states that Hall was the first to incorporate More's work into his own. He says,

> Although Hall meticulously adheres to More's account of Richard's life until the point that the earlier history breaks off, he continues More's narrative with a decided change in emphasis and tone, no doubt the result of his heavy reliance here upon Polydore [Vergil], Richard Grafton's Continuation of Hardying's Chronicle at Large and his own ponderous didacticism. (Candido 140)

It is true that there is a drastic change in Hall's and Holinshed's chronicles at the point at which More's History ends and new sources begin. Not only does the tone of the work change (in both Hall and Holinshed), but the substance and character of Richard also changes. The new Richard is weaker and less sure of himself; he makes decisions and then changes his mind; he is anxious about his future. Candido says that Hall's Richard, "although still a moral and political monster, is a mere psychological and behavioral ghost of the inventive manipulator of 'Kynges games' found in More" (140).

Not only does Hall's account change in tone and structure when More's account ends, so also does Shakespeare's. When Hall becomes the storyteller, Shakespeare

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[19] Candido writes, "Both Hall and Holinshed, Shakespeare's unmistakable sources for Richard III, draw the earlier sections for their narratives, usually word for word, from More. But the later portions of their historical accounts, which treat the events *after* Buckingham's rebellion, are mainly attributable to Hall (whom Holinshed copies) with a strong influence from Polydore [Vergil]" (139).

follows the account much less closely and creates more of the story himself. Certain events from Hall do appear in Shakespeare, though. For example, in Hall and Shakespeare, Lord Stanley was required to leave his son George with Richard as collateral when Stanley returned home before the battle at Bosworth Field. There is also mention in Hall's account that the night before the battle, Richard had a bad dream, though he doesn't specify what the dream entailed. Shakespeare formed the contents of the dream, but Hall was the first to record that there was a dream.

Thomas More's History of King Richard the Third was written in order to teach a lesson, just as the histories of the time were designed to do. More's work, however, added a dramatic element to the chronicle of Richard III's reign. This dramatic element was integral to Shakespeare's development of his Tragedy of King Richard the Third. Many of the events and characters that Shakespeare used had already been conceived of and formulated by More. Though Shakespeare used the chronicles of Hall and Holinshed for his other English histories, Richard III is a superior work because of how Thomas More wrote his History.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

When beginning to write for the stage, Shakespeare had several dramatic influences. He knew that the popular dramas contained certain elements that both high and low born enjoyed. It would have been an artistic impulse to create works similar to those he had witnessed or heard about. He was able to build on the foundation that had been built by other dramatists and by Sir Thomas More. The morality genre offered a platform for the depiction of good versus evil in dramatic form. The allegorical characters gradually lost their places in the plays as characters with names and distinct personality traits took over the stage. However, the morality play's most notable contribution to Richard III was the Vice.

Richard III is still an experiment in creating a vice for Shakespeare. Only Titus Andronicus was written earlier and contains a Vice. Edmund from King Lear and Othello's Iago follow Richard's example. They are all evil tricksters, running a game for either their own amusement or benefit. Each reveals his plan so that the audience is let in on the wicked design; we know that everyone on stage is being duped. Greenblatt writes that in Shakespeare's Vice figures, he

> conjures up a particular kind of thrill he must have first had as a child watching the Vice in plays like The Cradle of Security and The Interlude of Youth: the thrill of fear interwoven with transgressive pleasure. The Vice, wickedness personified, is appropriately punished at the end of the play, but for much of the performance he manages to captivate the audience, and the imagination takes a perverse hold. (34)

To watch Richard in action is certainly a thrill. His methods are contemptible and his genius evil, but his intelligence and brilliant planning are hard not to admire. He is captivating, but he is villainous, and for this he is punished at the end.

Miracle plays show familiar stories dramatized for the stage. The stories maintain their biblical core (Cain and Abel both offered sacrifices to God; Abel's sacrifice contained his best tenth while Cain's was much poorer; Abel's sacrifice burned brighter than Cain's; Cain was jealous and he killed Abel; Cain was banished), but their writers used creative license by adding scenes, characters, and dialogue to make them more interesting to spectators. Miracle plays also feature wicked characters who are unrepentant and unredeemed, much like Shakespeare's Richard III. These are important models for Shakespeare because they show his frequent *modus operandi* for playwriting: adaptation.

There is an important link between history and the morality and miracle plays that should not be overlooked. Turner writes,

> In the 1580's the habits of writing morality plays were still influential, and the commitment to literal drama was somewhat less than total. As I see it, these characters were shaped both by conventions of the morality tradition and by demands of the literal historical events. (243)

Turner sees Renaissance history as something less than wholly accurate. But the need to portray past events for contemporary audiences for the purposes of teaching a lesson outweighed the desire to achieve historical accuracy. Renaissance audiences knew the stock characters and plots of the morality plays, so modifying them with historical information was the first step toward producing the history plays of Shakespeare's era.

For hundreds of years scholars have examined seemingly every aspect of Shakespeare's work and life. From speculation about his existence and authorship to volumes of books examining his poetic style, these books and articles seek to explain the mysteries behind the plays that remain. Further scholarship is important because new documents are still being discovered and new theories created. With each new discovery and theory our knowledge increases, and a fuller picture of Shakespeare's works is developed.

Richard III is a product of its time. The transformation from old dramas and old histories to a new type of drama is seen in the text of Richard III. Containing elements that reflect medieval thoughts and ideals, the play shows qualities of the old and the emerging drama. The emergence of changing thoughts and ideals marks the beginning of a new era in English history, of which Shakespeare is a defining part. These changing thoughts encouraged Shakespeare to experiment in his playwriting, but his experimenting also encouraged additional changes. Countless playwrights followed his lead, and drama in the English language is much richer for it.

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