RECUPERATING THE AURA OF KINGS: RE-MYSTIFICATION AND THE PUBLIC IN *RICHARD II*

CHANDLER M. SHAW

> I was a poor groom of thy stable, King,
> When thou wert king, who travelling towards York
> With much ado at length have gotten leave
> To look upon my sometimes royal master's face.
> O how it erned my heart when I beheld
> In London streets that coronation day
> When Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary,
> That horse that thou so often hast bestrid,
> That horse that I so carefully have dressed.
>
> —William Shakespeare, *Richard II*

If the Duke of York's speech on the newly crowned Henry Bolingbroke's coronation procession through London describes the fawning and "greedy" way the populace intakes their new monarch, the Groom's speech above presents a starkly dissimilar vision of this regime change (5.2, 13). Indeed, when considering the central plot of *Richard II*, this language of opposition comes most readily to mind. Words like "usurper," "tyrant," and "*coup*" are the obvious word choices used to describe the unnatural succession of kings within the first history of Shakespeare's second tetralogy, but they alone do not adequately realize the fragility of *Richard II*'s political ground. Rather than utilize only the polarized language custom to a change in authority, Shakespeare's play finds its strength in the less clarified emotions and actions within usurpation. The audience tends to sympathize with whoever falls short of power—which by the end of the play is, without a doubt, the dethroned Richard. However, rather than promote King Richard II's often cruel and indulgent divine monarchy or his usurper King Henry IV's equally cruel, but callous popular monarchy, Shakespeare consistently prevents the audience from sympathizing with the party in power—causing audience members to question the legitimacy of these powers. And in fact, neither of these rulers provides a monarchical ideal, but what proves most interesting to me is how Shakespeare uses the two men to dramatize, for public consumption, the deposition of a legitimate, sanctified ruler. In *Richard II,* I see Shakespeare's awareness of the flimsy nature of divine monarchy in the midst of the establishment of a new ruler. Phyllis Rackin states in the opening lines of her criticism on the audience of this particular play, "it is commonplace that Shakespeare presents in *Richard II* a conflict between two contrasting

worlds—the static, picturesque, ceremonial world of Richard's medieval court and the active, modern, practical world of Bolingbroke and his successors" (262). Many New Historicist and Cultural Materialist critics do view this dichotomy as a given[1]—and it might seem obvious to understand the usurpation of Richard's divine monarchy as a rejection of the medieval politics of Richard's rule for a secular, or at the least, a less traditionalist view of monarchy represented in Bolingbroke's seizure of power. But to argue against the obvious, this commonplace argument of *Richard II*'s plot tends to downplay the fact that the more Richard falls from power, the more sympathetic a character he becomes, and obsesses on a presumed "modernity" in Bolingbroke's increasingly questionable rise to power. However certain the demystification of monarchy may appear in the conclusion of Richard's tragedy, I argue Shakespeare re-mystifies the divinity of Richard's very blood, though this divinity seems to become an increasingly social construct by the play's end. I would like to explore the accomplishment of this re-mystification—for although neither Henry Bolingbroke nor Richard II is capable of establishing themselves as a divine ruler of their own accord, through their appeals to the common man, both within and outside the play, they find footholds of power. To allow the common people of England a degree of agency in the tragedy of *Richard II,* speaks to a larger concept of the nature of divine monarchs. Neither promoting the desire for power Bolingbroke represents, nor the deeply ingrained tyrannical and irresponsible behavior Richard represents, *Richard II* does not necessarily dramatize a shift in government from medieval to modern politics, but through a number of appeals to the public, redefines divine monarchy, for better or worse, as something more dependent upon gardeners and stable boys than gods and angels.

Before I can discuss how Shakespeare redefines divine monarchy, I will establish what divine monarchy typically meant, both within the play and in Shakespeare's England. We know Shakespeare attributed a firm belief in divine right to his titular character, as he has Richard claim:

> Not all the water in the rough rude sea
> Can wash the balm off from an anointed king.
> The breath of worldly men cannot depose

[1] For example, Mark Bayer discusses Bolingbroke's "secular ethos" that replaces highly Richard's "symbolic, divinely-instituted order reliant upon religious doctrine" (130). Charles Forker quotes Benedict Nightingale from Malcolm Page's 1987 piece; "the total effect of [*Richard II*] was of watching 'the Middle Ages wane before our eyes' to be replaced by "Expediency and pragmatism'" (106). Jean E. Howard also discusses in her "Kings and Pretenders" chapter of the 'demystification' that occurs from the rule of Richard II to Henry IV: "Certainly the shift marks the modernity of the second tetralogy" (151).

> The deputy elected by the Lord;
> For every man that Bolingbroke hath pressed
> To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown,
> God for his Richard in heavenly pay
> A glorious angel. Then if angels fight,
> Weak men must fall, for heaven still guards the right.
> (3.2, 54-62)

Shakespeare would have Richard argue for himself that God protects the "right" or the divine right of kings and to understand that divine rule lies beyond mortal reach and comprehension somewhere in the heavens. The common man may, as Henry Bolingbroke's father, John of Gaunt, argues earlier in Act I, "never lift / An angry arm against [God's] minister" because to do so is to raise his arm against God himself (1.2, 40-41). Then, by the grace of God, Shakespeare's Richard has a mystical invulnerability, his rule defended against worldly usurpers by an army of angels. The concept of divine right had not faded out of popularity by the time Shakespeare wrote *Richard II*, almost 200 years later during the final years of Queen Elizabeth I's reign. Deborah Shuger discusses the pervasiveness of the sacred kingship through the rule of Elizabeth I, and even more so when James I took the throne. She distinguishes between sacred rulers and divine right rulers:

> Sacred kingship lies at the core of high Christian royalism, distinguishing it from…what we think of as divine right absolutism. Modern historians...understand this latter position as the opposite of the view that power derives from the community, which can, for its own benefit, confer this power, with or without conditions, on an individual, who thereby becomes its ruler. (56)

In other words, divine right absolutism comes to power through a force beyond humanity (in the case of an English ruler, the Christian God), whereas, in a sense, citizens subject a sacred ruler to approval or disapproval. For Shuger, the possibility of a sacred ruler exists outside the concept of divine right absolutism as a separate entity. A divine right ruler does not require the blessing of his people, for as Shakespeare's Richard observes, God is the elector and protector of his right. If at the beginning of the play Shuger's concept of a divine right ruler suits Richard as he falls from power, so does his mode of governance. The divine aura of kings seems to disappear along with divine right absolutism, like Richard's. However, Shuger suggests that this aura survived well into the rule of Elizabeth I:

> It simply does not follow that the Elizabethans found sacral kingship absurd. Had they found it so, it could not have

> worked as flattery. No one currently flatters an American president (nor, I suspect, even the British Queen) in such terms. They were usable, whether for flattery or homage, only because sacral kingship remained a cultural ideal and possibility. (56)

She argues that because terms like "divine inspiration" or "sacred spirit" was usable when praising Queen Elizabeth I that a sacred ruler, one endowed with a divine aura or "sacred spirit," could exist outside the sanctified, yet corrupted autocracy Richard represents (56). In Elizabethan England, two centuries after Richard was overthrown, the divine rhetoric Shakespeare utilizes in Richard's speeches, like the one above, clearly had not disappeared. This rhetoric's ability to cycle in and out of popularity means that though Richard's particular divinity suffers under the weight of his usurpation, and Bolingbroke, the destroyer of the Richard's throne's divinity, struggles to establish himself as a divine ruler, Elizabeth could use divine rhetoric because the usurpation of Richard did not mark the descent of the monarchy's divine aura and did not destroy the concept of the sacred ruler in England.

Though this aura would seem to survive the historical fall of King Richard II within the context of *Richard II*, the initial demystification of Richard begins when despite the elevated, heavenly language he uses to defend his rule, no army of angels come to defend his right. Perhaps more significantly, no army of humans come to defend his right either as he claims soon after his speech about divine right, "the blood of twenty thousand men / did triumph in my face and they are fled; / And till so much blood thither come again / Have I not reason to look pale and dead?" (3.2, 76-79). Learning that all mortal troops, who once defended his divine right to rule, have left him defenseless, Richard grows pale—his absolute power weakened. When beautiful speech must culminate in action, Richard finds all human soldiers, who were moments earlier nothing in comparison with the angelic ones at his beck and call, have left him—the unfavorable, reckless ruler, who like a landlord rather than a king, has leased out royal lands—for the rebel Bolingbroke. The divine right of Richard means nothing without men to back it, and stripped of this, Richard speaks to his few supporters not as a king, not as God's chosen, but as a human being: "I live with bread like you, feel want, / taste grief, need friends. Subjected thus, / How can you say to me I am a king?" (3.2,176-178). Richard emphasizes his needs as a living, breathing human and a rather pitiful human at that. To compare this man with the same man who moments before bragged of his godly invulnerability is almost laughable; the mystic aura that should protect him from a rebel army dwindles to nothing with his loss of loyal citizens. Without the power of the physical, human armies (or even metaphysical, angelic ones, for that matter) Richard

aptly declares himself "subjected," both making a pun of his situation and his being made a subject to his subjects, namely Bolingbroke and his army of rebels.

Richard begins to discuss his subjection at this point of the play, but according to David Scott Kastan, the subjection of a ruler to his subjects begins with the depiction of the ruler upon a stage. Kastan discusses another way that subjecting royalty, like Richard II and even Elizabeth I, to their subjects weakens their authority through the representation on the Renaissance stage. He claims: "In setting English kings before an audience of commoners, the theater nourished the cultural conditions that eventually permitted the nation to bring its king to trial, not because the theater approvingly represented subversive acts, but rather because representation itself became subversive" (111). As Kastan observes, the subversive nature of representation grounded in the idea of the actions of the government acted on a stage allows an audience, who ordinarily would have little to no role in politics, to learn and judge for themselves how politics work. Therefore, not only is Richard subjected to those within the play, but also to those in the playhouse. Kastan argues the audience becomes a source of authority with the ability to judge and condemn rulers like Richard with the repercussion that they could then apply this power of judgment to the monarchs of their own time. In this sense, the demystification of Richard is not so much a tragedy as it is an inevitability since a portrayal of him to the audience in any degree would allow the audience to see, analyze, and pass judgment upon his actions. Conversely, this means Bolingbroke, once crowned Henry IV, is equally subjected to subjects, allowing the audience to take as much of a critical stance with him as they did with Richard.

While I agree with Kastan that portraying a figure of authority in the context of the contemporary theatre contributes to a demystified vision of divine monarchs, I disagree that this necessarily means that the representation of authority must be only subversive and destructive of the legitimacy and power of the monarchy. Let us consider this play in its moment, for instance. Kastan declares that Elizabeth "was always unusually sensitive to being subjected to her subject's representations…however obscure the text, Elizabeth was able to find evidence of a personal application" (114). Though playwrights could make critical statements about monarchs generally, the consequences of portraying anything potentially negative about the Queen were grave. In the "Soldier" portion of his biography of Shakespeare's life, Jonathan Bate discusses the close censorship of the Elizabethan theatre, and remarks that Shakespeare's contemporary, Ben Jonson, was imprisoned for a time in the Tower of London for "some few seditious lines in a play" that caused Elizabeth to take offense (238). If this hostile writing environment

were not enough to dissuade a subject from portraying the Crown hypercritically, an additional obstacle existed in portraying the deposition of King Richard II. Charles Forker, in his introduction to the Arden Shakespeare's *Richard II*, discusses the political climate surrounding the writing of *Richard II*. He stresses, "as Elizabeth I aged, it became increasingly common to identify her with Richard II" (5). The tensions surrounding Elizabeth's lack of successor also plagued Richard's rule, and both rulers were, as Forker continues, "unusually susceptible to flattery." Most arguments on the relevance of *Richard II* to Elizabeth's rule cite her infamous line, "I am Richard II, know ye not that," despite the fact this quote has no confirmable source and could very well be a fabrication.[2] Nonetheless, we can presume the Queen, already sensitive to her portrayal in art, would be sensitive to portrayals of Richard II as well if she knew of the comparisons made between herself and the former monarch. Mark Bayer subverts the prevalent idea of a negative portrayal of Elizabeth I in Shakespeare's rendering of Richard II's rule because he believes Elizabeth would have every reason to see Henry Bolingbroke as a flattering dramatization of her rule. Bayer claims Elizabeth is a charismatic and popular ruler—but his argument more or less relies upon substituting in Elizabeth's name wherever descriptors of Bolingbroke exist. His equation of the two does not stand so much on firm historical proof as it does conjecture that Bolingbroke represented a flattering image of a rule, and Shakespeare, under the scrutiny of Elizabeth's critical reading, would want to flatter her. Bayer denies Elizabeth's interest, portraying, as Richard II did, the "antiquated theory of sovereignty" that is the "king's two bodies" or rather the theory that a divine monarch possesses an inseparable body natural and body politic (136).[3] Not only does Elizabeth utilize the language of the king's (or in this case, queen's) two bodies in her speeches, as Bate notes of a speech given to her soldiers at Tilbury, "I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and a king of England too" (231). Perhaps even more interestingly, she utilizes that language to establish herself as an equal ruler to any man who would sit upon the throne. Elizabeth is a divine ruler of a similar but not identical caliber to Richard, both by her reckoning and by her citizens and flatterers as well. For Bayer to see this divine language describing her rule and then to analyze her

[2] This line, supposedly said to William Lambarde late in Elizabeth's rule, is unverifiable, yet many critics utilize it to draw ties between Elizabeth I and Shakespeare's *Richard II*. Some people who mention this comparison, especially in its relevance to the Essex conspiracy of 1601 include Evelyn May Albright, Charles Forker, Anthony B. Dawson/Paul Yachnin,and several others.

[3] The theory behind these two bodies is that the body natural is just that, the human aspect of a monarch that ties them to their citizens, while the body politic is the monarch's godly entity—what gives them the hierarchical power to rule.

as secularly uninteresting, in what he calls the 'outgoing' models of divine monarchy, seems like an attempt at revisionism at best and does not suit the historical context of Elizabeth, nor does his analysis provide a logical argument for why the play was not considered seditious.

My theory on how the play avoided labeling as treasonous involves the way I believe Shakespeare re-mystifies the monarchy by the play's conclusion. First, I might explain what I mean by 'mystified.' The monarchy that Richard demonstrates is divine, unearthly, approved by the Christian God himself. This unearthliness, the sense of how untouchable Richard is in his heavenly appointment, is his divine aura—his mystification. The first place I see evidence of this re-mystification, despite the apparent contradiction, is in the deposition scene at the opening of Act IV. At this point within the play, Henry Bolingbroke ascends the throne as Henry IV, and Richard, a prisoner, is brought to relinquish his divine right and his crown. In what should be a moment of triumph for Henry, Richard, steals the scene with histrionics and Biblical allusions. Richard appeals directly to the men that stand in the newly crowned Henry's court, and claims, "Did they not sometimes cry 'all hail' to me? / So Judas did to Christ, but he in twelve / Found truth in all but one, I in twelve thousand, none" (4.1, 170-72). The divine aura Richard here believes to possess is godly, and therefore, it is appropriate to him to see his betrayal as severe as the betrayal of Christ. Shakespeare saturates *Richard II* with these Biblical allusions, and while both Henry and Richard take turns playing Cain with Richard's murder of Gloucester at the start of the play and Henry's murder of Richard at the end, the analogy most apt in the case of Richard's deposition is, as he says himself, the betrayal of Christ by Judas. Stanley R. Maveety discusses the importance of Richard's Christ-like complex in the play's perspective on the divine monarch. He argues that this comparison does nothing more than complicate the vision of monarchy already in place: "Though willing enough to play the role of the crucified Christ, [Richard] flinches at acknowledging human fallibility…The chaos and civil war that followed Bolingbroke's usurpation might not have come to pass had Richard played the man instead of playing Christ" (193). According to Maveety, rather than remain deposed and allow Henry IV to rise to power unquestioned, the way Richard uses these Biblical allusions in an attempt to make a martyr of himself does not accomplish what he intends, and furthermore, undermines the rule of Henry by placing himself on an unwarranted pedestal. However, no matter how excessive Richard's Christ analogies may appear, beautiful rhetoric does not save him from losing his throne in the first place, and there is no reason to believe that simply altering the topic from the divine right of kings to Christ's betrayal that Richard's speech alone would have any more rhetorical weight now in his deposition. Why does this Christ imagery persist;

how has Richard successfully become a martyr? Just as Kastan discusses the subjection of monarchs to an audience within the theatre, Richard subjects himself to the judgment of his audience onstage and off in presenting himself as the center of his deposition, and more than offering himself up, implicates his audience in his dethronement: "Nay, all of you that stand and look upon me…though some of you, with Pilate, wash your hands, showing an outward pity, yet you Pilates have here delivered me to my sour cross" (4.1, 237-241). Richard does not stand idly and allow the taking of his crown, but in fact demands his cousin "seize the crown," likens himself to a betrayed Christ, and portrays both his former subjects and the audience, by contrast, Pontius Pilates all (4.1, 183). While this scene by no means elevates him to his projected Christ-like status, it emphasizes the importance of audience within the plot and in the theatre, and perhaps plants within them the very language they will utilize in making a martyr of him at the end of the play. Even if Richard's melodrama does not persuade the audience that they are acting along with Henry as a Pontius Pilate or Judas figure in his dethroning, it does give them the power to do so. Whether or not they agree with what Bolingbroke has done, they are given further power to judge a king by Richard himself.

The fact that the audience works in tandem with the actors on stage to dethrone Richard—or at least desire this dethronement—means they have some power, even if that is just the power of judgment. Phyllis Rackin argues that audience members play just as great a role in judging and misjudging characters within *Richard II* as any character within the stage. She acknowledges, "There is an extra role in the play not listed in the *dramatis personae*, a carefully calculated role complete with motivations…designed to be filled by the members of the audience" (263). However important the audience may seem to her argument, though, she also insists, "Shakespeare deliberately alienates us from the action on stage, reminding us that we are, after all, simply an audience in a theatre" (263). Certainly Shakespeare is aware of the audience and the role they play within the theatre, but I take issue with the idea he wrote *Richard II* as an exercise in isolating an audience from characters for the sake of reminding them of their lack of participation in the action. Because their judgment or misjudgment does not balance and leaves the audience ambivalent, distant, and collectively unaffected individuals, I would argue in line with the critic Steven Mullaney as he discusses what he calls "affective technologies" within the Renaissance theatre. He argues, "theatre is the most social of the arts…it is completed only in performance, and thus, it is produced not only for, but also by its audience," and suggests that such an art form provided a vital way for the Renaissance audience to learn about their history and political environment (73). He also proposes that audiences utilized this public space as a way of understanding who they are

individually and socially. Mullaney constructs an eloquent argument for the inherently symbiotic nature of the Elizabethan theatre, one in which actor and audience member share equal responsibility in identifying and pondering issues that faced them as a society.

With this in mind, it makes more sense to consider how Shakespeare wanted to utilize something within the history of King Richard II to spark this inter-societal contemplation rather than further isolate members of an already dissociated generation. If Shakespeare utilizes isolation at all within the plot, it might appear like what Mullaney calls "affective irony." This particular kind of irony means that while a viewer of *Richard II* may have trouble feeling any determined emotions about either Richard or Bolingbroke, they instead feel individualized and unique emotions contributing to a collective of playgoers with unique ideas. While encouraging individual thought processes, the theatre also encourages bonding under a singular theatrical experience. In an era plagued by a "lasting sense of unsettlement," Shakespeare attempts to grapple with this unsettlement by dramatizing unstable audience sympathies for Bolingbroke and Richard as the play progresses (72). Where divine right defines Richard, Bolingbroke must rely on his popularity and Richard's acquiescence, knowing he cannot consider himself a natural or divine successor to the throne. Shakespeare wrote knowing his audience would directly involve nobility and common people alike. It may well be that he recognizes his own internal, split sympathies, and he attempts to replicate this feeling within the audience rather than spark any single strong response from the text. He stages characters that at once demand our sympathy and inspire our harshest judgment in Bolingbroke and Richard. Shakespeare does not appear to be interested in heralding the triumphs of Bolingbroke, the appellant to the common people. Because the play does not end with his triumphant ascension to the throne, and because Richard does not fall out of the audience's sight as he falls from power, they are made to question his usurpation. He also does not attempt to excuse Richard for the crimes he commits during his rule, exemplified by the fact that despite all the sympathy we gain for the sometimes Christ-like Richard, he never reads his crimes at his deposition, and he never asks forgiveness for the things he has done. Shakespeare presents a less determinate concept of usurpation—the gray area that gets lost in the black and white of magnificent speeches and absolute depositions of absolute rulers.

New Historicists and Cultural Materialists often discuss the role of the audience members in the theatre and the role of marginalized classes within Shakespeare's plays to determine if Shakespeare's work serves to confirm the monarchy, or subvert the status quo. David Scott Kastan, Jeffrey Doty, Anthony Dawson and Paul Yachnin all work to interpret both the

purposes of an audience and marginalized characters in the plot, convinced that these groups play a larger role in the developing politics of Renaissance England. In every instance, these critics have focused on two marginalized groups within *Richard II* as models for the audience in the theatre: the Gardener and his workers in Act III, Scene IV, or the offstage mob of commoners witnessing Bolingbroke's coronation and Richard's journey to prison. In other words, these critics see only two places for commoners within Richard II: as well-informed and analytical political ideals, or uneducated, inhuman members of a horde. In fact, Dawson and Yachnin argue that, other than these two groups, "Shakespeare tends to reduce London and the commons inside and outside London to an undifferentiated mass," suggesting the public plays extremely invariable, or even unimportant roles in Shakespeare's concept of a monarchy (24). However, I believe that by looking at an interaction overlooked by critics, this scene in Act V with the Groom, the common man can witness their role in Richard's tragedy as something apart from the Gardener's informed political commentary or the crowd's herd-like tendencies. They see a place where the marginalized class repurposes the sanctity of the monarchy.

Dawson and Yachnin argue that "Shakespeare tends to minimize the active role of the commons and to diminish almost altogether the place of the citizenry in the constitution of the state…with high-ranking clergy taking part and speaking well, but with the commons on the sidelines, and, with one or two exceptions, without voice" (26). It is true that *Richard II* focuses on high-ranking members of society, but the "one or two exceptions" Dawson and Yachnin mention are vital to the plot and vital to Shakespeare's modified concept of government. While the two mention the importance of the Gardener as one of the exceptions, I would argue that the Groom's visit to Richard in the Tower is evidence of a crucial change that occurs within the text and most likely occurred within the audience itself. The Groom acts as a character of sympathy to Richard and addresses him still as "royal prince" (5.5, 67). Despite the willingness of all to see Richard deposed at one point in the text, this moment contrasts deliberately with previous scenes that it must represent a paradigm shift of some kind. Indeed, where the Groom's kind treatment wasn't enough to stir sympathy, Richard response to him, "thanks, noble peer," simultaneously raises a mere groom to the status of nobility, while also doubling the meaning that, since deposed, the two truly do exist within the same social strata. In fact, a few lines later, Richard calls him "gentle friend," still emphasizing the nobility he believes within a commoner and claiming him as a friend. Echoing Bolingbroke's earlier statement to a crowd of onlookers: "I thank you, countrymen," now that Richard is powerless, he too attempts to align himself with the common man he sees in

front of him (5.2, 20). The only difference is, in the Tower, Richard has no reason to perform to one Groom, as opposed to Bolingbroke's hope of acquiring a throng of admirers. It is significant that a Groom, a common person who should have as much reason to hate Richard as any other, would instead wish to show kindness to the man whose horse he dressed. It is equally significant that a man who so recently was king is willing to accept the Groom's friendship, not for his flattery or power to ally, but for his kindness and his respect for the royalty Richard has lost. Because the audience can see a member of their class on stage, the way the Groom treats Richard has all the more significance. In this scene, Richard appears absolutely demystified, a man in a cell with only a groom for a friend. He also appears absolutely sympathetic, especially if the one person who sympathizes with him is kind with no ulterior motive—and in fact, at a potential risk to himself.

At the exit of the Groom, one more remark gives place for us to sympathize with Richard. In contrast, to Richard, who has referred to the Groom as a noble friend throughout their brief interaction, when the Keeper enters the room, Forker points out in a footnote that he "addresses the Groom as an inferior," calling him "fellow," rather than peer (471). His remark only contrasts all the more sharply with Richard's kind reception of his peer, the groom, a man he quite recently ruled over with a less than a kind hand. This scene sparks what becomes the paradigm shift that ends the play. No counterargument tries to re-convince the audience of the tyranny of King Richard II; that is over and done with the deposition of the tyrant. Were that the laudable goal, perhaps the play would have left off with the deposition scene, with Bolingbroke ascending the throne in all the glorious pomp and circumstance of the victorious. It does not. Instead, before we can return at last to the reigning Henry, the audience must see what has become of the former King Richard, and instead of cheering at his fall from power; the Groom's actions must inspire sympathy for him. However, the purpose of this scene does not only creates sympathy for Richard, but by enacting the Groom, who refers to Richard not as a peer, but as a prince, the common people, who have already proven their ability to strip a monarch of his power, somewhat paradoxically repurpose and reinstate a symbolic, and emotional power to Richard. It seems the Groom's words to Richard inspire him to not only acknowledge his wife's analogy that "the lion, dying, thrusteth forth his paw/And wounds the earth, if nothing else, with rage/To be overpowered," and take action (5.1 29-31). Richard no longer acts as a peer to those who would take his life; he fights back like a lion and declares upon being struck down by Exton, "thy fierce hand/Hath with the King's blood stained the King's land" (5.5, 109-10). Richard dies verbally crowned by one of his people. His right to rule is consecrated by the Groom, and hopefully by now,

the audience. Not only does Shakespeare create the circumstances by which Richard becomes a character of sympathy, reversing the conditions that allowed Bolingbroke such sympathy, he also creates the opportunity for the common man to reestablish godly divinity in a fallen ruler, in a way that jointly acts as democratic and royalist—giving the common man power to both judge the deposed monarch and re-elevate him, both within the context of the play and within the concept of divine rulers outside the play.

Few members of "the commons" actually appear in *Richard II*—in fact, aside from the Gardener and the Groom, they are only ever referred to as "the people"—an unpredictable mass, vulnerable to the manipulation of whoever appeals to them. Because of this near-nonexistent marginalized class, it follows that the places where the commons do appear assume all the more importance. Therefore, though critics in the past have focused solely upon the Gardener and his servants as what Doty refers to as "idealized proto-citizens," I would like to extend this definition to the Groom (197). Critics generally agree that the Gardener and his workers present the audience with an idea of political commentary and "an allegorization of playgoing in the most positive light" (Dawson and Yachnin, 30). But in addition to this, Doty also argues, "Shakespeare, like the gardeners, strips royalty of its magic," while "he likewise makes kings and queens accessible to audiences in personal and political terms" (198). Though Shakespeare causes the audience to relate to characters otherwise inaccessible to them outside of the theatre, most modern critics agree that the theatre, as Kastan maintains, "works to expose the mystification of power," and by laying it bare for the judgment of an audience, thereby destroys it (115). Subjecting a system of governance to the scrutiny of a budding political sphere allows the people, like the Gardener and his men, to be "capable of well- informed and thoughtful discussion and judgment about matters of public concern" and by doing so, tear down the mystical aura built up around the monarchy in favor of demystified rationality (Dawson and Yachnin, 31). However, by ignoring the second inclusion of the commons in *Richard II*, how we interpret the role of the commons also ends here—with a proto-citizen who presents a rational political ideal that ultimately demystifies Richard and his divine rule. Shakespeare expresses an entirely different manifestation of the commons' agency by including the Groom. In his individual work on the publics of the theatre, Yachnin discusses the idea that Shakespeare does not just work "to foster straightforward rational-critical debate" within playgoers, but "instead encourages emotional *and* intellectual investment" [emphasis mine] (216). If as an idealization of the public the Gardener and his men act as the rational-critical side of playgoing, the Groom acts as their emotional-ethical counterpart. Yachnin argues, "Shakespeare is himself working toward a new idea of performance and publicity" and "is able

to point us toward a more robust and inclusive form of public life that interweaves strong feelings with rational debate and collective judgment" in his plays—an idea I see clearly expressed in the two characters—the Gardener and the Groom (205, 209). While the Gardener presents the audience with a model of rational political discussion, Shakespeare includes the Groom as the equally important model of moral, affective contemplation. In fact, by recalling the Bishop of Carlisle's prophecy in Act V Scene I, that "The blood of England shall manure the ground / And future ages groan for this foul act," it appears Shakespeare even favors the stance of the Groom. Carlisle's predictions come true: Richard's spilled blood nurtures England towards the War of the Roses, which was common knowledge among the playgoers of the Elizabethan theatre (4.1, 138-39). Rather than ignore the decades of insurrection and bloodshed that would follow Richard's fall from power, Shakespeare utilizes the pathos of the Groom to remind the audience that, rather than the Gardener's belief that "superfluous branches / We lop away that other boughs may live," the death of Richard, the "superfluous" king, does not allow England's allegorical garden to flourish (3.4, 63-64).

The divine right absolutism that Shakespeare's Richard represents disappears when Richard loses his throne. This much I established earlier in my analysis. However, in addition to divine right absolutism, Shuger also discusses the sacred ruler, one who may or may not have absolute power but for the sake of a "legitimizing principle, as well as its cultural power," possess the sacred aura that critics argue collapses upon Richard's usurpation (59). While I originally applied this concept to explain Elizabeth's use of divine rhetoric after I argued the shift away from this, I would like to consider that perhaps, in creating this second "proto-citizen," Shakespeare allows the people to create a sacred ruler. By giving the commons the power to establish or destroy the divine aura in their rulers, they have a strange power over those who otherwise rule them absolutely. The Gardener demystifies; the Groom re-mystifies. In place of expressing a movement from the medieval, divine politics of Richard's rule to the more modern, secular rule of Bolingbroke—an easy argument to make when the only synecdoche for the people is the Gardener—both of these overarching models of audience behavior exemplify the role of the people as complex: rational *and* emotional—capable of both critical and ethical decisions. In *Richard II*, Shakespeare encourages the political and emotional participation of the people in the judgment of their rulers. That he then utilizes this participation by including the Groom to make a martyr of Richard ends the play not as a demystification of monarchy, nor an attempt to dramatize a move from the medieval to the modern world, but as a way of expressing to an audience of commoners what power they have in determining the divinity of their rulers.

WORKS CITED

Bate, Jonathan. "The Famous Victory of Queen Elizabeth." *Soul of the Age*. New York: Random House, 2009. 223-232. Print.

Bayer, Mark. "Is A Crown Just a Fancy Hat?: Sovereignty in *Richard II*." *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*. 28.1 (2002) : 129-52. *MLA International Bibliography.* Web. 25 Feb 2015.

Dawson, Anthony B. and Paul Yachnin. Introduction. *Richard II*. By William Shakespeare. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. 1-118. Print

Doty, Jeffrey S. "Shakespeare's *Richard II*, 'Popularity,' and the Early Modern Public Sphere." Shakespeare Quarterly. 61.2 (2010) : 183-205. *MLA International Bibliography*. Web. 11 May 2015.

Forker, Charles R. Introduction. *Richard II*. By William Shakespeare. London: Thomson Learning, 2002. 1-169. Print.

Howard, Jean E. "Kings And Pretenders." *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England*. New York: Routledge, 1994. 129-153. Print

Kastan, David S. "'Proud Majesty Made a Subject': Representing Authority on the Early Modern Stage." *Shakespeare After Theory*. New York City: Routledge, 1999. 110-127. Print.

Maveety, Stanley R. "A Second Fall of Cursed Man: The Bold Metaphor in *Richard II*." *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*. 72 (1973) : 175-193. *MLA International Bibliography*. Web. 12 Feb 2015.

Mullaney, Steven. "Affective Technologies: Toward an Emotional Logic of the Elizabethan Stage." *Environment and Embodiment in Early Modern England.* Basingstroke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 71-89. Print.

Rackin, Phyllis. "The Role of the Audience In Shakespeare's *Richard II*." *Shakespeare Quarterly.* 36.3 (1985) : 262-81. *MLA International Bibliography*. Web. 26 Feb 2015.

Shakespeare, William. *King Richard II*. London: Thomson Learning. 2002. Print.

Shakespeare, William. *Richard II*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2011. Print Shuger, Deborah K. "Political Theologies in Shakespeare's England: The Sacred and the State in *Measure for Measure*." London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001. Print.

Yachnin, Paul. " Performing Publicity." *Shakespeare Bulletin: A Journal of Performance Criticism and Scholarship.* 28.2 (2010): 201-219. *MLA International Bibliography*. Web. 7 Feb 2015.