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Renaissance Conventions in Modern Shakespearean Productions

The contemporary shift of focus away from the purely textual analysis of Shakespeare towards a more production-oriented form of criticism, coupled with the growing popularity in this country of studies in dramaturgy which bridge the previously isolated areas of history, literature, and stage production, have made us widely aware of the special significance of a number of Renaissance theatrical conventions all too often brushed aside in the interest of an uninformed search for contemporary "relevance." Some Renaissance conventions, like the many emblematic stage pictures whose esoteric iconography is lost to almost all moderns,[1] are no longer recoverable as a meaningful theatrical experience; yet there are others, deeply evocative of Elizabethan life, which, if imaginatively produced, still can communicate much of their original significance.

Two such conventions, analogical repetition and the public scene, have been chosen for comment here because in both instances they are prominent elements in the Renaissance drama, are available to the twentieth-century imagination, and yet are all too frequently either cut or so understated as not to have their proper impact upon the meaning of the play we see.

This paper sounds no call for an "authentic" Elizabethan staging, whatever that might be. The most significant Renaissance techniques, and certainly the two discussed here, can be rendered effectively in a reproduction of the Globe or on a proscenium stage, in Edwardian or Tudor costumes. However, ignorance of the conventions and their meanings must necessarily impair the theatrical effectiveness of any modern Shakespearean production.

Analogical Repetition

The typical Shakespearean *dramatis personae* offer an immediate clue to the dramaturgy: casts are large and they are various. Significant action, in patterns repeated and contrasted, is seen as involving many different people who pull into their orbit a spectrum of characters affecting and reflecting the actions of the protagonist. Since there are "too many" characters, the temptation is to cut some out, as Laurence Olivier

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[1] For examples, see John Doebler, *Shakespeare's Speaking Pictures* (Albuquerque, 1974), p. 17.

cut Fortinbras and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern from his film version of *Hamlet*. But this expedient is dangerous; it alters the Renaissance image of analogical action to conform with a modern—or Greek—single-plot action.[2] Without the spectacle of three sons—Hamlet, Fortinbras, and Laertes—each seeking revenge for a father murdered, the action of the play is not complete; in the loss of a Renaissance convention the action is robbed of a considerable measure of its power and richness.

The cast list of *Richard III* is staggering, citing almost three dozen named characters of some importance in addition to the various Lords and Gentlemen. Shakespeare did not need large numbers for the purpose of historical accuracy; indeed, he considerably reduced the complex York genealogy. Yet the rhythms and vicissitudes of the play are viewed accurately only in the context of those who join Richard on the wheel of fortune. Hastings, for example, is convenient but not strictly necessary to the plot. His fall in III.iv has the formal function of anticipating that of Buckingham (V.i) and of Richard himself; yet his career in the play, like that of Buckingham, spells out a perfect "wheel of fortune" tragedy of the man who rises to power, is careless of his danger, and plunges to ruin. It ends, typically, with a lament to fickle fortune: "Who builds his hopes in air of your [fortune's] good looks/Lives like a drunken sailor on a mast" (III.iv.98-99).[3] Rivers, Vaughan, and Grey, though peripheral to the main action, are given their own brief scene (III.iii) in which to lament their fall and their guilt (for standing by when Richard stabbed Edward, Prince of Wales). In this action, Rivers recalls for his companions—and the audience—that they are meeting their death in the same Pomfret Castle which saw the betrayal and death of Richard II. The accretion of analogous incidents is building a web of meaning around the protagonist's actions, a web which transcends any purely causal pattern.

Buckingham's career in the play is similarly rounded off with an appropriate coda: his moving "halter speech" ("Why, then All Soul's day is my body's doomsday" [V.i.12-29]). The precedent—if such a common form needed precedent—for multiplication of examples lay ready to Shakespeare's hand and in many a playgoer's memory through the popular *Mirror for Magistrates*, which by its 1563 edition contained, besides the story of Richard, those of Buckingham, Hastings, Clarence, Edward IV, Rivers, and Jane Shore. The same multiplication of examples can be seen in crude form in the individual stories of the *Mirror*. Just before describing the plot to murder the young princes, Sackville pauses in his "Complaynt of Henrye duke of Buckingham" to recount the evil deeds and bloody deaths of five traitorous murders from Cyrus to Macedo. When Buckingham is deserted by the band of commoners he had raised for his fight against Richard, Sackville piles up examples of heroes turned out by their state because of the fickleness of the commonality.[4]

Thus *Richard III*, while clearly organized around the title character, plays itself out

[2] The same point is made in an interesting way by Jonas Barish, who describes attempts by William Archer and his contemporaries to improve the Elizabethans by eliminating some of their superfluities. "The New Theatre and the Old," in *Reinterpretations of Elizabethan Drama*, ed. Norman Rabkin (New York, 1969), pp. 11-14.

[3] References to Shakespeare's works are from Alfred Harbage, *Complete Pelican Shakespeare* (Baltimore, 1969).

[4] Lily B. Campbell, ed., *The Mirror for Magistrates* (Cambridge, England, 1938), pp. 320-323, 332-335.

in the parallel careers of his associates. In imagining or producing the play, each of these stories—and even those of Rivers, Vaughan, and Grey—should be sharply drawn, not subordinated and blurred by the "main plot," as we shall see was the case with the version of *Richard III* by Colley Cibber used by most of the great actors from 1700 to the latter part of the nineteenth century. Even modern producers rarely possess the courage—or insight—to say, in effect, "This is repetitious; I know it is repetitious, and I believe the repetition is beautiful." What we in the audience generally sense is that the producer is saying to us, "I know this is repetitious, but I have doctored it up so that *you* won't perceive the repetition." If Wölfflin's disputed categories have any value, certainly his observation of multiplicity in sixteenth-century art yielding to unity in the "baroque" style of the next century would be helpful to the creation of a truly Renaissance *Richard III*. As Wölfflin characterizes sixteenth-century art, "The single parts . . . maintain a certain independence. . . . The part is conditioned by the whole, and yet does not cease to have its own life."[5]

Perhaps the fact that the men are active excuses their number for a modern audience, but what will justify the excess of wailing women in *Richard III*? Historically Henry VI's widow, Margaret, was not present in the English court at the time when the action of the play is set; yet Shakespeare's invention of her curse on her royal successors is a splendid dramatic touch. On the other hand, the Duchess of York (Richard's mother) is hardly necessary to the plot. Again, it is the multiple image which Shakespeare is projecting. In fact, the playwright seems to gather up much of the weight of this almost medieval tragedy in the wailing scene (IV.iv) which presents the choral laments of Margaret, the Duchess of York, and Edward IV's widow, Queen Elizabeth. In the center of this scene a speech dominated by epiphora, which might to modern taste be clumsily rhetorical, ties together for these aged mothers a litany of family murders all the more horrible owing to the fact that the enemies in this dynastic war frequently bore the same name:

> I had an Edward, till a Richard killed him;
> I had a Harry, till a Richard killed him:
> Thou hadst an Edward, till a Richard killed him;
> Thou hadst a Richard, till a Richard killed him.
>
> [IV.iv. 40–44]

Queen Margaret's lament challenges director and actor to convey to a modern audience the chilling, almost magical, powers which a Renaissance man could feel in this formulaic naming.[6]

This is a difficult scene to stage. The earlier precipitate action seems suddenly to have slowed (a common tendency of the Shakespearean fourth act), and the women seem to take an unconscionably long time recalling past events. We can see, however, that the playwright has considerably enriched the meaning of his action by multiplying the reflectors of suffering—the catalogues of dead sons—at this penultimate moment

[5] Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History* (New York, 1932), p. 15.

[6] As in much of the drama of the time, there is a hint here of medieval philosophical Realism, a doctrine which sees words, especially names, not as arbitrary symbols but as having an existence as effective as that of things. Although this philosophy no longer has much meaning to a modern sensibility, some of its implications—and those of Margaret's lament—may be intuited in poets like Walt Whitman.

in the fall of the houses of York and Lancaster. Every effort should be made to retain these choric comments and to dramatize their nature as rhetorical forms, for these very forms have specific meaning for the characters and to the modern audience sensitively addressed.[7]

Historically, producers have thought it best to do away with the "reflectors" and to focus on a presumably clarified main action. The results and the inevitable impoverishment of the reverberant sense of Renaissance action may be seen in the Colley Cibber version of *Richard III*.[8] The startling fact about this radically altered *Richard* is that it dominated the stage for over 150 years after its debut in 1700. As late as 1886, Edwin Booth was successfully playing the Cibber version, and both Macready and Phelps reverted to it after unsuccessful attempts (in 1821 and 1845, respectively) to offer the public a more nearly Shakespearean text.[9] Perhaps even more telling an example of how little the meaning of Shakespeare's theatrical technique was understood even in our own century are the words of George C. D. Odell: "Whatever the cause, and with due deference to out-and-out sticklers for Shakespeare's text first, last and always, Cibber's play—as a play—is better than Shakespeare's."[10]

"As a play," Cibber's transformation is certainly different. We can dwell here only on those aspects of the revision which bear on the subject of analogical actions, but, since almost all of these analogies have been cut by Cibber, much of the altered effect of the new play can be traced to this cause. Cibber seems to have taken as his guiding principle the idea of strengthening and clarifying Richard's part. In the first act of the Cibber version, material from *3 Henry VI* is presented to show Richard killing King Henry. Before Anne's appearance, Cibber has Stanley and Tressel explain who she is and wonder whether, in such strange circumstances, Richard could win her love; then Richard himself, in an aside, explains that though his form will not move her, his tongue could move the Devil. Thus, a much truncated wooing scene is naturalized and made rather tamely logical. The rest of Cibber's many alterations to Richard's part follow this same pattern: simplification and stress on the more obvious aspects of the protagonist's villainous character. This simplification does away with the analogous actions: Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, and Grey never appear and, hence, never act out their rise and fall. Buckingham, who is retained, is deprived of his death scene (and, of course, Richard's death is deprived of this reflector).[11] Margaret is

[7] Madelain Doran, who quotes IV.iv.40–41, 44–45, finds these choric speeches tediously long but necessary to "give the play balance and meaning." She adds, "They cannot be *wholly* omitted," *Shakespeare's Dramatic Language* (Madison, 1976), p. 10 (my emphasis).

[8] Cibber's *Richard III* is reprinted in Christopher Spencer, ed., *Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare* (Urbana, Illinois, 1965).

[9] See C. B. Young's "Stage-History" in the Cambridge *Richard III* (Cambridge, England, 1954), pp. xlviii-lviii, lxi.

[10] *Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving* (New York, 1920), II, 153.

[11] The Augustans did not sin only in the direction of deletions but actually added parallels not provided by Shakespeare. In Davenant's *Macbeth*, a ghost of Duncan is provided to balance, for Lady Macbeth, the ghost of Banquo who haunts her husband. In the Davenant-Dryden *The Tempest*, Miranda receives a male counterpart (Hippolito) who, like Miranda, had never seen a member of the opposite sex. These neat pairings of character and action, however, have more in common with the rhymed couplet and balanced antithetical clauses of Augustan style than they do with the loose piling up of examples which the Renaissance inherited from the Middle Ages.

entirely eliminated and the only equivalent of the choral laments mentioned above is a sentimental scene (IV.i, mostly Cibber's invention) in which the Duchess of York, Queen Elizabeth, and Anne bid farewell to the two young princes who quite obviously will never leave the Tower alive.

Few of the famous puzzles of the original *Richard III* remain in the Cibber version. Richard of Gloucester has become a plausible well-motivated villain in a drama which concentrates on his deeds and avoids the complication of parallel actions. In the days of mercurial stars and sadly under-rehearsed ensembles, there was a production logic to having actors like Edmund Kean use the Cibber *Richard*. In the overview, however, Cibber has not strengthened his protagonist by his focusing but has inevitably weakened this Renaissance figure, the dimensions of whose character depend upon his bearing about him all the echoes of sin, betrayal, and death which are the product of the War of the Roses.

One indication that modern audiences can respond to a rather heavy dose of analogical action is the current popularity of *Love's Labor's Lost*. This play, which lacks anything like what William Archer would have considered an adequate plot, long lay neglected for plays like *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*—plays which had, or could be doctored up to have, one consecutive line of intrigue. *Love's Labor's Lost* can almost be thought of as moving sideways, rather than forward, for the actions of the four noble lords as they pretend to learning, write sonnets, or devise entertainments are repeated in various ways by the braggart soldier Don Adriano de Armado, by the curate and the schoolmaster (Nathanial and Holofernes), and by the clowns Dull and Costard. Something of the effect of the interplay of these levels can be glimpsed from Peter Thomson's praise for the 1973 Royal Shakespeare Company production in which, with all parts richly played, both the noblemen and the ladies lost some of the one-sided romantic aura they are often bathed in and came off "as brittle, slight people against the substantial countrymen."[12]

From a historical perspective, analogous and parallel actions take their structural precedent from the medieval and Renaissance cosmologies in which the elements of nature, the family unit, the body politic, and the universe enjoy fundamental and dynamic interconnections. While we may have lost much of this perspective, our craving for psychological portraits of characters motivated by a clear chain of events receives subtle and poetic reinforcement from the more expansive notions of character behind the conventions we have been describing.[13] The Renaissance view of Hamlet as one of three sons whose fathers had been murdered, as an actor among actors, as Nero to his mother, is compelling for its complexity—a complexity lost in Cibber's well-motivated *Richard III*. This thin portrait of Richard lacks the depth supplied in the analogous acts of treachery involving the Edwards, the Henrys, and the Richards of Margaret's IV.iv speech.[14]

[12] "Shakespeare Straight and Crooked: A Review of the 1973 Season at Stratford," *Shakespeare Survey*, 27 (1974), 147.

[13] Maynard Mack describes the Jacobean mingling of psychological realism and moral example in *"King Lear" in Our Time* (Berkeley, 1972), pp. 74–76. Mack's discussion of "recapitulations, recurrences, and reverberations," is highly relevant here, though he includes repetitions of gestures, motifs, and props, not just the repetitions of character and action which we have stressed. See especially, pp. 72–74.

[14] The inclusion of analogous and parallel actions in modern productions of Renaissance plays is not

The Public Scene

If moderns tend to miss the significance of the convention of analogical actions, they are often equally insensitive to the meaning which public scenes possessed in the Renaissance. These scenes, the stage versions of the many progresses, entries, presences, levees, tournaments, and all the occasions which the nobility took to dramatize their lives, were, for the Elizabethan, not empty pageantry, but significant moments in a public existence which all people from king to peasant would share. The modern stage tends to expose few public occasions, confining the drama largely to the agonies of the living room. Our significant moments are more informal, and the form of our drama reflects this. Large gatherings frequently take place offstage, and the characters, singly or in small groups, escape from the crowd for their more significant moments alone. Even where Tennessee Williams, in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, places the semi-public—and highly informal—"poker night" on stage, the important moments take place when a character is separated out for private conversation. Shakespeare's theatre, on the other hand, lavishly dramatizes the public political function as a central aspect of Renaissance life. The various "official" scenes serve to define a country's health at its fountainhead, as the deteriorating health of Scotland is defined in the contrast between Duncan's gracious, if naive, celebration of his country's victory over treachery (I.iv) and the traitor Macbeth's forced attempt to knot up a bitter and suspicious kingdom in the "bloody banquet" (III.iv).

The second scene of *Hamlet*, having shifted from the cold blunt opening on the battlements to Claudius's presence chamber, is an especially effective image of the effulgent Renaissance court with its king at center, its malcontent on the periphery, and its petitioners at the ready. Understanding the full Elizabethan context of this scene requires a grasp of the specific official nature of the occasion, a kind of Elizabethan press conference initiated, once the formalities of the processional entry are complete, with an elaborately prepared speech. Twentieth-century audiences must be helped to understand, as Elizabethan audiences would, that the speech is prepared and official. The fact that the Elizabethans themselves had an ambivalent attitude toward this kind of rhetoric—it was not all bad, as we are tempted to think—calls for considerable tact in the handling of this speech. It should also be remembered that Claudius is capable of very direct speech when the occasion demands and that, as A. C. Bradley has pointed out, he is a plausible ruler who "performs his ceremonial duties efficiently."[15] For the producer mounting *Hamlet* I.ii on the modern stage the example of the presidential address provides an informative contrast. Americans experience such an address in the domestic scene of most modern drama, their own homes, where, through television, they individually confront the individual figure

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always beneficial. In Middleton and Rowley's *The Changling*—one of the very small group of non-Shakespearean Renaissance plays which now enjoy frequent revivals—the antic doings in the madhouse scenes (II.i, III.iii, IV.iii) and the intrigues in Vermandero's castle may be read as analogous playings out of sin and redemption motifs. However, because so much of the humor in the madhouse scenes depends on attitudes and customs long out of date, inclusion of these scenes weakens the effect for modern audiences; and, in fact, the three scenes are usually omitted from modern revivals.

[15] *Shakespearean Tragedy* (New York, 1955), p. 138. See also the description of Frank Vosper's Claudius which, in Sir Barry Jackson's 1925 production, reversed the nineteenth-century tradition of bumbling malevolence. Harley Granville-Barker, *Prefaces to Shakespeare* (Princeton, 1963), II, xxii–xxiii.

of the President. Most people realize that the "informality" of such television appearances is carefully staged. The producer of Shakespeare can offer the very illuminating lesson of political events staged in as calculated a fashion (as Richard and Buckingham staged Richard's appearance before the Mayor and citizens of London in *Richard III*, III.vii) but with subtly different meanings involved in the relation of prince to nobles and citizens. The all but lost ritual of the presence chamber needs sympathetic staging to suggest its importance in Renaissance political life (especially important, for instance, in the various *presences* offered by the Duchess in *The Duchess of Malfi*).

One of the most interesting public scenes in all drama takes place in the center of *Hamlet*, where the prince tests his uncle with the Gonzago play. This famous mousetrap scene (III.ii) packs together several important Renaissance theatrical conventions in such a way as to be almost a model of their usage. In the first place, it is the kind of public scene we have been discussing, a court occasion to which the King and Queen with all their attendants make a ceremonial entrance announced by trumpets and kettledrums. But the show provided by the monarch, in this instance, takes second place to the show provided for the monarch. The presence of the Players adds another dimension, not just of such popular court entertainment as might be provided by musicians and jugglers; but because the actors will present a serious drama, it adds a suggestion of the whole complex of mirroring, pleasing, and instructing which Renaissance people took to be the function of a play. At such a royal command performance the monarch and, to a lesser degree, the higher members of the court were not assumed to be passive spectators, but to be actively and personally involved.[16] Lastly, we have in the mousetrap scene the element of intrigue intensified by the Machiavellian plotting of the various factions and, further, by its apparent contrivance as the climax of a revenge tragedy.

From the many illustrations inspired by this famous scene it is possible to discover a good deal about the way in which directors through the ages have dealt with the theatrical conventions involved. If the director has done his job well, the eye will be guided quickly to each of the three focal centers—the Players, Claudius and Gertrude, and Hamlet and Ophelia—with minor focus drawn to Horatio, Polonius, and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, each spying in turn on a member of the main group. Traditionally the Players perform upstage, watched by Claudius and Gertrude at stage left with Hamlet and Ophelia farther downstage on the opposite side. The director must contend with the fact that if any character is watching something upstage of him, his back will be to the audience. In such a situation, Claudius's reactions to the Gonzago murder would be hidden. Some sets, such as the one by Robert Edmond Jones for the Barrymore *Hamlet* (1925), aggravate this problem. Here the Gonzago play was placed upstage, framed by Jones's very handsome back-lit central arch. The King and Queen were placed—one on either side—at the foot of the eight long steps which led up to the arch. Thus Claudius and Gertrude, whose chairs were set three-quarters

[16] Comic versions of the interaction between royal spectators and their entertainers may be recalled from the "Pyramus and Thisbe" and the "Nine Worthies" scenes from, respectively, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V.i and *Love's Labor's Lost*, V.ii. Still another level of involvement came from playwrights who, especially during the Tudor period, typically "characterized" their royal benefactors in thinly veiled conceits.

front, made a very unconvincing audience for a play almost directly behind them and four feet above their heads. The isolated figures in this picture gave very little sense of the kind of court entertainment which would engulf and trap a Renaissance king.

Under the best of circumstances, a certain amount of "cheating" is necessary to give the impression that all characters watch "The Murder of Gonzago." In the Barrymore production the staging also tended to produce an unnatural split of the court group while leaving the important down-center area bare. When Macready, and later Booth, played Hamlet they solved the problem by occupying this center space themselves, stretched out on the floor in front of a raised stage for the Players (Barrymore sprawled across the middle of Jones's steps). Occasionally "The Murder of Gonzago" has been played downstage and in front of the King and Queen, as it was in 1909 by Max Reinhardt, whose stage rose in steps, giving Claudius and Gertrude enough height to be clearly visible above the Players. A photograph of the Prague *Hamlet* of 1927 shows the Players working in silhouette on the forestage while the court, in full light, watches upstage of them. John Gielgud, utilizing Motley's flexible arrangements of platforms and drapes, managed an effective staging that opposed the King, on a raised platform stage-right, to the Players on a low stage at the far left and slightly forward. The court was grouped downstage of the King's platform with Ophelia further center. This allowed Hamlet a central position as the play started and also allowed him on "What, frightened with false fire?" (III.ii. 256) to take stage just center of the Players and directly facing the elevated figure of the King risen to escape from the "mousetrap." In this more or less abstract set Gielgud managed clarity of dramatic design while at the same time conveying a sense of the complexity we have suggested is present in the scene.[17] If Gielgud's staging reflects a little too much of twentieth-century "good design" and a much more sophisticated use of asymmetry than Elizabethans were used to, it is probably a good compromise for creating an image of the openness of the platform stage (and the floor of the manor hall) at the same time that the highly formal functional relationships of the groups are set forth.

A sensitive production of Shakespeare's political public moments is important in yet another way, for it dramatizes one side of a much thought-on dichotomy—that of a ruler's public and private life, his function as king and his function as a man. Almost any of the dramas of monarchy—history or tragedy—will remind the reader of the dramatic energy generated by the conflict between these two poles, but the torment of Hamlet caught between his public duty and his private conscience, or, in quite a different way, the accommodations the private Hal must learn to make as he grows into the public Henry V are obvious examples. The presence of this conflict in the dramas is no accident, for it was central to Renaissance thought, as we may see not only through its popularity as a debate topic but also through the theoretical extension of some of its implications to the convenient doctrine of "the king's two

[17] For an extensive collection of pictures of this and other scenes see Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson, *Hamlet through the Ages* (London, 1952). The Gielgud production is illustrated in Granville-Barker, *Prefaces*, I, plate 42. J. L. Styan offers a penetrating analysis of the staging of this scene in *Shakespeare's Stagecraft* (Cambridge, England, 1967), pp. 130–132. This becomes the basis of a discussion of Olivier's filming of the same scene in Styan's article "Sight and Space: The Perception of Shakespeare on Stage and Screen," *ETJ*, 29 (March 1977), 25–28.

bodies."[18] These considerations suggest the distortions that would be involved in under-producing the public scenes or in producing them with opulent show but in such a manner as to suggest that this show is merely hollow while the significant material lies in the private scenes—a prejudice we have inherited from the Romantics. Either production fault tends to distort Shakespeare's structure by artificially devaluing one side in a typical Renaissance equation—both sides of which the men of the time took with great seriousness.

In *Richard II*, Richard's fall from public power to the private humiliation of his death in the keep of Pomfret Castle constitutes the essential movement of the play. With the structural necessity of such a contrast in mind, Shakespeare's public scenes of the Mowbray-Bolingbroke dispute (I.i and I.iii) take on special importance, and, although we cannot deal here with their plot and thematic meaning, the significance of these two scenes as theatrical images needs some comment. In the first place, it should be noted that the occasions dramatized are described at length in the chronicles which were followed closely by Shakespeare.[19] Especially in the trial by combat (Shakespeare's I.iii), Holinshed and Hall elaborate on the noble company gathered, the challenges, the trappings of the horses and the stands, and the officials "apareled in silke sendall embrodered with silver both richely and curiously, every man havyng a tipped staffe to kepe the feld in order."[20] Thus, the historians as well as the dramatists placed a good deal of emphasis on the nature of these occasions. The resources of the Globe could not match the resources of a king and his most powerful dukes, but with suggestive staging, music, and the language which Shakespeare supplied to the actors, much of the sense of these highly public and highly political scenes can be conveyed. The playwright has further heightened the public and formal nature of these scenes by juxtaposing them with two scenes in which, away from the gaze of the populace, private feelings are expressed. In I.ii, two representatives of the old order, John of Gaunt and the Duchess of Gloucester, bewail the uncertain justice demonstrated in the previous scene. In I.iv, King Richard and his flatterers—the new order—celebrate the banishment of Henry Bolingbroke in sarcastic tones which contrast markedly with the noble speeches of I.iii.

Directors are not likely to underproduce the accusation and trial scenes; in fact the opposite error is more probable. Beerbohm Tree had both Bolingbroke and Mowbray enter the lists on horseback.[21] Without horses and the multitudes of extras that Charles Kean and Beerbohm Tree employed, these scenes will function very effectively with the suggestion of magnificence created by a few strategically placed attendants and with a careful handling of the speeches to stress the public and political nature of the oratory, especially in contrast to the private feelings voiced in the alternate scenes. If this is done, Richard at his end, trying with his thoughts to people the lonely world of his cell like the world of public occasions he has left, will be a most moving figure.

[18] Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* (Princeton, 1957).

[19] The sources of these two scenes are discussed in the Cambridge *Richard II* (Cambridge, England, 1971), pp. 117–118, 133–134. Hall's account is reprinted in Geoffrey Bullough, ed., *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (London, 1966), III, 383–387.

[20] Hall in Bullough, III, 385.

[21] J. C. Trewin, *Shakespeare on the English Stage 1900-1964* (London, 1964), p. 28.

The spirit of Shakespeare's group scenes is often distorted by what may be the inevitable demands of the motion picture medium. In an example particularly relevant here, the extreme close-ups in Peter Brook's *King Lear* frequently isolate individuals from the total stage picture.[22] Thus, through the interminable dwelling on Paul Scofield's face in I.i, the director transformed the Renaissance image of king and court to a modern introspective image which short-circuits Shakespeare's deliberate progress from the public to the private body of the monarch. Later, where the mad Lear meets the blind Gloucester (IV.vi. 80 ff.), another cinematic device isolates the characters as tiny figures in an extreme long shot of a barren Dover Beach. The effect, striking and moving as it is, relates to a mid-twentieth-century concept of puny existential man most effectively drawn in the films of Antonioni. Neither physically in the Globe, nor conceptually in whatever remnants of the Renaissance cosmology clung to the Jacobean mind did landscape ever thus dominate the man who could, even in his nakedness, cry out so forcefully against its most terrifying powers.

The Globe stage and the acting company that employed it comprised a vivid and plastic medium for the creation of a central set of images of Renaissance life. In reading or viewing Shakespeare it is essential to recognize these images and to understand their connotations, especially in those areas where, without antiquarianism, some of the lively sense of a specifically Renaissance concept can still be created for an appreciative modern audience.

[22] The loss of a sense of background in such close-ups is discussed by Styan in "Sight and Space," p. 20.