

Ricardian Placenames Quiz (answers p. 18)

The names of many famous Ricardian places are hidden in the following clues. How many can you solve? Example: A gait of a horse plus a small fruit. Answer: Canterbury. Good luck. (The author says it's much easier when you begin with the placenames and then make up clues for them. Our misfortune! Answers on page)

1. Many battles plus the top portion of a candle.
2. The center, plus the back end of a porker.
3. Angry insect and a large room.
4. Rhymes with the plural of two noblemen, plus a small fruit.
5. Monastery church plus the rhyme for the definition of a hut.
6. The modern town of Verulamium.
7. English namesake of a Pennsylvania town.
8. Siring plus merry.
9. Breeze plus a title.
10. A lawman and the last name of a famous actress.
11. Funeral visitation plus a plot of land.
12. To haul a vehicle plus 2000 pounds.
13. The final act in tying up a package plus an overacting performer.
14. A direction plus a monastery church.
15. A tall fortress in England's capital.
16. Famous Yorkshire cheese.
17. A nickname for Charles Dickens, a value, and a pasture.
18. Highly polished finish plus what you do when you mix a batter.
19. The place where drinks are served plus a confinement for the hair.
20. Visual legacy of a wound plus a small donkey.
21. Half of how an English judge is addressed plus the sound of a contented cow.

--Beth Argall, Chicagoland Chapter



Judy Gerard of the Chicagoland Chapter constructed this rod puppet of papier-mâché, and expertly painted and costumed him for their Twelfth Night Celebration. Although you may find him a bit sympathetic in appearance, he is intended to represent Shakespeare's Richard; he wears one black glove, and has a hump, neither of which is visible in the photograph. As for his limp, it isn't very noticeable, since he doesn't walk much.

BOOK REVIEW: Sex vs. the Historical Novel: This Ravished Rose, by Anne Carsley, Pocket Books, N.Y., N.Y. 1980

Anyone who browses through the historical novels for sale at the local drug store, reads past the lurid title, the romantic picture on the cover, the passionate blurb on the back (all expected), and comes to an author's note which reads:

...All agree on her (Elizabeth Woodville's) overweening ambition and it is thoroughly documented as to the means she took to rid herself of those who disagreed with her, both in her own right as Queen of England and as wife of Edward IV....The character of Richard III is taken from authorities outside the Tudor tradition... The love of the City of York is documented in the rolls of that city even after the Tudor was on the throne.... The mystery of what happened to the princes in the tower appears only tangentially in the novel and remains just that.

must feel that the author had a well-formed interest in, and some knowledge of, Ricardian history. Perhaps the "means" Elizabeth Woodville took to rid herself of people are not so well documented as the author tells us, but in view of her other clear and guarded statements, we are willing to give the novel a try.

This turns out to be a frustrating and baffling experience, and, finally, a mistake. Although we were not mistaken about the author's interest in history, and although she is capable of sketching a character with a few well-chosen words, her constant use of sex (repeated, explicit, sometimes sado-masochistic) rends the fabric of the history she is trying to relate, obscures the nature of the principal characters, and as a result distorts the entire tale so as to make it almost unrecognizable as a good tale.

In reading this, and other historical novels which have pretensions to accuracy and are punctuated with liberal doses of sex, we feel that perhaps the author is "letting it all hang out," but somehow the idea that she (or he) is pushing and contriving to get all the sex in obtrudes itself. Although it may be true that history is simply one way of distilling sex, as Freud might have put it, it's nonetheless true that pornography and the historical novel make--strange bedfellows. Where a scene involving sex is truly important to the development of a character or of history itself it should be there, but every twenty pages? Goodness!

One wonders where Anne Carsley's primary interests lie: in the careful underscoring of the validity of the precontract in 15th century England, or in gratifying the reader's suppressed interest in sex, both natural and cruel? In an explanation of the probable extent of Elizabeth Woodville's interest in witchcraft, or in heavy leather?

And who are the readers who want this stuff? Some authors even feel compelled to produce it to get their work published.

--Julie Vognar

Answers to Ricardian Placenames Quiz (p.16)

1. Warwick
2. Middleham
3. Crosby Hall (cross bee)
4. Tewkesbury (dukes)
5. Minster Lovell (hovel)
6. St. Albans
7. York
8. Fotheringhay (fathering)
9. Windsor
10. Sheriff Hutton (Betty Hutton, movie actress of '30s and '40s)
11. Wakefield
12. Towton
13. Nottingham
14. Westminster
15. Tower of London
16. Wensleydale
17. Bosworth Field ("Boz" was Dickens' early pseudonym with which he signed prose sketches)
18. Gloucester
19. Barnet
20. Scarborough
21. Ludlow ("M'lud")



It's an Absolute Boar.

T-Shirt Information: In case your Ricardian T-Shirt has worn out, or you've never had one to wear out, Ricardian T-Shirts, Sweat-shirts, Totebags, Aprons are available from Historical Products, P.O. Box 220, Cambridge, Mass. 02238. They are available in white, red, or light blue, with Richard and Loyauté Me Lie silkscreen on the front, for \$10.00 each and 75¢ shipping. Sizes S, M, L. For additional information please write Historical Products.

"It's an Absolute Boar" stolen by Beth Argall from a greeting card published by the Recycled Paper Company for use in her newsletter, and now by your editor.

"I quite expect...to be accused of vandalism."

Interpolation and Deletion in Laurence Olivier's Richard III

by
Pamela Garrett

"I quite expect...to be accused of vandalism," said Sir Laurence Olivier in 1955, after completing his film version of William Shakespeare's Richard III. Many film critics and Shakespearean scholars, though certainly not all, accused him of just that. For, in his version of the story of history's allegedly blackest villain, Olivier interpolated materials of Colley Cibber, David Garrick and other anonymous contributors. A number of Shakespeare's characters were cut from the film altogether, while the dialogue of other characters was drastically reduced.

Critics for Variety, Sight and Sound and the New York Times, all writing between December 1955 and March 1956, believed the textual adaptations were perfectly acceptable. Derek Proulx (Sight and Sound) went a step further and asserted that "judicious pruning has done its best to thin the treacherous jungle, to emphasize the main line of action." Constance Brown, writing more than ten years later, offered some realistic motives for the drastic textual changes:

Olivier's major alterations suggest the operation of two basic principles...economy and cinematic expediency. He slashes out half-a-dozen of the lengthy characters...who clutter the stage...and he consequently reduces the parts of many more. Every ounce of linguistic fat is removed, leaving a lean, swiftly moving plot...with its central characters still intact.

We do not have to wait long to see that Olivier has indeed tampered with Shakespeare. Richard's famous opening soliloquy, "Now is the winter of our discontent...", is interspersed with portions of his long, searing speech from Henry VI; Part III (III,ii, 124-195). This provides additional background on Richard's character and lays a stronger foundation on which to build audience comprehension of Richard's situation and his plans to become King, than does the opening soliloquy of Richard III alone. This speech illustrates just how passionately and insanely he longs for the Crown:

And, whiles I live, t'account this world but hell,
Until my misshaped trunk that bears this head
Be round impaled with a glorious crown.
And yet I know not how to get the crown,
For many lives stand between me and home:
And I--like one lost in a thorny wood,
That rends the thorns and is rent with the thorns,
Seeking a way and straying from the way,
Not knowing how to find the open air,
But toiling desperately to find it out--
And from that torment I will free myself,
Or hew my way out with a bloody axe.
Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile,
And cry, 'Content' to that which grieves my heart,
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.
...I can add colors to the chameleon,
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
And set the murderous Machiavel to school.

Can I do all this, and cannot get a crown?
Tut, were it further off, I'll pluck it down.

(Henry VI, Part III, III,ii, 170-195)

This speech tells much. It is the voice of a man driven by pride and intense will toward what seems an unreachable goal. It anticipates Edmund's speech on bastardy in King Lear (I,i, 10-22), and Satan's speech in Paradise Lost; and all of them follow Marlowe's Tamburlain the Great. From it, we know with what type of man we are dealing and the kind of actions we can expect from him.

use of this speech for these purposes is a masterful stroke on Olivier's part. It could be argued, of course, that the tactic destroys some of the forcefulness of the opening soliloquy of Richard III, one of the classics of Shakespeare. Certainly that speech can stand alone, yet coupled with the chilling lines from Henry VI, Part III, the destructive brilliance of Richard III is all the more visible and compelling.

Olivier also uses this interpolation of the earlier speech in another way. And perhaps here it should be noted that while it was actually Alan Dent who adapted Shakespeare's text for this film, Olivier, as producer, director and leading man, must share equal responsibility. All references to the plot to murder Clarence are put aside in the opening scene of the film. Olivier's Richard is preoccupied with the fact that "love foreswore (him) in (his) mother's womb." Certainly, many of the lines from the earlier speech deal with this and lend credence to the preoccupation in the film:

What other pleasure can the world afford?
...Am I then a man to be beloved?
O monstrous fault, to harbour such a thought!
Then since this earth affords no joy to me...
I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown....

(Henry VI, Part III, III,ii, 147, 163-5, 168)

Says Constance Brown:

Part of Richard's long soliloquy from Henry VI, Part III...is particularly suggestive of Richard's paranoic conviction that he is the victim of a conspiracy so cosmic that all nature is a party to it. But Richard is portrayed as a special kind of paranoic--one whose resentment finds its supreme expression (and its chief compensatory device) in sadistic aggression and a lust for power that is quite literal and physical as well as figurative and psychological ... (a) suggestion that his quest for power is a substitute for normal sexual activity.

Roy Walker, in his article entitled, "Bottled Spider," in the January 1956 issue of Twentieth Century magazine, believes that Alan Dent, by removing all early reference to the Clarence plot, and concentrating Richard's attention, and ours, on his deformities, means to show that because Richard has "no delight to pass away the time" he plots to seize the crown. He so desperately wants to be King because his deformities have deprived him of love and other, gentler pleasures of life. In short, he has nothing better to do. This is a mistake for which Dent later has to pay. Richard, of course, wins the Lady Anne with what

seems a minimum of effort under the circumstances. Given Dent's interpretation, Richard, having won the love of a sweet, beautiful and enormously wealthy young woman, should have no further desire or need for plotting. Yet we all know that he does. Walker asserts that Dent was forced to insert the Clarence plot between the two portions of the wooing scene to provide a credible motive for Richard's continued plotting. Says Walker, "Alan Dent has simply told a story of Beauty and the Beast and got the wrong answer. Shakespeare, who knew his dramatic business, shows that the Beast, despairing of love, embarked on fratricide before his meeting with Beauty, so that he put himself beyond the redemptive powers of innocent love." This is an intriguing theory, and, if true, Dent and Olivier created more difficulties with the tactic than they solved.

It has generally been assumed that the goal in breaking up the wooing of Lady Anne was merely simplification. Olivier, in a 1955 interview with Roger Manvell, author of Shakespeare and the Film, said, "...I felt it was absolutely necessary to do more simplification than I've ever done before...." Olivier clearly hoped to solve the difficulty presented by "an absolute delta of plot and pre-supposed foreknowledge of events (in the earlier Henry VI cycle)." In this particular case, it becomes less ludicrous and easier to credit if Anne is seduced over a seemingly longer period of time. Yet, once more, the ploy backfires. If we accept that the audience may need some time to absorb and adjust to Anne's obvious, if unwilling, attraction to Richard, it is all the more ludicrous to convert the body in the coffin from that of King Henry VI, Anne's father-in-law, to that of her husband, Edward of Lancaster. Again, it has been assumed that the change occurred to simplify the complicated inter-familial relationships of the Houses of York and Lancaster. And, in fact, many people have probably "never been quite sure who was in that coffin!"

Alice V. Griffith, writing for the Shakespeare Quarterly in 1956, believes that the change of corpses was made to further emphasize the attraction Anne feels for Richard. Roy Walker, on the other hand, believes that Dent was again forced to make the change because he had already post-dated Edward IV's coronation and Edward could hardly have been crowned before his predecessor was dead. This theory doesn't really ring true because this coronation was, in fact, a restoration of Edward IV following the Battle of Tewkesbury in May 1471. Henry had been previously deposed by Edward in 1461 and was merely deposed again ten years later. It is true that Henry died in the Tower, undoubtedly on Edward's orders, the very evening of Edward's return to London on 21 May, 1471. However, it is certainly not necessary to have one king dead before another is crowned. Bolingbroke deposed Richard II; Edward IV deposed Henry VI; Richard III deposed Edward V. That, after all, is precisely the point of these two tetralogies of English history--the disorder and civil strife that comes from usurpation. Therefore, Walker's claim that Dent converted the corpse of Henry VI to that of his son because Henry had to be dead long before Edward IV's coronation --which we have just witnessed in the film--does not seem valid.

Another striking and important change in Olivier's film is the removal of the character of Queen Margaret. Most, though not all, critics agree that the result of this tactic is rather dismal. Constance Brown believes that Margaret was removed because her prophecies and curses, symbolic of medieval superstition, no longer apply. "It is a device which a modern production...can do without, especially since there are other possibilities in the play which can be more profitably developed--as Olivier apparently felt there were." Yet no one familiar with Shakespeare's play can deny that Queen Margaret serves as a kind of Chorus, reminding Richard, the other characters who are his pawns, and the au-

dience that retribution will surely overtake them. With Margaret on the scene we are never allowed to forget what is past or what is ahead. We are not able to become quite so close to Richard, nor quite so admiring of him as in Olivier's film. Margaret's ever-present voice is the portent of doom, "running like a thread through Shakespeare's text." Her dialogues with Elizabeth Woodville, the Duchess of York, Hastings, Buckingham and Richard himself are thought provoking and powerful. Without them, without the "She-Wolf of France" and her come-true curses, Olivier has "shifted the emphasis away from history and the working out of Divine Justice." He "narrows the scope from the execution of divine justice on doers of evil to a chronicle of Richard and his pawns, and his theme from the falls of princes to the punishment of one man." As C.B. Young, in the 1955 New Cambridge edition of Shakespeare's plays, writes, "the absence of Margaret, at once the chorus and the embodied nemesis of the play, is loss irreparable."

It should be noted that Queen Margaret was originally removed from the scene in Colley Cibber's version of Richard III, but, as Roy Walker correctly points out, Dent aggravates the error by slashing to ribbons the part of Cecily, Duchess of York. That is to say, of course, what remained of the part, since many of the Duchess's best scenes are those with Queen Margaret. I was hardly aware of Miss Helen Hayes' portrayal in the Olivier film; but how much can an actress, even an extremely capable actress, do with twenty lines?

This thought brings us to the presence in the film of the King's mistress, Jane Shore. Mistress Shore is not present at all in the Cibber version, though she had a large part in the pre-Shakespearean The Tragedy of Richard III. Shakespeare refers to her several times, letting us know that she is the King's mistress, that she is probably involved with Hastings and that Richard accuses her of withering up his arm through witchcraft. These mere implications from Shakespeare are made abundantly clear in the Olivier film. For example, we are certain that she is the King's mistress; that she arranged for Lord Hastings' release from the Tower and that the two are attracted to one another. When she and Hastings look into each other's eyes and touch hands over Edward IV's corpse, there is no doubt that they will soon be lovers. And when Catesby goes to sound out Hastings on his support for Richard's assumption of the crown, he finds Hastings, not at his own lodgings as in Shakespeare, but in the arms of Jane Shore. Through meaningful looks and suggestive glances, Pamela Brown, as Jane, is wonderfully effective. As a film critic for Time magazine wrote in 1956, "...she says but four words ('Good morrow, my Lord') but she hangs in the offing like a sensuous portrait by Rubens, and fills the court with just the kind of sexual music Shakespeare meant when he spoke of 'the lascivious pleasing of a lute.'"

Several other important changes were made in Olivier's film. The scene in the Tower between Clarence and his murderers is considerably shortened by Olivier. This does no particular violence to the story though we are deprived of some excellent dialogue. Richard cautions the murderers not to listen to Clarence plead lest they be swayed to abandon their bloody commission: "But, sirs, be sudden in the execution, / Withal obdurate, do not hear him plead; / For Clarence is well-spoken, and perhaps / May move your hearts to pity