

if you mark him." (I,iii, 345-8). In Shakespeare, of course, they do just that and are almost taken in by the Duke's pleadings. In the Olivier film, Richard's words of warning are included, but the conversations between the two murderers themselves and between them and Clarence are not. We are left, then, without the complete story. Yet Olivier's cutting here is understandable as these scenes are very long and do not add appreciably to the storyline. Suffice, for Olivier's purposes, that Clarence repents his past crimes and becomes yet another of Richard's unwitting victims. The Clarence of Shakespeare, always Christ-like in these scenes, is more so in the film, as brilliantly portrayed by Sir John Gielgud. Gielgud's Clarence arouses such pity in us, particularly with the drowning speech, that we are hard pressed to believe in, let alone care about, his treacherous past.

Olivier and Dent have also taken great liberty with the part of Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond. Roy Walker has correctly pointed out that we therefore get no sense of what Shakespeare was trying to convey through Richmond. Shakespeare's Richmond is the delivering angel of mercy, come from across the sea to wash England clean of its evil illness, to bring peace and prosperity once again. Olivier deprives us of this, and more:

Richmond:

The wretched, bloody and usurping boar,  
That spoiled your summer fields and fruitful vines,  
Swills your warm blood like wash, and makes his  
trough  
In your emboweled bosoms, this foul swine  
Is even now in the center of this isle...  
...In God's name cheerily on...  
To reap the harvest of perpetual peace....

(V,ii,7-11, 14-15)

For what is he they follow? Truly, gentlemen,  
A bloody tyrant and a homicide;  
One raised in blood and one in blood established;  
One that made means to come by what he hath,  
And slaughtered those that were the means to help  
him;  
A base, foul stone, made precious by the foil  
Of England's chair, where he is falsely set;  
One that hath ever been God's enemy,  
Then if you fight against God's enemy,  
God will in justice ward you as his soldiers....

(V,iii,246-56)

We will unite the White Rose and the Red.  
Smile heaven upon this fair conjunction,  
That long have frowned upon their enmity!

(V,v,19-21)

Constance Brown had some interesting thoughts on Richmond:

Richmond is...an utterly humorless being who bears no scars of psychological conflict, who apparently never engaged in battle with his conscience. In (the) film he is endowed with a conventional square jaw, a melodious Welsh accent and a head of blond hair with not a curl out of place...Richmond has all the compelling properties of a vacuum.

We are deprived, then, of the very essence of the Tudor Myth.

As Alice V. Griffith correctly observes, the narrowing of the ghostly visitations to Richard on the eve of Bosworth and the deletion of the visits to Richmond "reduce them to (Richard's) bad dreams, when they were intended as a sign that divine providence is guiding Richmond." We do not see, in this scene, Henry VI, Edward of Lancaster, Rivers, Vaughan or Grey. Though Olivier did cut the scene of the execution of these latter three at Pomfret, we are told that Richard had them beheaded on some trumped up charge. Olivier does effectively present the ghosts of Clarence, Anne, the Princes and Hastings, remaining consistent with their prominence in his film. It is a visually stunning scene.

Olivier has chosen to remove virtually all of the "recognition" scene in which Richard "is afflicted with an attack of conscience and moral revulsion, teetering precariously between self-love and self-loathing." Richard awakes:

Give me another horse! Bind up my wounds!  
 Have mercy, Jesu! Soft, I did but dream.  
 O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!  
 The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight.  
 Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.  
 What do I fear? Myself? There is none else by....

(V,iii,178-183)

The speech goes on, pathetic and patently tragic. It has a profound effect upon the King. Incredibly, we hear only the first two lines of it in Olivier's film. Its absence is most disturbing and there seems to be no credible reason for its deletion.

Richard's oration to his men before battle, like Richmond's, is drastically reduced. Olivier gives us but a few lines: "March on, join bravely, let us to it pell-mell./If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell." (V,iii,313-14).

Richard observes dryly that "The sun will not be seen today." (V,iii, 283). This is intended, of course, to represent the demise of the House of York. The filmed battle is then fought in brightest sunlight. A small point, perhaps, but one that many have noted.

And, finally, the mortal duel between Richard and Richmond is gone. Instead, Stanley's men surround Richard, inflicting dozens of death blows. Interestingly enough, this is what really happened on Bosworth Field. The last Plantagenet King was indeed surrounded at the end, cut off from the knights of his household. And that historical Richard, rather like Olivier's Richard, was stripped on the battlefield and thrown naked over the back of a horse, his arms and legs dangling on either side.

In all fairness, it must be noted that a number of Olivier's changes were positive and extremely effective. As Alice Griffith writes, "to make the involved politics and genealogy of the warring factions of York and Lancaster clear, Olivier uses the camera with stunning effect." For example, the complicated relationship between the historical characters is often shown as described. As Richard and Buckingham plot against Elizabeth Woodville and her faction, they look through an open window and we see the Queen and her adherents below. Richard and Buckingham seem to control them, "like pawns on a chess-

board."

During the coronation of Edward IV--itself an interpolation--the camera moves to the face of each of the principal characters, helping the audience to identify them.

Some of the very best of Olivier's additions are merely outgrowths of his interpretation of the role of Richard and are without words: His terrifying evil as he whirls to face the young Duke of York who has just taunted him about his crookback; and the way he physically forces the Duke of Buckingham to his knees the very moment the Crown has been attained. We see here a shift in Olivier's characterization. Says Constance Brown:

After accepting the kingship, Richard holds out his black-gloved hand for Buckingham to kiss. He thrusts it forcibly toward the camera, and holds it extended in the air like a huge black claw. The hand is extended toward the audience as much as toward Buckingham. For the first time, the audience is advised that what it has approved...and condoned in the earlier part of the film is its own destruction....

And who could forget the subtle brilliance in his rendering of "Off with his head, so much for Buckingham," or "Conscience avaunt, Richard's himself again."? (Both of these lines are Colley Cibber's.)

Laurence Olivier's rearrangement of Richard III has been called "wickedly ingenious"--the seduction of Lady Anne "brilliantly amended and miraculously convincing." Others have asserted that Olivier, "in insisting on clarity for the benefit of the millions who will see the film...has sacrificed the larger significance of the work." Roy Walker believes, for example, that "Dent has proceeded from insult of Shakespeare's text to injury by using and enlarging upon some of the Cibber changes...." Walker also raises, but does not discuss, unfortunately, the interesting question of whether or not a leading actor should be his own producer. In this case, the producer, in striving for the utmost in simplification and clarity, has deprived his audience of some of the finest dialogue of the play, and many of its subtle, but important, psychological implications. As Walker says, the film is "a triumph for the actors, the designer, and composer. It is at the same time the more remarkable and the more regrettable that it should be a triumph over a tampered text...they should have been content to speak only what Shakespeare set down for them without trying to out-Cibber Cibber." Yet, in spite of its very real shortcomings, Laurence Olivier's Richard III remains one of a handful of outstanding Shakespearean films.

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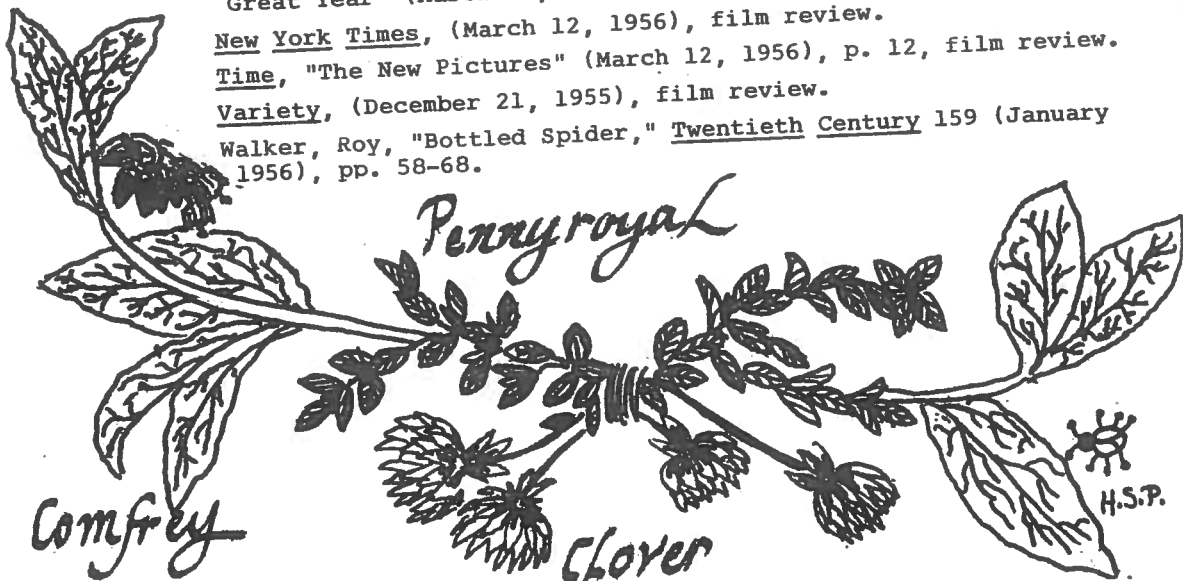
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#### Two Recently Discovered Letters in our Archives

To Goodwife Margery Nonesuch, Strawberry Cottage, Second Milestone, Berwick Road, Near York. I recommend myself heartily unto you and seek your advising and assistance as I have with me the memory of the welcome advice you sent me before the birth of my eldest son (now living) Edward. I now have five children living and as you know I have longtime followed my husband Richard in his duties as a soldier of the King and therefore my children have been born in far places where your assistance has been unavailable, though it would have been most welcome. My midwife here in Dublin by way of example uses several expressions I am unused to, as for instance speaking of me as being in foal. Unfortunately ever since this last time I have certain Signs, for I am sore and still bleed and am unable to be Church'd or to bed my husband. We are both distressed at these Signs and I therefore beseech your advising. Cecily.

To Cecily. I am sending you a bag of dried comfrey to be boiled into a weak brew in which you then each day soak the affected part. Also it would not be amiss for your Richard to drink the brew boiled separately from that which you soak in of course as it will help him feel less distressed. I have never forgiven myself for the excess borrhage I put in his Spring physic when he was a child. Discharge your midwife immediately and go to whomsoever the women in town attend, for she at least will be skilled in delivering babes and not horses. Also, I suggest you plant and use the second herb I am sending you. It is called pennyroyal and your new midwife will explain its use. If you will follow her instructions exactly you may not need her services or mine quite so soon again. And God have you in His merciful keeping. Margery.

Richard III: The Historiographical Tricotomy

By Professor Louis R. Bisceglia, Professor of History, San Jose State University. Talk delivered to the Richard III Society, Northern California Chapter, San Mateo, May 18, 1980

I would like to preface my remarks by noting that I am a generalist addressing a group of specialists--experts on late fifteenth century Britain. I do teach English history at San Jose State, have done so for the past ten years, but all of English history. In the course of a year I lecture approximately ninety hours--one hour to one and a half hours of which I lecture on Richard III. My principal areas of research are centered upon twentieth century British internationalism and social-intellectual history, as well as Ireland. So it is unlikely that I will enlighten you very much. I say this not out of any false modesty, but with utmost awareness of the high level of communication and research that is carried on within the membership as revealed in The Ricardian, the Bulletin and the California Loyaulte me lie (now the Register--ed.) newsletter.

Having been told by Pam Garrett, the Northern California Chapter President, that the membership would indeed be interested in hearing about my students' reactions to Richard III, I agreed to speak, but noted that the topic would more likely prove greater grounds for humor than enlightenment. My problem with the students' reactions to Richard III is that they are largely as uninformed as the general public's. Many are English majors and most have only heard about Richard III as one of Shakespeare's "historical" plays. Also I examine them on this topic in the midterm examination (which I return) and have no written record of their responses preserved. However, if I might generalize for a moment, I can say a few things about their reactions.

Basically, they are enormously "turned-on" by reading Tey's The Daughter of Time. They swallow her book hook, line and sinker, and they are usually ready to go out into the world and spread ill will toward Thomas More, Henry VII and all academic historians for aiding and abetting a five-hundred-year old crime.

Consequently, Tey has an important impact upon them. But she seems to encourage their darker and more aggressive propensities. She seems to inspire, at once, both an urge for Judge Lynch and a stirring of latent, anti-intellectual leanings, as if to confirm an earlier conviction: "I knew those pompous historians had not the slightest idea of what they were talking about." She also promotes that pervasive pestilence most historians spend their lives combating: the simplistic "conspiracy theory of history." The "Cat and the Rat" are replaced by Morton and More and the "Tudor Court Historians." All very simple, very tidy, packaged history with a message.

One could easily ask, why use a source which conveys such undesirable impressions. The answer lies in the alternatives and the benefits derived from Tey. The alternative is using a biography too large and formidable for survey students to handle. The benefits derived from the use of Tey in class are many: 1) the heightened interest of history as a detective story (many read it while I am still talking about Bede), 2) the important lesson concerning the view of history as an interpretation and a continuing story, 3) the emphasis on the essential need of getting down to primary as opposed to secondary sources, which she underscores so well, 4) the instructive steps by which she shows a good historian conducting research, 5) the manner in which the researcher selects evidence and rejects or qualifies opinion, 6)

and the way she demonstrates the intuitiveness and impressionistic nature of the discipline--despite the greatest reverence for a fact and quantitative or "scientific" history and the goal of objectivity. Quantitative history tends to minimize the human element in history. Tey tells a story in which Richard III is center stage, a person who does make a difference. All these things are delightfully inculcated in this intriguing little book.

Yet my role as an instructor is to temper and qualify the student's experience of reading Tey. Whilst praising the story, the author's writing style, the brilliant suspense, plot development, and the didactic simplicity of presentation (magnificently constructed--far better than any historian I have read), I still have to re-impose the factual side of the story. It usually comes as a shock, or at least a bit of a "downer," for the student to learn that 1) Henry VII did not murder the Princes in the Tower, 2) Bishop Morton did not write Thomas More's book, 3) and despite her anti-historian bias, Tey herself got the whole thing, the entire research project, from just such an historian by the name of Clements Markham.

Thus, at the risk of demeaning their whole exhilarating experience, at the risk of turning it into a tempest in a teapot, I essentially spend my time informing them just what we do know about Richard's reign; that is, how little we know about the era and the events of 1483-85. I also tell them how that incredible historiography associated with Richard came into being and developed into the modern period. My own interest in Richard III is in the historiography that has grown up about him. In other words, I like packing for the trip as much as I like the trip itself.

There are three facets of the Richard III question that fascinate me and basically embody my true interest in Richard III: 1) the universal appeal of wronged innocence and the widespread identification with it, 2) the popular vs. academic nature of the controversy, 3) and the unbelievable longevity of the controversy--going on three hundred fifty years now. There is also an Old Testament-Genesis quality to the historiography. If we forget Mancini and the Croyland Chronicle--the only two contemporary accounts, which, indeed, all too often are forgotten--the litany goes something like this: In the beginning was More, and More begat Vergil, and Vergil begat Hall, and Hall begat Hollinshed, and Hollinshed begat Shakespeare. For the New Testament, you could add: And Shakespeare begat Gairdner, and Gairdner begat Hanham.

There is also an Old Testament quality about the nature of the struggle involved, a simple moral tale of Good vs. Evil that can be told with a Star Wars simplicity: Sir George Buck discovered the Force in the first half of the seventeenth century, and he passed it on in the second half to William Winstanly, from whom it was picked up in the next century by Sir Horace Walpole, who gave succor, and passed it on in the nineteenth to Caroline Halsted. However, its modern use was only fully developed by Clements Markham after gargantuan combat with James Gairdner in the English Historical Review in the 1890's. And, to remix the metaphor, Markham begat numerous offspring: a first-born called Lindsay, a second-born deemed Lamb, and his favorites, the twins Tey and Kendall--one devoted to applying the Force to literature, the other to history! Hopefully, without the least bit of cynicism intended, since I have delighted in the works of all, that monumental historiography will continue to bear new offspring.

But now let us look at some of the features I have identified that have insured its continuance.

The first item identifiable is the most significant reason for the appeal of the Richard III story. Its continuance has been guaranteed by the magnitude of the injustice done to the man and the magnitude of the person who perpetuated the miscreant shape in the first (in reality, fifth) place. The world's greatest playwright--Shakespeare--created a monster. That monster has been portrayed since 1593 in every shape and form of communication since then. The audience for this monster is worldwide, and in the case of the English-speaking world, one which beams even wider throughout the general public to the commonest of common man. Thus, to learn that the person Shakespeare created had really very little to do with the historic personage named Richard III clearly comes as a shock. With it comes the added shock that Shakespeare was essentially a party to propaganda, and a continuing one at that, a confederate of brain-washers! That information and realization lends sympathy to the last Plantagenet and abhorrence of the historic crime that has been perpetrated against Richard. We have all felt misunderstood and we have all been innocently wronged. Those basically universal human experiences have produced an instant identification with Richard and his historic plight.

In October 1979, the Chancellor of the State University of California--himself a former historian in the state system--delivered a lecture in which he clearly identified his own plight as a misunderstood Chancellor with that of Richard as a wrongly maligned king. His lecture was entitled appropriately "Richard III: An Administrator with a Bad Press."<sup>2</sup>

"If Richard III were alive today," Chancellor Dumke declared, "his face would be a familiar image and his name would be a household word. He would have banner headlines and blaring television coverage. And it is safe to say that he would take little solace in what was written, or pictured, or said about him."<sup>3</sup>

It is clear by the very title he chose, that the California State University's senior administrator identified with Richard. "My purpose," he continued, "is...to observe that once a leader falls into the trap of being negatively interpreted by the media and the public, it makes little difference what he says or does--or what his intentions are."<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, this identification can be seen in the fatalistic conclusion of the historian cum Chancellor:

If my view of Richard is correct--that he was not the villain he has been painted, then one of the most disheartening aspects of the whole story is that it is entirely possible for an individual to be maligned for centuries with faint hope of having his reputation cleared. Woe betide the lamentable fate of the public official. Historical interpretation is not of itself infallible.<sup>5</sup>

The fallibility of historical interpretation also underscores a second feature of the Richard III controversy--the division between popular and academic historian on the issue. This basic antagonism has been there from the beginning. Sir George Buck, in The History of King Richard the Third (1619), was essentially reacting against the overbearing accounts of the sixteenth century historians, or what passed for accredited historians in that time. And so too was Walpole a century and a half later. His basic aim in writing Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of Richard III was principally tilting with an undermining the "considered" and "solemn" eighteenth century historians, the most parochial of whom Samuel Johnson called "Writers of Small Histories."

From the beginning then the debate over Richard III has been a "Town-Gown" one; and it has so remained. The "Gown" has not taken kindly to the "Town" knowing as much or more about something at which the "Gown"

is supposed to be an expert. And the "Gown" has had the establishment (of which it is a part) on its side as well--why else the persistence of the Richard III myth in authorized, official histories, textbooks, and primers for so long after the issue was aired. And so long after Ricardians clearly showed that from Walpole's time forward at least a healthy doubt about Shakespeare's image existed, to say nothing of downright falsification.

The classic example of this quality of the historiographical debate was seen recently by the review of Alison Hanham's critical work entitled Richard III and his Early Historians (1975). In the most establishment of establishment publications, The Times Literary Supplement, in a review by, who else? but the most cutting of the Court Historians, G.R. Elton, an essay appeared under the triumphant heading: "The Proof of Villainy."<sup>6</sup> And whom did Elton attack--not More, who was shown to be less than he had been, but Tey and the "Town," the Richard III Society--making jest that its American counterpart was incorporated. Here we find the doyen of Tudor historians lamenting in print how for years the bane of his existence was to have his every public lecture interrupted by questions about his opinions of Tey and her work. It was of course entirely appropriate as well that the rejoinder letters to the editor in subsequent TL editions did not constitute an "in-Gown" debate. Only "Townies," amongst whom the President of the Richard III Society, Jeremy Potter, pointed out that the bulk of Alison Hanham's "excursus" exculpated Richard III, not Thomas More, the real source of Shakespeare's monster. And that the basis for that monster story had no teeth. Academicians were silent and silenced.<sup>7</sup>

The confusion caused by Alison Hanham's book, and her own attack upon the revisionary views of Richard III in her "conclusion," exemplifies a third feature of the controversy--its longevity. The now centuries-old historic nature of the debate gives it a life of its own. With the publication of Kendall's biography of Richard III and the subsequent qualifications about Richard that began to appear in general textbooks such as David Harris Wilson's A History of England, I, for one, thought the debate essentially over; that it was one clearly belonging to history; that it was one in which the revisionists had clearly won.<sup>8</sup> But here comes Hanham in a detailed exposition running to nearly two hundred and twenty pages in which we are told that Kendall's account is as much "fiction" as More's. Can this be so? Did Richard and not Buckingham really murder the Princes in the Tower? Are those much bespeached bones really the remains of the little Princes--"those dear lambs!"? Hanham has recently continued her attack upon the revisionist view of Richard. Whether she has succeeded in overturning the revised assessment is very much open to question. However, one thing Alison Hanham has assured is that what Kendall called the "Great Debate" will continue. (Who was the Croyland Chronicler?) I think the Richard III Society should give Alison Hanham an award for insuring that the Great Debate will continue. Her own research has raised as many questions as she answered. There is no doubt her book has inspired, and will inspire further research into contemporary manuscripts. This we should be thankful for, and look forward to.

As for my own area, let me tell you about Churchill and Tonyandy, or Lloyd George and the "Coupon Election," or the Labour Party and the Zinoviev Letter, or perhaps about the "Bankers' Ramp" of 1931. Despite the occasional Eltonian pronouncements of "Proof of Villainy," the Richard III debate continues. And well it should. For it is the Tonyandies of history that keep us historians going, and the Richard III Societies that keep us on our toes.



## Footnotes

- 1 Both contemporary sources have only recently played a role in the historiographical controversy.
- 2 Chancellor Glenn S. Dumke, The First Annual Mildred Winters Lecture, San Jose State University, History Department, October 18, 1979, "Richard III: An Administrator with a Bad Press," unpublished manuscript, 11 pages.
- 3 Ibid., p.1
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid., p. 11
- 6 TLS, October 10, 1975, p. 1179
- 7 Ibid., October 24, 1975, p. 1264
- 8 A recent text, Clayton and David Roberts, A History of England, Vol. 1: Prehistory to 1714 (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980), presents a mixed revised view, but at least clearly denounces Shakespeare's "ogre" as unhistorical, pp. 211-212.

