"As Crooked in Thy Manners as Thy Shape": Reshaping Deformity in Loncraine's *Richard III*

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Among Shakespeare's characters, Richard III is perhaps most easily identified on sight by his physical appearance. Unlike Hamlet with Yorick's skull or Romeo and Juliet on their balcony, he is identifiable not by his context, but by his body itself, and "like hardly another character in Shakespearean drama, Richard III commands the audience's attention to his body."[1] Throughout the play, Richard invites us to read his body in a variety of ways; "his deceptions redefine the meaning of his deformity as he bends the semiotic power of his body to his own purposes, making it signify what he wants it to signify," even as other characters offer their own readings of his disfigurement.[2] The result is contradictions and ambiguities, in both text and performance, concerning Richard's deformity and the evil nature with which it is associated: it may serve as a visible sign of evil, but many characters are unaware of Richard's evil nature, and those who recognize it are usually silenced by textual cuts. The play suggests both that deformity is an external sign of evil and that his deformity has caused him to become evil; his status as a powerful soldier is at odds with his disability.

Every production must make choices in an effort to reconcile these issues and express what Richard's deformity represents in terms of that production's interpretation. In Richard Loncraine's 1995 film, starring Ian McKellen, Richard's physical disfigurement is minimal.[3] The implications of that deformity are not erased, however; rather, they are transposed onto Richard's status as a soldier and a Nazi. Consequently, the film is able to reconcile

many of the contradictions inherent to performing Richard's deformity by giving us another sort of monstrosity altogether: the aggressively masculine militarism of Adolf Hitler and his Third Reich. By moving the play to a specific historical moment, a 1930's England under the thrall of a Hitleresque Richard, the film limits the audience's understanding of Richard's evil deeds. It creates new avenues for understanding the play's moral universe, however, buy coding Richard as a masculine monster in opposition to the feminine world of Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of York.

It is potentially problematic to erase Richard's deformity, the physical sign through which his difference is known. According to early modern physiognomy, "the wicked intentions of a corrupt soul will inevitably manifest themselves in the body that houses it."[4] Deformity was a particularly telling sign: "If various bodily traits indicate wickedness and deceitfulness, there can be no more certain sign of evil than deformity. A misaligned body denotes a misaligned soul."[5] If Richard is clearly deformed, then in a Renaissance context those surrounding him should recognize his evil and not be taken in by his manipulations. Many of Richard's victims, however, never mention his deformity and even go out of their way to avoid doing so, such as when no one points out that Richard has been deformed since birth and therefore has not been cursed by Elizabeth and Jane Shore, or when no one contradicts Hastings's claim that Richard bears a physical resemblance to his father (3.7.13-14).[6] Those who do draw attention to his physical appearance—namely, the women—often find their roles drastically cut (as they are in the Loncraine film). Any production must establish what Richard's deformity is supposed to signify to the audience—a clear sign of innate evil, the cause of an inferiority complex that results in murderous rage, a metaphorical representation of the diseased state—and then reconcile the need to display that meaning to the audience with the need to conceal it from the other characters.

In the Loncraine film, the traditional marks of his deformity, his hunchback and limp, are underplayed, and the voices of those who suspect him from the beginning are quieted; the signs that, in most productions, would point to his evil nature are minimized. Yet McKellen's Richard unsettles us not because of

his physical handicaps so much as his marked resemblance to (and, due to the film's setting, clear associations with) Hitler. The use of such associations resolves the inherent conflict between Richard's monstrous appearance and the inability of his victims to see him for what he is: by portraying him as a Hitler beginning to build his empire, the Loncraine film gives us a Richard whose monstrosity is clearly visible to late-twentieth-century audiences, but invisible to most of the film's other characters.

If the Loncraine film wants the audience to see Richard as an evil tyrant, portraying him as a Hitleresque tyrant is certainly a simple, effective solution. There are certain limitations, however, to such an interpretive choice. Richard's deformity is ambiguous, particularly to modern audiences, who are much less likely to read his misshapen body as the sign of a warped mind than Shakespeare's original audience would have been. Because the signs associated with his evil nature are now more open to interpretation, the question of Richard's evil nature also becomes less simplistic. To post-Holocaust audiences, however, the image of Hitler is far less ambiguous and limits the scope of Richard's character. From the outset, we fail to form the close relationship that most Richards have with their audiences; "associating Richard with contemporary atrocities drastically alters his relationship with the audience in a way that creates serious challenges for the actor."[7] We are not duped by McKellen's Richard—how can we trust someone with such a clear resemblance to the twentieth century's most notorious monster?—but part of the joy of watching *Richard III* is being duped. He engages us with his wit and brilliance and plays on our sympathies, but the image of Hitler distances us from him.

Richard's frequent communication with the audience usually serves to bridge that gap. In Shakespeare's text, and in many productions, Richard's "most important relationship is not with any of the other characters, but with the audience."[8] By engaging his audience, charming us with his wit and inviting us along his journey, Richard wins his viewers' hearts even as he performs despicable acts; since we are privy to all his machinations and delighted by his wickedness, we become his accomplices. Such a performance was the hallmark of Olivier's film: from his first soliloquy, he addresses us directly and invites us to follow

him in his exploits. Though many Shakespearean films, as Samuel Crowl argues, have had much success with such use of direct address, "McKellen reports that he had some difficulty convincing Loncraine to allow Richard the ability to break realism's convention and address the camera directly" during Richard's first soliloquy, and the film "desperately needs more such moments, for Richard's soliloquies are as important to establishing his character and his unique relationship with the audience as are Hamlet's."[9] Instead of engaging us from the beginning, McKellen's Richard does not notice the audience's presence until he has nearly completed his soliloquy; only then does he see us as if reflected behind him in the mirror, and his expression betrays annoyance at being interrupted: "He sneers at us as he sneers at the feeble characters he manipulates in the film. The result is an alienation from him, as opposed to the fascinated emotional participation in his schemes and our sharing in his response to their success that Olivier's evil schemer invites."[10] Without such a connection, it is difficult for the audience to care about Richard. We can only watch, from a distance, in grim fascination.

If Richard does not make us care about him, we are less likely to care *why* he does what he does. Although contemporary audiences would have seen Richard's deformity as a sign of preexisting evil, both *3 Henry VI* and *Richard III* suggest otherwise, by having Richard state that because he is deformed, he is not accountable to the human race and will commit evil in order to compensate for his physical shortcomings: "since this world affords no joy to me . . . / I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown"; "since the heavens have shap'd my body so, / Let hell make crook'd my mind to answer it"; "since I cannot prove a lover . . . / I am determined to prove a villain" (*3 Henry VI* 3.2.165,168; *3 Henry VI* 5.6.78-79; *Richard III* 1.1.28-29). Freud characterized Richard as an "exception," as "one who imagines himself . . . as in some way handicapped by nature and consequently entitled to special status and special behavior. The 'exception' looks for compensation, a way of asserting himself even as he exacts some form of retribution against the world."[11] Such psychological interpretations of a Richard who "anticipat[es] the modern ideas of psychiatrists such as Adler,

with his theories of the aggressive patterns of compensation aroused by an inferiority complex," are common in modern productions of the play, most notably Bill Alexander's 1984 production with the RSC starring Antony Sher.[12]

This reading is largely shaped by the "primal unreliability of his mother, the Duchess of York. In the play we get glimpses of a lifetime of rejection by his mother because of his deformity."[13] McKellen states that, in the film, Richard's evil is the result of maternal neglect: "His mother hates him simply because he is deformed. There is no man in the world who can recover from that."[14] The film's historical parallels, however, make such a reading hard to swallow. Although a more nonspecific representative of tyranny might invite our sympathies, Hitler is the ultimate modern sign of pure evil, and it is harder to excuse the actions of a clearly Hitleresque Richard simply because his mother didn't love him.

Reading Richard's evil as fascism is further limited by the film's reluctance to make full use of the association between Richard's tyranny and Hitler's. The film strips away the play's medieval context, but does not fully establish a historical context for its new setting, expecting the flash and glamour of the 1930s and the visible markers of the Third Reich to make its arguments for it. If Nazism is meant to serve in the place of deformity as a sign of Richard's evil nature, it is less effective here than it could be; without fully portraying the attendant political circumstances, the film's Richard is certainly no medieval usurper, but not really a Third Reich fascist. While the film attempts to underscore its political arguments by providing a well-known historical context, Loncraine's reluctance to reconcile two vastly different periods robs the film of any real political meaning. When Gary Crowdus pointed out, in an interview with Ian McKellen, that critics are concerned with "discrepancies between Shakespeare's story and the actual history of the fascist regimes of the Thirties," McKellen merely replied "Very boring of them, really."[15] His dismissal of the issue is symptomatic of the film's refusal to address the differences between the political circumstances surrounding Richard's usurpation of the English crown in the 1480s and Hitler's rise to power in Germany in the 1930s. Richard succeeds not because of public support, but because he

is next in line and has gotten rid of everyone in his way. Written near the end of Elizabeth I's life, the play expresses the anxieties that face a hereditary monarchy who is in danger of running out of suitable heirs. This context bears little resemblance to the circumstances leading up to World War II: "Twentieth-century fascism, as a mass movement of the lower classes spearheaded by an autocratic dictator and supported by industrial capital, has little in common with the dynastic struggles of hereditary nobility which comprise the politics of Shakespeare's play."[16]

The need for a more politically developed setting, however, opens the film up to another issue common in performing *Richard III*: the struggle between the play's historical concerns, acted out by a large ensemble cast, and our desire to focus almost exclusively on Richard himself. Richard is "one of the greatest character parts in Shakespeare, and deserves all of the attention he demands. Yet he is defined, as all Shakespearean characters are defined, by his context."[17] The play "has always been a favorite star vehicle for actors, from the days of Garrick and Colley Cibber, whose version was cut and expanded to make Richard even more central. More than any of Shakespeare's other histories, and arguably more than any of Shakespeare's other plays, it is dominated by its protagonist."[18] Shakespeare's text, when taken in context with the preceding *Henry VI* plays, is more of an ensemble piece showing a large group of characters coping with the aftermath of a protracted civil war. Although Richard is clearly the play's focus, in this context his deformity and the internal evil that deformity implies stand more as a metaphorical representation of a deformed civil state, a nation that has not developed out of its violent past just as Richard's body has not fully developed. Rather than a lone tyrant, his actions reflect the evils of many characters, including his victims, who, in the context of the Wars of the Roses, have their own sins to account for.

Difficulties arise, however, in performing such a work to modern audiences. Many of today's viewers possess neither knowledge about, nor interest in, the convoluted history leading up to the Yorkists' accession to the throne; the play is much more appealing to modern audiences as the story of a witty, engaging devil whose cleverness and amorality help him effortlessly

eliminate his helpless victims, who seem so much duller and less intelligent than Richard himself: "One of the difficulties with *Richard III*, in terms of revisionist political production, is that it is so completely focused on the title character. . . . The other characters are important but are sketchily defined; to an audience unfamiliar with the historical background or the other plays of the tetralogy, they are just heads for Richard to chop off."[19] And given the size of his role—the second longest after *Hamlet*—"it is tempting for directors to treat the play strictly as the tragedy of one man rather than as the tragic history of a nation."[20] Such a choice is economic as well as artistic; *Richard III* as a star vehicle, highlighting the performance of a renowned and accomplished actor at the expense of all other roles, brings more ticket-buying patrons to the theater; more ensemble-driven interpretations, in which the culpability of the play's other characters is made apparent, are often reserved for versions that are performed as part of the first Henriad cycle (such as Michael Bogdanov's *Wars of the Roses* or the BBC recording), in which the historical events surrounding *Richard III* can be more fully explored.[21]

Stripping away that context, making Richard's victims helpless dupes rather than lesser Machiavels, robs the original text of some of its depth and complexity, but such choices are a necessary evil in producing a 400-year-old play to modern audiences. Unlike most productions, however, Loncraine's film operates neither as a star vehicle nor as an ensemble piece steeped in a specific historical context. The script is excised of most of its references to the events of the *Henry VI* plays, and most of the roles are drastically cut; in 1995, however, an Ian McKellen film would not have been considered a star vehicle to film audiences (things have changed since the *Lord of the Rings* and *X-Men* films). While this seems like a good compromise, in practice this approach does not work particularly well; the film ultimately has little to say about either medieval usurpation or twentieth-century fascism. Although the culpability of the other characters is not as present in the film, McKellen's Richard does not work as a lone tyrant because of the historical context to which the film has been relocated: "When Richard gets to the throne, there is no state, no structure and no programme for the *Volk*. He is only personally a Machiavel."[22] The historical contexts

surrounding the rise of Nazism are lost in a film that strips away its original context; it would have done well to have explored the political context of its setting as fully as Shakespeare's play explores Richard's medieval world.

The film "appropriates one of the play's major themes, Richard's manipulation of the masses, to fit with a twentieth-century recasting of the play."[23] Those manipulated masses, however, are curiously absent; they only appear in Richard's Nuremberg-style rally, and we have no sense of who they are or why they support him. Instances of propaganda—newsreel footage of the coronation, the photos "used as 'verification' of Hastings's supposed treachery"—never operate as *propaganda* in the film, but rather only as a way for Richard to indulge his obsession with his own image.[24] We are given no sense of who else is seeing such images and what effect they may have on the nation's political future; "more use of the black and white newsreel footage would have been an effective film technique through which Loncraine might have captured more of the political flavor of the age he wishes to invoke."[25] Hitler "has come to represent that evil for this century, but he did so as the voice of a political movement which, however vicious and perverse, did have massive popular support as the documentaries demonstrate so chillingly."[26] As Crowl argues, the film's historical setting would have been more effective if Loncraine had put less effort into the surface trappings of the 1930s and more into "creating a series of mass rallies and street activities to mark the growing spread of Richard's Blackshirts as his crude and cruel tyranny seeps into the culture" and "depicting the mass, mob activity that Eyre rightly associates with the tactics of the modern dictator."[27] Otherwise, it is unclear what argument the film is trying to make as to the nature of Richard's evil deeds. If they hope to suggest that fascism could have taken over England in the 1930s, it is unclear how a ruler such as Richard would have accomplished it.

While more political context would have made the Loncraine film more consistent, the 1990 stage version at the National Theatre directed by Richard Eyre, on which Loncraine's film is based, suggests that the opposite effect—downplaying images associated with a specific setting—may have also been successful.

Of the stage production, some critics maintain that "when Eyre started going for blatant Nazi parallels, the effect became very forced."[28] Others argue, however, that this was less of a problem in the stage production because "what was largely symbolic and suggestive on stage, becomes relentlessly realistic in Loncraine's film."[29] The set "established the 1930s period by suggestion rather than by any detailed recreation of a palace interior," relying more strongly on the markers of totalitarianism in general than on establishing specific parallels with Hitler's Germany; as H. R. Coursen argues, the setting works best if "Hitler [is] used as characterisation, as subtext, but not as the centrepiece for a fully articulated fascist setting."[30] Eyre claims he "never sought to establish literal equivalents between mediaeval and modern tyrants," opening up the play to the idea that Richard's tyranny could occur anywhere, at any time.[31] As McKellen observed, "Audiences took the message personally wherever we toured. In Hamburg, Richard's blackshirt troops seemed like a commentary on the Third Reich. In Bucharest, when Richard was slain, the Romanians stopped the show with heartfelt cheers, in memory of their recent freedom from Ceaucescu's regime. In Cairo, as the Gulf War was hotting up, it all seemed like a new play about Saddam Hussein."[32] The variety of responses "proves we have gotten to the heart of a dictator."[33]

Such simplification focused audience attention on Richard, rather than the set surrounding him. By suggesting the fascist setting but not overemphasizing it, and by giving McKellen's Richard more presence on a sparsely furnished stage, Eyre's stage production seems to have been more successful in striking the balance between historical context and star power: "In high contrast to the gorgeous period detail of the film, the bleak austerity of the stage production focused attention on McKellan's [*sic*] performance, filled as it was with memorable eye-catching flourishes such as his one-handed dexterity with cigarette lighters, knives and clothing. It was a high-wire act."[34] Such a focus on the figure of Richard provides an exploration of his evil nature that is better able to reconcile medieval and modern politics, "permitt[ing] McKellen to suggest the concentric circles of institutionalised evil radiating outward from the still centre which his presence created. The effect was achieved because he

stood alone on a vast stage, not surrounded by the busy 1930s *mise-en-scène* that Loncraine constructs."[35]

In this regard, the film works best in how Richard's deformity as a sign of evil is translated not strictly as Nazism, but as a dangerously hyper-masculine militarism set up in opposition to the feminine world of Annette Bening's Queen Elizabeth. As noted earlier, the attention given to Richard's deformity and the evil nature it betrays is often compromised by textual cuts. While the male characters rarely mention his deformity, Elizabeth, Margaret, Anne, and the Duchess of York make extensive references to it, perhaps as the only weapon in their arsenal. At the moments when Richard is at the height of his performance, the women cut him down again, drawing attention away from the Proteus's many masks (dashing seducer, loyal brother, strong leader) and back on his monstrous nature: "Margaret's public listing of crimes and curses at their perpetrators interrupts the spirit of complicity between the audience and the protagonist that has been developed during the wooing scene . . . The cursing scene forces the audience to see Richard through the world's eyes again and to recall his crimes."[36]

When the text is cut for performance (as it inevitably is, being some four hours in length), the women's lines are usually the first to go. Their curses draw attention to the role of providence in the play, which often strikes modern audiences as outdated, and they are most associated with the play's historical scope, bringing emphasis to its nature as an ensemble piece concerned with a long series of historical events with which many modern audiences are not familiar. Since women's lines in the play consist largely of curses against Richard's evil and insults concerning his physical appearance, cutting down the women's roles simultaneously takes the focus away from his deformity, the visible sign of his evil nature.

While women's roles are certainly cut in Loncraine's film, they are not excised from McKellen's text as drastically as in Olivier's film. While the role of Margaret is lost, many of her most powerful lines are given to Elizabeth and the Duchess of York. The film establishes Elizabeth as Richard's moral and political opposition (probably out of a desire to exploit Annette Bening's box office power rather than simply as the result of feminist

principles), taking the significance of Richard's deformity as a sign of evil recognized by his female opponents and rewrites it in terms of opposing masculine and feminine energies. While removing the women takes away from emphasis on deformity as monstrosity, the film establishes Elizabeth's "feminine" world as the opponent to Richard's "masculine" (and therefore monstrous) one.

Richard's masculinity, in the film, is visualized by his militarism, serving to resolve another of the text's contradictions concerning Richard's disfigurement. The deformities ascribed to Richard suggest physical disability, but Richard in the *Henry VI* plays has been a soldier and often speaks of himself as such in *Richard III*. Although Emyr Wyn Jones attempts to establish what type of deformity Richard might have had, based on Shakespeare's text and accounts by Tudor historians, he finds that none of these medical causes are consistent with a man who "could have donned armour and taken an active physical part in warfare."[37] Nor can Richard's status as a soldier easily be dismissed in performance, as he uses his military past not only as a supposed motivation for his crimes (he is better suited to warmongering than lovemaking), but also as a way to manipulate others by reminding them of his military support of the house of York. Richard is often played as a remarkably physical character, dashing all over the stage, stirring up trouble; performances must seek ways in which to reconcile Richard's vitality, which appeals so to audiences, with the physical limitations suggested by his deformity.

McKellen asserts in his interview with Crowdus that *Richard III* is "a story about a soldier."[38] In the film, his deformity cannot be an impediment to his military actions: "Richard cannot be as deformed as his enemies say he is, because he was first and foremost a soldier."[39] Instead of trying to reconcile Richard's physical limitations with his status as a soldier, the meaning behind those limitations in the play's original context now emerges through that status. Rather than deformity standing for an external sign of internal corruption, the film instead suggests that Richard's unbending militarism is a sign of his evil, evidenced in the tension between the masculine world of tyranny and the feminized world of Elizabeth.

Although Richard is certainly characterized by "unruly masculinity," as Ian Moulton has argued, the "unruly" nature of Richard's character and body has feminine overtones. As Richard Grinnell argues, Richard is linked throughout the text to images of witchcraft and, consequently, women's bodies: "Richard's body is a body that is not controlled by its physical boundaries; it is a grotesque body, a body that overflows its edges to take on new shapes. Interestingly, women's bodies, as well, were considered transgressing bodies, bodies that did not remain within the boundaries set for them by patriarchal culture."[40]

But the body of McKellen's Richard is defined by an emphasis on boundaries and control. His masculinized image as a soldier disguises his physical handicaps almost entirely: "Loncraine presents a Richard who, in the context of his world, is its best dresser and smoothest talker. The film presents the elegance of dress as its central symbol of the surfaces that hide the body and give the illusion of wholeness, just as Richard's deformed arm is always plunged deep into the front pocket of his pants, an erotically suggestive gesture that gives his body an uneven swagger of masculine bravado."[41] His barely perceptible hump and limp are concealed by his military gait and uniform, and the deformed hand only makes an appearance when it would benefit him to do so—indeed, the most unsettling aspect of his deformity is not the deformity itself, but his freakish ability to overcome it through feats of one-handed dexterity. Richard's status as a soldier downplays his deformity, but it also highlights the ruthless villainy that deformity had represented in the play's original context: "Subverting all feminine qualities in himself, he has identified with the image of manliness (that is, aggression and destructiveness) as bodied forth in his ruthless father."[42] McKellen's Richard is a "repressed, lethal machine," a "study in perverted militarism" and "psychotic military rigidity."[43] With his "exaggeratedly rigid bearing," speaking with "the clipped and strangled vowels of the officer elite" and dressed "in an impeccable military greatcoat with regimental red tabs," he is recognizable to English audiences in particular as "the consummate aristocratic soldier whose military genius, surely primed at Sandhurst, was temporarily disabled by the Yorkist triumph . . . he had helped to engineer."[44]

The repeated use of boar imagery in the film further emphasizes Richard's hyper-masculine nature. As Margaret Olson argues, Richard's crimes can be understood in terms of the animal images with which he is associated, and performances often link those images to the characteristics they wish to highlight—such as the seductiveness of Olivier's hissing serpent or the intricate plotting of Sher's "bottled spider." In Loncraine's film, Richard's heraldic symbol, the boar, is most visible; it replaces Hitler's swastika on his banners, and Stanley dreams of Richard with a terrifying, boar-like visage. As Olson argues, the boar is particularly associated with Richard's masculine, warlike tendencies in that "Richard's burnt-earth policy of eliminating his enemies resembles a boar's violent uprooting of the earth in its search for nourishment" and "references to him as a boar also serve another function: they highlight his strength and ability to fight"; Ian Moulton associates the image with "bestial masculinity."[45]

Whether Richard's relationship to men is to be read as homoerotic or simply homosocial will be informed, doubtless, by the viewer's own familiarity with McKellen, whose public persona as a gay actor and champion of gay rights invites homoerotic readings of his performances.[46] He receives pleasure in a massage from a faceless underling and the embrace of Ratcliffe after his nightmare, and he has no interest in his wife's sexual advances. The ways in which McKellen's Richard experiences pleasure, however, are linked not simply to homoerotic desire, but to a larger network of homosocial, masculine, which he experiences as sexual gratification. He takes pleasure in his own image as a brutal force of masculine militarism, and in the replication of that image onto other sites: in his reflection in the mirror and viewing newsreel footage of his coronation; in fondling Clarence's glasses (which come as a message that the execution has been carried out); in saluting Prince Edward's bullet-ridden corpse after seducing his widow; in poring over photographs of the hanged Hastings (which Johnson compares to "a craving for pornography")[47]—images that please him through the representation of his own power through and over men.

The play has been seen as "a movement away from the feminine toward a dominant and even ultra-masculine principle.

Thus Richard is not simply a garden variety chauvinist, but is the very embodiment of an increasingly misogynistic world-view."[48] These feminine and masculine "principles" are expressed not only through the text, but through the film's setting as well. While Richard's world is characterized by masculine militarism, "Yorkist society is glamourously feminized."[49] The film's feminine postwar world is set up, visually, in opposition to the violent, masculine world in which the film opens and which Richard hopes to restore. Consequently the film "graphically understands the consequences of Richard's evil in female terms and locates in women's voices the only source of moral opposition to his nihilistic agency," particularly in the figure of Elizabeth, who serves as a "pole of positive identification to counterbalance Richard."[50]

In terms of this opposition, it is telling that Loncraine's film retains the wooing-by-proxy scene between Richard and Elizabeth, which Olivier cuts. As "Richard's deadly career has been a repudiation of the life-giving goodness of the womb," the retention of such lines as "in your daughter's womb I bury them, / Where in that nest of spicery they will breed" (4.4.423-24) highlights the contrast not only between the two characters, but between the masculine and feminine forces they represent.[51] Here Elizabeth also supports the heteronormativity that Richard, who at the film's opening "stands out . . . for the fact that when the camera zooms out we find him standing alone amidst the dancing couples," rejects.[52] By showing Elizabeth leading her daughter away from Richard at the end of this scene, both of them appearing next at young Elizabeth's marriage to Richmond, the film presents Elizabeth as a powerful opponent to Richard, steering the nation away from Richard's destructive homosociality and back to normative masculinity and heterosexuality, as embodied by Richmond and Princess Elizabeth—the same couple we saw together in the film's beginning as Richard stood alone.

In Olivier and Loncraine's films, "Henry is depicted by young, muscular actors, who fulfill conventional expectations of masculine attractiveness."[53] For the Loncraine film, McKellen states that they "wanted an upright, handsome young man whose youth, beauty and assurance Richard could understandably

envy."[54] But since masculine militarism, not physical ugliness, is the hallmark of evil in Loncraine's film, the film ultimately suggests that Richmond, handsome though he may be, has the makings of a Richard in him. In the film's final moments, Richard "falls in slow motion into a Hell that looks like a movie set. The sequence evokes the absurd cliché of popular/horror film dying, which we half expect the villain to survive so that he can return for one more fight with his vanquisher."[55] Every good horror-movie villain comes back for the sequels, and the film, by addressing late-twentieth-century audiences with a sixteenth-century play about fifteenth-century politics in the guise of mid-twentieth-century atrocities, suggests that the monstrosity of fascism will continue to reincarnate, take on new forms. As Richard falls into the flames, grinning, Richmond turns to the camera and "a similar sly smile . . . spreads on Richmond's face as he realizes he's now the top gun."[56] Evil therefore becomes something not innate or psychological, not something ordained by God or marked on the body, but the natural consequence of absolute power.

This ending effectively demonstrates how well the film works when the danger of evil is not specifically tied to the image of Hitler, but is instead associated with totalitarian rule and masculine brutality in a way that could be explored in any historical context. While the analogy of Richard as the leader of the Third Reich limits the ways in which Richard's character and political actions can be read, translating the evils indicated by Richard's deformity in the text into the dangers of fascism and militarism serve the film well.

Notes

1. Greta Olson, "Richard III's Animalistic Criminal Body," *Philological Quarterly* 82, no. 3 (2003): 2.

2. Michael Torrey, "'The Plain Devil and Dissembling Looks': Ambivalent Physiognomy and Shakespeare's *Richard III*," *English Literary Renaissance* 30, no. 2 (2000): 143.

3. *Richard III*, DVD, directed by Richard Loncraine (1995; Los Angeles: MGM/UA Home Entertainment, Inc., 2000).

4. Torrey, "The Plain Devil," 128.

5. Ibid., 129.

6. All citations from William Shakespeare, *The Third Part of Henry the Sixth* and *The Tragedy of King Richard the Third*, are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997).

7. James N. Loehlin, "Playing Politics: *Richard III* in Recent Performance," *Performing Arts Journal* 15, no. 3 (1993): 82.

8. Loehlin, "Playing Politics," 80.

9. Samuel Crowl, "Changing Colors Like the Chameleon: Ian McKellen's *Richard III* from Stage to Film," *Post Script: Essays in Film and the Humanities* 17, no. 1 (1997): 58.

10. H.R. Coursen, "Filming Shakespeare's History: Three Films of *Richard III*" in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film*, ed. Russell Jackson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 103.

11. Cited in David Pollard, "Richard in the 'Amorous Looking Glass," *The Upstart Crow* 13 (1993): 50.

12. Hugh M. Richmond, *Shakespeare in Performance*: King Richard III (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 24.

13. Pollard, "Richard in the 'Amorous Looking Glass,'" 51.

14. Ian McKellen, quoted in George L. Geckle, "Shakespeare's Rhetoric versus the Ideology of Ian McKellen's *Richard III*," *Theatre Symposium* 5 (1997): 59.

15. Gary Crowdus, "Shakespeare Is Up to Date: An Interview with Sir Ian McKellen," *Cineaste* 24, no.1 (1998): 3.

16. Loehlin "Playing Politics," 82.

17. Scott Colley, *Richard's Himself Again: A Stage History of* Richard III (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 3.

18. Loehlin "Playing Politics," 80.

19. Ibid.

20. Marliss C. Desens, "Cutting Women Down to Size in the Olivier and Loncraine Films of *Richard III*," in *Shakespeare Performed: Essays in Honor of R.A. Foakes*, ed. Grace Ioppolo (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2000), 261.

21. Melissa Dana Gibson, "Himself Again: *Richard III* on the London Stage in the 1980s," *New England Theatre Journal* 12 (2001): 150.

22. Coursen, "Filming Shakespeare's History," 105.

23. Jared Scott Johnson, "The Propaganda Imperative: Challenging Mass Media Representations in McKellen's *Richard III*," *College Literature* 31, no. 4 (2004): 49.

24. Ibid., 52.

25. Crowl, "Changing Colors," 59.

26. Coursen, "Filming Shakespeare's History," 107.

27. Crowl, "Changing Colors," 59, 61.

28. Loehlin, "Playing Politics," 88.

29. Crowl, "Changing Colors," 55.

30. Ibid.; Coursen, "Filming Shakespeare's History," 106.

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32. Ian McKellen, *William Shakespeare's* Richard III (London: Doubleday, 1996), 13.

33. McKellen, quoted in Geckle, "Shakespeare's Rhetoric," 55.

34. Gibson, "Himself Again," 157.

35. Coursen, "Filming Shakespeare's History," 108.

36. Olson, "Richard III's Animalistic, Criminal Body," 5.

37. Emyr Wyn Jones, "Richard III's Disfigurement: A Medical Postscript," *Folklore* 91, no. 2 (1980): 214.

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39. McKellen, quoted in Geckle, "Shakespeare's Rhetoric," 58.

40. Richard W. Grinnell, "Witchcraft and Theater in *Richard III*," *The Upstart Crow* 17 (1997): 70.

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42. Pollard, "Richard in the 'Amorous Looking Glass,'" 51.

43. Crowl, "Changing Colors," 54; Irving Wardle, English writer and theater critic, quoted in Geckle, "Shakespeare's Rhetoric," 60; Loehlin. "Playing Politics," 88.

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45. Ian Frederick Moulton, "'A Monster Great Deformed': The Unruly Masculinity of Richard III," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (1996): 265; Olson, "Richard III's Animalistic, Criminal Body," 8, 10.

46. Barbara Hodgdon, "Replicating Richard: Body Doubles, Body," 216.

47. Johnson, "The Propaganda Imperative," 52, 47.

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53. Olson, "Richard III's Animalistic Criminal Body," 2.

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