SHAKESPEARE SURVEY

AN ANNUAL SURVEY OF SHAKESPEARIAN STUDY AND PRODUCTION

28

EDITED BY
KENNETH MUIR

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
CAMBRIDGE
LONDON · NEW YORK · MELBOURNE

Published by the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP
Bentley House, 200 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB
32 East 57th Street, New York, NY 10022, USA
296 Beaconsfield Parade, Middle Park, Melbourne 3206, Australia

© Cambridge University Press 1975

Library of Congress catalogue card number: 75–2720

ISBN: 0 521 20837 8

First published 1975

Shakespeare Survey was first published in 1948. For the first eighteen volumes it was edited by Allardyce Nicoll under the sponsorship of the University of Birmingham, the University of Manchester, the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

Printed in Great Britain
at the
University Printing House, Cambridge
(Euan Phillips, University Printer)

CONTENTS

List of Plates *page* viii

'Richard II' and the Realities of Power *by* S. SCHOENBAUM 1

The Politics of Corruption in Shakespeare's England *by* JOEL HURSTFIELD 15

Literature without Philosophy: 'Antony and Cleopatra' *by* MORRIS WEITZ 29

Self-consciousness in Montaigne and Shakespeare *by* ROBERT ELLRODT 37

'Measure for Measure': the Bed-trick *by* A. D. NUTTALL 51

Shakespeare and the Doctrine of the Unity of Time *by* ERNEST SCHANZER 57

'Coriolanus' and the Body Politic *by* ANDREW GURR 63

'Titus Andronicus', III, i, 298–9 *by* PIERRE LEGOUIS 71

'The Merchant of Venice' and the Pattern of Romantic Comedy *by* R. F. HILL 75

The Integrity of 'Measure for Measure' *by* ARTHUR C. KIRSCH 89

'To Say One': an Essay on 'Hamlet' *by* RALPH BERRY 107

'The Tempest' and King James's 'Daemonologie' *by* JACQUELINE E. M. LATHAM 117

Sight-lines in a Conjectural Reconstruction of an Elizabethan Playhouse *by* D. A. LATTER 125

The Smallest Season: The Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford in 1974 *by* PETER THOMSON 137

The Year's Contributions to Shakespearian Study:

1 Critical Studies *reviewed by* D. J. PALMER 149

2 Shakespeare's Life, Times and Stage *reviewed by* N. W. BAWCUTT 164

3 Textual Studies *reviewed by* RICHARD PROUDFOOT 173

Index 183

PLATES

BETWEEN PAGES 136 AND 137

I *King John*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, 1974. Directed by John Barton with Barry Kyle, designed by John Napier with Martyn Bainbridge. Emrys James as King John.
[*Photo: Joe Cocks Studio, Stratford-upon-Avon*]

II *Cymbeline*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, 1974. Directed by John Barton with Barry Kyle and Clifford Williams, designed by John Napier with Martyn Bainbridge and Sue Jenkinson. The bedroom scene (act II, scene ii) with Ian Richardson as Iachimo and Susan Fleetwood as Imogen.
[*Photo: Joe Cocks*]

III *Twelfth Night*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, 1974. Directed by Peter Gill, designed by William Dudley. Jane Lapotaire as Viola and John Price as Orsino.
[*Photo: Joe Cocks*]

IV *Twelfth Night*, act II, scene v, Nicol Williamson as Malvolio.
[*Photo: Joe Cocks*]

V *Measure for Measure*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, 1974. Directed by Keith Hack, designed by Maria Björnson. Michael Pennington as Angelo.
[*Photo: Joe Cocks*]

VI *Measure for Measure*, Michael Pennington as Angelo, Francesca Annis as Isabella.
[*Photo: Joe Cocks*]

'RICHARD II' AND THE REALITIES OF POWER

S. SCHOENBAUM

There is a scene in an Elizabethan play on the reign of Richard II – the play, anonymous and without title, of uncertain date and theatrical provenance, now commonly called *Woodstock* or *Thomas of Woodstock* – in which one of the caterpillars of the commonwealth enters the royal presence poring over a book. 'How now, what readst thou, Bushy?', asks the King. To which his favourite replies:

> The monument of English Chronicles,
> Containing acts and memorable deeds
> Of all your famous predecessor kings.[1]

This book – is it Holinshed (a bit large for the purpose) or Stow evoked in a kind of surreal flash-forward? – holds examples, strange and wonderful, of treason and conquest applicable to Richard's own predicament. The information on which he eagerly seizes, however, is more prosaic. Bushy reads: 'Upon the 3rd of April 1365 was Lord Richard, son to the Black Prince, born at Bordeaux.' '1365...', muses the King. 'What year is this?' (This is one of those plays in which characters ask the year, presumably more for the spectators' benefit than their own; it is not dramaturgy of a Shakespearian order.) The year, it turns out, is 1387. Thus does it dawn on Richard that he has reached his majority. He can now claim his birthright, the throne of England, and set in motion the catastrophic sequence of events which will lead to his fall.

The episode illustrates the education of a prince and furnishes another instance – if one were needed – of the uses of literacy. The sequel in *Woodstock* properly reminds us of the caution we must exercise in making use of written memorials. Woodstock yields up the mace of his office of Lord Protector (an office that the historical Woodstock did not enjoy) with good grace, but not without glancing sceptically at the authority which the King has consulted:

> And yet I think I have not wronged your birthright:
> For if the times were searched, I guess your grace
> Is not so full of years till April next.[2]

In truth our source-materials are often enough ambiguous, confused, or contradictory. A note of complaint is heard early. 'This tragicall example', William Baldwin remarks on Mowbray's 'tragedy' in *The Mirror for Magistrates*, 'was of all the cumpany well liked, how be it a doubte was founde therin, and that by meanes of the diuersity of the Chronicles: for where as maister Hall whom in this storye we chiefely folowed, maketh Mowbray accuser, and Boleynbroke appellant, mayster Fabian reporteth the matter quite contrary, & that by the reporte of good authours, makyng Boleynbroke the accuser, and Mowbray the appellant.'[3] What can a moral poet do? Leave such matters to the experts who have access to the documents, trust to the best authorities, and go about his proper business of discouraging vice and exalting virtue. For the modern scholar, deprived of the consolations of didacticism, the solution is not so straightforward.

[1] *Woodstock: A Moral History*, ed. A. P. Rossiter (1946), p. 98.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[3] *The Mirror for Magistrates*, ed. Lily B. Campbell (Cambridge, 1938), p. 110.

I

I have turned to the reign of Richard II for the induction to my paper, and it is Shakespeare's play on Richard that is my subject here. It seemed an especially appropriate choice. In bodying-forth on the stage the *fons et origo* of the Wars of the Roses and the other tumultuous events that occupy Shakespeare through eight historical dramas, *Richard II* stands in much the same formal relation to the sequence as does the 'Introduction' (and first year) of the history of Henry IV in Edward Hall's vast chronicle of *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancaster and York*. The deposition of a reigning monarch is (as events in America have lately reminded us) a fearful thing, intrinsically dramatic, immense in itself, and also immense in its consequences. It invokes great themes and issues: The Divine Right of Kings, the falls of princes, and the destiny of a nation, and invites us to meditate on the mysteries of historical causation, as a later poet did in his great sonnet on Leda and the Swan.

Such a subject has its disabilities too, though, for *Richard* cannot be reckoned one of Shakespeare's more neglected plays. It has been explicated by authorities with a more profound grasp of historical and philosophical contexts than may be claimed by the present writer, who has lately concerned himself with such unprofound (indeed unliterary) matters as the number of elm-trees in Shakespeare's Stratford, when brick first came into use as a building material in Warwickshire, and how a dramatist living in Bishopsgate ward managed to escape paying his rates. Anyway, isn't it an illusion, under the best of circumstances, to hope to say anything excitingly novel about one of Shakespeare's major plays? The excitingly novel has a way of being excitingly wrong, or tendentious, or beside the point. So Ernst Kantorowicz, in his celebrated study of the mystic fiction of the King's two bodies, applied to *Richard II* a point in medieval political theology of which I – and I dare say a number of others – had hitherto been ignorant; but I remain unpersuaded that the vast erudition brought to bear really illuminates Shakespeare's drama, pleasing as is an unexpected encounter with such recondite lore.

Of course an alternative to being excitingly off-base is to be correctly dull. It is not enough, especially in such a context, to reiterate pedestrian commonplaces with minor variations. The time is propitious for something a little bolder, for fresh breezes are blowing through scholarship on Shakespeare's English histories. In a recent review-article Professor Cyrus Hoy has likened the Shakespeare canon to a modern urban landscape – 'the tragic monuments have never lacked attention', Hoy observes, but 'the historical business sector has in recent years become something of a critical slum'.[1] This is perhaps to exaggerate a point for the sake of an ingenious metaphor; if the histories are a slum, then a number of able citizens have gone slumming. But it is true that the seminal contributions of Tillyard and Lily Bess Campbell established an orthodoxy, and accustomed a generation to view the two tetralogies as dramatic recapitulations of the Tudor myth of history, or mirrors of Elizabethan policy. Now we seem to have entered a revisionist phase, exemplified by the stimulating first chapter of Robert Ornstein's *A Kingdom for a Stage*. Tillyard has been enduring his knocks of late, and we are invited to take another, and different, view of the achievement of the history plays. Thus thesis breeds counter-thesis. This is well and good; it keeps the pot bubbling. Eventually, I expect, we shall look again at Tillyard, more disinterestedly, extrapolate what is of lasting value,

[1] Cyrus Hoy, 'Recent Shakespearian Criticism, Prefabricated and Authentic', *The Sewanee Review*, LXXXII (1974), 363.

and absorb it into the critical stream. Thus we have synthesis. It is what may be described as the Hegelian tendency in Shakespeare studies. Meanwhile Hoy is no doubt right to see the appearance of Ornstein's book as a liberating phenomenon.

These are large issues. My own objectives are more limited. I propose to look once again at two historical considerations that have been looked at often enough in the past: the matter of Richard, and the revival of a play about Richard II on the eve of the Essex rebellion. Finally I shall argue for a modest adjustment of interpretative emphasis as regards an aspect of Shakespeare's art that has been – dare I say it? – comparatively underestimated. My emphasis must be on *modest* and *comparatively*.

II

If Richard was not a popular king in his own time, he seems to have stirred a good deal of popular interest two centuries later. 'Certainly', Dover Wilson says in his introduction to the New Cambridge edition, '*Richard II* took London by storm when it first appeared'; also that Shakespeare's tragedy had become 'the talk of the town before December 1595'.[1] Dangerous word, *certainly*. The Chamberlain's men had no Henslowe to record for posterity the takings at the Theatre, and the age boasted no show-biz weekly to report the latest sensation in Shoreditch or on Bankside. If *Richard II* was the talk of the town in 1595, that talk has not been jotted down in any correspondence which has survived. Still, the play clearly made a strong impact. Three quarto editions issued from the presses in 1597 and 1598, and another two before Shakespeare's death. In August 1601 Queen Elizabeth made the famous remark, noted down by Lambarde, that 'this tragedy was played 40tie times in open streets and houses'.

Interest in Richard and his reign was of long standing, as is evidenced by the rich mix of sources, possible sources, near misses, and analogues to Shakespeare's play. In addition to the usual English chronicles – Hall and Holinshed – there are no fewer than three French accounts, including the *Chroniques* of Jean Froissart. This last, Shakespeare very likely consulted in Lord Berners's translation. There is also, in the library of Gray's Inn, a narrative in Latin of 'The Deposition of Richard'. Daniel's *First Four Books of the Civil Wars between the Two Houses of Lancaster and York* deal at length with Richard, setting forth 'His Unkles pride, his greedie Minions gaine, / *Glosters* revolt, & death...', Bolingbroke's exile and return, and the usurpation. In *The Mirror for Magistrates* the first five of the 'sundry Unfortunate Englishe men' who deliver their laments are Richard and those around him. One learned investigator of the sources of Shakespeare's *Richard II* concluded, after duly weighing the evidence, that the playwright consulted no fewer than seven accounts.[2] The reckoning probably errs on the side of numerosity, but suggests the complexity of the task to which Professor Bullough has addressed himself with such superlative skill.

If anything emerges forcibly from the array of source-matter, it is the absence of consensus. Men and events are variously evaluated. In Dover Wilson's summation, 'two legends about the character of Richard II have come down to us from the fifteenth century: that of his supporters, which represented him as a saint and a martyr, compared his sufferings and death with those of Christ himself, while they accounted for his capture by an act of base betrayal; and secondly, that of the Lancastrians which depicted him as a weak,

[1] William Shakespeare, *Richard II*, ed. John Dover Wilson (The New Shakespeare; 1939), introd., p. ix.

[2] M. W. Black, 'The Sources of Shakespeare's *Richard II*,' *Joseph Quincy Adams Memorial Studies*, ed. James G. McManaway *et al.* (Washington, D.C., 1948), pp. 199–216.

cowardly, moody man who surrendered himself and abdicated of his own free will'.[1] This ignores, however, the shades between. Opinions also differ about the men around the protagonist. To the chronicler Grafton, Thomas of Woodstock was an 'honorable and good man miserable put to death, which for the honor of the King and wealth of the realme had taken great travayles'; but Daniel describes the same Woodstock as

> one most violent,
> Impatient of command, of peace, of rest,
> Whose brow would shew, that which his
> hart had ment:
> His open malice & repugnant brest
> Procurd much mischiefe by his discontent.[2]

As with narrative, so with dramatic portrayals of the reign. Richard figures in several plays. 'Sir, findinge that you wer not convenientlie to be at London to morrow night', Sir Edward Hoby wrote to Sir Robert Cecil from his house in Cannon Row on 7 December 1595, 'I am bold to send to knowe whether Teusdaie may be anie more in your grace to visit poore Channon rowe where as late as it shal please you a gate for your supper shal be open: & K. Richard present him selfe to your vewe.'[3] Eminent authorities, Chambers among them, have assumed that Hoby is referring to a private performance of Shakespeare's *Richard II* for the delectation of the great, but Hoby doesn't mention Shakespeare, nor is it clear whether the play – if it is that – is old or new, or even whether the Richard alluded to was the second of that name, although likely enough it was. Such uncertainties should wonderfully encourage scholarly agnosticism. We are on safer ground in looking at the two extant plays (besides Shakespeare's) in which Richard appears, and the play about him witnessed by Simon Forman at the Globe.

Of unknown authorship and date, *The Life and Death of Jack Straw* (printed in 1593) limits itself to the Peasants' Revolt. The play is short, but few can have wished it longer. It has been attributed to George Peele, mainly (one guesses) on the unstated grounds that any play, mediocre or worse, from the early nineties that happens to be knocking around without an author had better be ascribed to George Peele. Still, the concept of Richard in *Jack Straw* holds interest. The young king is shown as an exemplary character, magnanimously dispensing free pardons to all but the ringleaders of unnatural rebellion; such compassion in a prince reminds the King's swordbearer of 'The gladsome sunne-shine in a winters day'.[4] It is not the only instance in the play of the sun imagery we associate with Richard.[5]

Another and less sympathetic Richard is presented to view in *Woodstock*. This headstrong youth neglects crown and kingdom as he gives himself up to 'wild and antic habits': aping foreign manners, feasting boon companions and hangers-on at Westminster Hall while the commons starve, extorting revenues with odious blank charters, and – ultimate irresponsibility – farming out his realm, at a fixed rent, to self-serving flatterers. The pejorative most frequently attached to him is

[1] Shakespeare, *Richard II*, ed. Wilson, p. lix.

[2] Samuel Daniel, *The First Fowre Bookes of the Civile Wars . . .*, in *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, ed. Geoffrey Bullough (1957–), III, 437.

[3] E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* (Oxford, 1930), II, 320–1.

[4] *Jack Straw*, ed. Kenneth Muir and F. P. Wilson (Malone Society Reprints; 1957), l. 1014.

[5] See also:

> The Sunne may sometime be eclipst with Clowds,
> But hardlie may the twinckling starres obscure,
> Or put him out of whom they borrow light
> (ll. 238–40).

In such an imagistic context figures of plant growth have propriety: '. . . commaund our wealth, / But loyall harts the treasure of a Prince, / Shall growe like graines sowne in a fertill soyle' (ll. 1194–6). The sun images are remarked by Irving Ribner, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (rev. ed.; 1965), p. 74.

'wanton'. Eventually he becomes a 'wanton tyrant', although he is never seen as irredeemably committed to evil ways.[1] In contrast his uncle Gloucester, plain Thomas of Woodstock, represents the homely English virtues. It is distinctly a minority view of Woodstock that this playwright provides. Stage imagery reinforces the thematic point. The bearded elders contrast with the spruce, clean-shaven courtiers; Green at one point proposes making it high treason for any grey-beard to loiter within forty feet of the court gates. Woodstock's homespun clothing – he wears a country habit of English frieze – betokens the traditional values under assault. On the other hand, the king's favourites are fantastically tricked out in Polonian peaks, and jewellery chains that join knee with toe, and 'so toeify the knee and so kneeify the toe, that between both it makes a most methodical coherence, or coherent method'. Inevitably fashions, as men, collide: a foppishly attired courtier on horseback mistakes Woodstock for a groom, and offers him sixpence to take and walk the beast. One of Woodstock's virtues is thrift, and later he claims his sixpence – 'promise is a *promise*'. In the end he is conveyed to Calais, and there murdered at Richard's behest. The King in this play, unlike that of *Jack Straw*, is neither merciful nor just. When he experiences the twinges of conscience, and orders a reprieve, it comes, like Edmund's, too late.

The play on Richard II that Simon Forman saw on 30 April 1611 has not come down, but he has left a characteristic description of it in his 'Book of Plays'. Dr A. L. Rowse, who in Forman has found a biographical subject worthy of his mettle, does not doubt that this performance was of Shakespeare's *Richard*.[2] But Dr Rowse is not conspicuously given to doubt, and the play described by Forman differs in so many essentials from Shakespeare's that no theory of revision – always a dubious mode of rationalizing a conviction – can reconcile the two. The play at the Globe seems to have covered the whole of Richard's reign, for Forman refers to the overthrow of Jack Straw as well as to the triumph of Bolingbroke (events separated by nearly twenty years). Whether the play is old or new Forman does not say. In it Gaunt is a secret contriver of villainy who sets Richard and the nobles together by the ears, his aim being to make his own son king. This Gaunt is the sort who, having consulted a wise man about the future of his house, and having got his answer, 'hanged him vp for his labor, because he should not brute yt abrod or speke therof to others'. Richard himself is not much behindhand when it comes to policy:

> Remember also, when the duke [Gloucester] and Arundell cam to London with their Army, king Richard came forth to them and met them and gaue them fair wordes, and promised them pardon and that all should be well yf they wold discharge their Army, vpon whose promises and faier Speaches they did yt, and Affter the king byd them all to A banket and soe betraid them And Cut of their heades, &c, because they had not his pardon vnder his hand & sealle before but his worde.[3]

This episode eerily reminds us of the ruthless equivocation of Prince John at Gaultree Forest.

Forman is an unreliable reporter, capable of confusing what he has seen with what he has read.[4] Still, from the sum of the reports, play-texts, chronicles, and other accounts comprising the matter of Richard, it is clear that he could

[1] I cannot go quite so far as Robert Ornstein, who describes the Richard of *Woodstock* as 'thoroughly despicable and corrupt', *A Kingdom for a Stage: The Achievement of Shakespeare's History Plays* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), p. 13.

[2] A. L. Rowse, *Simon Forman* (1974), pp. 13–14 and (transcript) pp. 305–6.

[3] I quote from the text in Chambers, *William Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1930), II, 340.

[4] The problems presented by a Forman account of a Globe performance (in this case of *Macbeth*) are expertly discussed by Leah Scragg, 'Macbeth on Horseback', *Shakespeare Survey 26* (1973), 81–8.

be variously represented: we have virtuous Richard, wanton Richard, and cunning Richard; the weak king, the politic king, the would-be despot. So too with others in the *dramatis personae*. Gaunt is patriot or self-seeker; Woodstock, a loyal peer or malevolent trouble-fomenter. Such latitude of interpretation should serve to discourage the historical critic from facile generalizations about how the Elizabethans assessed their past.

If for the scholar the contradictions in the sources are at times vexatious, for the artist they must have had a liberating effect, and invited him to explore the complexities of character and motive we in fact find in Shakespeare's Richard. My point is a corollary of one made by Ornstein in his recent book when he complains of 'the inherent bias of the historical method toward what is conventional and orthodox in Elizabethan culture, because any search for the "norms" of Elizabethan thought must lead to a consensus of truisms and pieties'.[1] Only here we do not even find the coveted norms.

III

Shakespeare's *Richard II* seems to have had several special performances in the author's lifetime. Sir Edward Hoby possibly refers to one in his letter already cited. Another took place on the high seas. In 1607 the *Dragon*, *Hector*, and *Consent*, bound for the East Indies, cast anchor off Sierra Leone. On 30 September William Keeling, captain of the *Dragon*, recorded in his journal, 'Captain Hawkins [of the *Hector*] dined with me, wher my companions acted Kinge Richard the Second'.[2] (On two other occasions the same thespians played *Hamlet*, once to the accompaniment of a fish dinner.) But the most celebrated revival of *Richard* was that mounted by the Lord Chamberlain's men at the Globe Theatre on Saturday, 7 February 1601. The circumstances are described by Augustine Phillips, the actor who bore Shakespeare such affectionate regard that he bequeathed to him a thirty-shilling piece in gold. According to Phillips, some half-dozen men of position in the land – including the Percies (Sir Charles and Sir Jocelyn) and Lord Monteagle – had approached the players, offering them a reward of 40*s* 'to have the play of the deposyng and kyllyng of Kyng Rychard the second to be played the Saterday next'.[3] The actors hesitated, 'holdyng that play of Kyng Richard to be so old & so long out of vse as that they shold have small or no Company at yt', but in the end they consented. The purpose of the revival, as we all know, was to further sedition. At noon that Saturday the conspirators met for dinner, and afterwards repaired to the playhouse, where they applauded the downfall and murder of a king. 'So earnest hee was', Francis Bacon said of one, Sir Gilly Meyrick, 'to satisfie his eyes with the sight of that tragedie which hee thought soone after his lord should bring from the stage to the state, but that God turned it vpon their owne heads.' Meyrick was steward to the Earl of Essex. On Sunday the attempted coup took place. Shakespeare's troupe collected their £2. Essex and others were tried and executed. On the eve of the Earl's beheading the Lord Chamberlain's men acted before the Queen at Whitehall. We do not know which play; presumably not *Richard II*.

Most authorities agree that the performance bespoken by the conspirators was of Shakespeare's *Richard II*. It is not unusual to find this information given as a fact. We do well, however, to recognize that we are dealing not with a fact but an inference. Neither Phillips nor anyone else interviewed at the time mentions Shakespeare's name in connection with the event. Prosecutor Coke muddies the waters

[1] Ornstein, *Kingdom for a Stage*, p. 4.

[2] Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, II, 334.

[3] Chambers conveniently prints extracts from the principal documents (II, 27).

slightly when he speaks of 'the story of *Henry IV* being set forth in a play', but as Bolingbroke becomes king before the end of *Richard II*, that is accountable. There is of course no reason why there should not have been other plays on this interesting theme which, like the one seen by Forman, failed to achieve print: and the designation of the one acted on 7 February as 'old' opens up the whole vista of Elizabethan theatrical history. But the company in this instance was Shakespeare's, Phillips's description suits Shakespeare's *Richard II*, and no alternative possibility presents itself for consideration. So in what follows I shall assume the 'old' *Richard II* wheeled out for the Essex *putsch* was by Shakespeare, while not claiming more than that this is a plausible assumption.

To do so disposes of one problem only to raise another. Why *Richard II*? After all, the play hardly comes across as an inflammatory tract in favour of deposition and regicide. Richard in his sufferings is too sympathetic, and ultimately (at Pomfret Castle) heroic, while Bolingbroke in his triumph is too ambiguous. It seems an odd choice to rouse the rabble. Scholarly unease is understandable. 'I do not know the answer to the riddle', Lily B. Campbell confesses, and to Irving Ribner 'Shakespeare's relation to the Essex rebellion remains a puzzling problem which has yet to be satisfactorily settled'.[1] This may be so, but we do well to bear in mind that the revival in fact failed to kindle seditious sparks; if such was the conspirators' intention, it was one of many miscalculations. More likely, perhaps, that they were thinking of themselves rather than of the multitude, and sought by reviving a play about a successful deposition to buoy up their own spirits on the eve of the desperate adventure.

Yet might there not be another dimension, perilous to ignore and even more perilous to face? Many critics have fancied Shakespeare as moving about comfortably in the corridors of power, playfully taking the mickey out of the Sir Walter Raleigh set in *Love's Labour's Lost*, concocting a suitable wedding entertainment for the dowager Countess of Southampton with *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, or advising King James on the respective merits of mercy and justice in *Measure for Measure*. The list might be extended, and there are recent additions. Such speculations, showing Shakespeare hob-nobbing with the mighty, represent what might be described as the Richard Ryan syndrome in Shakespeare studies. In his *Dramatic Table Talk* (in 1825) Ryan recorded an anecdote of Queen Elizabeth trying to catch Shakespeare's eye while he was acting at the playhouse, and resorting to the timeworn female ruse of dropping her glove; her favourite (we are told) picked it up and presented it to her, but not without first declaiming, 'And though now bent on this high embassy, / Yet *stoop* we to take up our *Cousin's* glove!' It is not what one would describe as a very probable story. The Ryan syndrome is nevertheless very prominent in Shakespeare studies; it has enlisted some choice spirits, and has illuminated the contexts for the plays if not always the plays themselves. Now Professor Richard Levin in several essays has been casting a cold eye on the whole phenomenon, to which he gives the term 'occasionalism'. Sceptical reappraisal along these lines is long overdue, and we do well to pay heed to Professor Levin's home truths.

But what of *Richard II*, which was used in Shakespeare's own day as a move in a power struggle? Here the connection is direct, not fancied. Might not Richard's reign (in the dramatist's conception) stand in an analogical relation to Elizabeth's reign, and animadvert obliquely – as censorship enforced – on actual

[1] L. B. Campbell, *Shakespeare's 'Histories': Mirrors of Elizabethan Policy* (San Marino, 1947), pp. 211–12; Ribner, *English History Play*, p. 155n.

persons and events? Of course the trouble with oblique commentaries is that they are oblique; we may miss what is there and find what is not. To his *D.N.B.* biographer the content of the Elizabethan historian John Hayward's *Life and Reign of King Henry IV* looks innocent enough of veiled allusiveness, and even a contemporary, Chamberlain, wondered what all the fuss was about.

Such considerations serve only to whet pursuit, and the trail, in truth, is not an utter blank. 'I am Richard II. know ye not that?', the Queen declared in Lambarde's presence, and she was not the first to make the comparison. As early as 1578 Sir Francis Knollys complained to Elizabeth's secretary that the Queen persisted in misliking safe counsel – in such circumstances 'who woll not rather shrynkingly...play the partes of King Richard the Second's men, then to enter into the odious office of crossing of her Majesties' wylle?' (To be one of Richard's men is to be a sycophant; there are other such references.) Knollys was related to the Queen, and also the grandfather of the Earl of Essex. The latter traced his descent from Anne, daughter of Thomas of Woodstock, the Duke of Gloucester, sixth son of Edward III – the same Thomas of Woodstock who had his life snuffed out at Calais by Richard's command. And were not Elizabeth's hands, like Richard's, stained with 'guilt of kindred blood'? 'The slaying of kindred here [i.e. in *Richard II*]...was probably intended to remind Elizabethans of the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots.' This suggestion was made almost half a century ago, by Evelyn May Albright, in what remains the most elaborate investigation of the Richard–Elizabeth analogy in relation to the play put on for the Essex conspiracy.[1] Miss Albright further notes that complaints about the influence of favourites, about oppressive taxes, and about the exaction of benevolences – all made in Shakespeare's *Richard II* – find their parallels in agitation about Elizabeth's government. There is even a passing reference to 'the prevention of poor Bolingbroke / About his marriage'; and we all know how Elizabeth meddled in marriages. From such hints it is but an easy leap to interpreting York's speech in Act II, scene i – the speech about the consequences of Richard's seizure of 'The royalties and rights of banish'd Hereford' – as 'a warning to Elizabeth' concerning 'a popular favorite whom she is treating badly, and whose family also have been unfairly dealt with'. And who might that favorite be other than Essex?

This is heady stuff for which some evidence, besides the detection of covert allusions in Shakespeare's text, would be welcome. Such evidence has been offered in the form of Hayward's history of Henry IV, to which I have already referred. His book was published with a brief Latin dedication to Essex, in which the latter is extolled as the expectancy and rose of the fair state. Hayward's title is a misnomer, presumably prudential, for his history deals mostly with Richard's reign, not Henry's. That the work deliberately exploited the Elizabeth–Richard analogy was widely believed at the time; we hear of this 'seditious pamphlet' and 'treasonable book'. 'He selecteth a storie 200 hundred yere old', noted Sir Edward Coke, 'and publisheth it this last yere; intending the application of it to this tyme.'[2] Elizabeth, outraged, wanted Hayward executed, and were

[1] Evelyn May Albright, 'Shakespeare's *Richard II* and the Essex Conspiracy', *PMLA*, XLII (1927), 686–720. Her essay drew a rejoinder from Ray Heffner, 'Shakespeare, Hayward, and Essex', *PMLA*, XLV (1930), 754–80. Undaunted, she replied in 'Shakespeare's *Richard II*, Hayward's History of Henry IV, and the Essex Conspiracy', *PMLA*, XLVI (1931), 694–719.

[2] Margaret Dowling prints Coke's notes on Hayward's *Henry IV* in an important article, 'Sir John Hayward's Troubles over his *Life of Henry IV*', *The Library*, 4th ser., XI (1931), 212–24. For the passage cited, see p. 213.

it not for Bacon's discreet intervention, he probably would have been. As it was, not until after Elizabeth's death was Hayward released from prison to assemble the prayers and meditations of the enlarged *Sanctuary of a Troubled Soul.* Shakespeare and his fellows do not seem to have got into any trouble at all, which is odd if he was up to mischief similar to that for which Hayward was tried. Never mind; perhaps some neutral party, high up, intervened to get Shakespeare off the hook. Such a party has lately been suggested in the person of the Keeper of the Rolls; the same William Lambarde to whom Elizabeth made her famous protestation.[1]

What remains is to demonstrate that Hayward's *Henry IV* was one of Shakespeare's sources when he came to write *Richard II.* We are shown parallels as regards general ideas, groupings of ideas, echoes of words and phrases, the characterization of Bolingbroke, and a couple of specific episodes (Henry's repudiation of Piers of Exton, and Aumerle's supposed duplicity with Richard at Flint Castle). Some of these hold interest. There is a problem, however, and that is that Hayward's *Life and Reign of King Henry IV* was first published in 1599; three or four years after Shakespeare composed his play. Such a fact might ordinarily be deemed awkward, but there is a way round it, and that is to posit that the history circulated in manuscript for some years before being printed, and that Shakespeare saw and used it. Otherwise we might be tempted to account for the parallels as Hayward's borrowings from Shakespeare. There is nothing like a hypothetical manuscript to resolve an awkwardness of chronology. Only in this case the awkwardness remains, for Hayward is on record as saying that he had begun 'to write this history about a year before it was published, but had intended it a dozen years before, although he acquainted no man therewith'.[2] One might reckon that such a statement would successfully discourage enthusiasm for the theory of Hayward's influence on Shakespeare, but this would be to underestimate scholarly ingenuity. In the phrase *although he acquainted no man therewith*, maybe *therewith* refers to the interval but not to Hayward's materials? I think not. Yet Ribner, in what is the standard study of the English history play in Shakespeare's age, can suggest that there is 'some possibility' that Shakespeare saw Hayward's *Henry IV* in manuscript – a manuscript that did not then exist.

Nor, although properly wary, does Ribner rule out the Albright thesis altogether. During the past year somebody has written that 'Shakespeare's connection with the Essex affair was all too obvious through his praise of the Earl in *Henry V* and his authorship of the deposition scene in *Richard II*', and he goes on to speak of Shakespeare's 'partisanship' for Essex.[3] It is one of many odd statements in a curious book. How many innocent spectators, standing at a play and caught up in the great issues of the drama, would pause to reflect on Essex's descent from Gloucester's line, or apply passing references to abuses of Richard's rule to the politics of the moment? I don't see Shakespeare as a seditious playwright involved, however peripherally, in a conspiracy against his monarch, any more than I see him as a darling of the Court, a sort of minister without portfolio, sagely advising his Queen, and later his King, on how to manage the affairs of state. I expect that he had his hands full writing his plays, acting in them and in those of others, and as 'housekeeper' advising his troupe about affairs in which we know he had a stake.

This is not to say that he failed to interest

[1] W. Nicholas Knight, *Shakespeare's Hidden Life: Shakespeare at the Law 1585–1595* (New York, 1973), p. 144.

[2] Quoted by Albright, 'Shakespeare's *Richard II*, Haywood's History...', p. 695.

[3] Knight, *Shakespeare's Hidden Life*, p. 143.