

**REIMAGINING DESIRE AND IDENTITY IN THE TITLE  
CHARACTERS OF *HAMLET* AND *RICHARD III* IN A  
SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT**

**By**

**MATTHEUS HEYDENRYCH**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements in respect of the Doctoral Degree  
**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY WITH SPECIALISATION IN DRAMA AND  
THEATRE ARTS**

in the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts in the Faculty of the Humanities at the  
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**Promotor: Professor Anthea van Jaarsveld (University of the Free State)**

Shakespeare's

# RICHARD III


in modern English

*My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,  
And every tongue brings in a several tale,  
And every tale condemns me for a villain*




*And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover  
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,  
I am determined to prove a villain  
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.*

Shakespeare's  
**HAMLET**




*"Why, then, 'tis none to you; for there is nothing  
either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. To me  
it is a prison."*

- Hamlet




*"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."*

- Hamlet



*"O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!  
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd  
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!  
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,  
Seem to me all the uses of this world!"*

- Hamlet



*"Nymph, in thy orisons  
Be all my sins remember'd"*

- Hamlet




*"It shall be so.  
Madness in great ones must not unwatched go."*

- Claudius




*"O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!  
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword;  
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,  
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,  
The observed of all observers!"*

- Ophelia



*"'Tis now the very witching time of night,  
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out  
Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood,  
And do such bitter business as the day  
Would quake to look on"*

- Hamlet



*"The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,  
That ever I was born to set it right!"*


- Hamlet



## DECLARATION

I, Mattheus Heydenrych, declare the following:

1. The thesis that I herewith submit for the degree Doctor of Philosophy with specialisation in Drama And Theatre Arts at the University of the Free State, is my independent work and that I have not previously submitted it for qualification at another institution of higher education.
2. I am aware that the copyright is vested in the University of the Free State.
3. All royalties as regards to intellectual property that was developed during the course of and/or in connection with the study at the University of the Free State, will accrue to the University.



Mattheus Heydenrych

28 July 2023

## ABSTRACT

During my Master's studies in Theatre Directing at East 15 Acting School, London, a question regularly asked by my lecturer, Tony Clark, was: 'If you were to direct a Shakespeare play now, why would you do it? What would the play say today?' I started asking myself, 'If I were to transpose a Shakespeare play into a modern context, what new perspectives and interpretations could be arrived at if I were to read it from a queer perspective? How would that influence the identity and desires of the characters and the interpretation thereof?'

The study aimed to examine what would happen if the sexuality of the characters Richard and Hamlet were changed by transposing *Hamlet* and *Richard III*, into queer adaptations and how that would change the identity and desires of the title characters in the new adaptations. To do this, the study identified 'unspoken or unconscious lesbian, gay, or queer presence', or what will be referred to as *queer cues*, utilising the coding process of Constructivist-Grounded Theory in *Hamlet* and *Richard III* by William Shakespeare.

Queer Theory has significantly impacted literary analysis. It has broadened the field's focus beyond conventional binary conceptions of gender and sexuality. Using Queer Theory, one can study how gender and sexuality are disrupted and challenged in texts and how these categories are created and performed through language and narrative. Similarities exist between Queer Theory and Lesbian, Gay, and Queer Criticism (LGQC) as they both examine gender and sexuality. However, their approaches and points of focus are slightly different. While LGQC focuses on analysing particular cultural representations, Queer Theory deconstructs binary categories.

One of the fundamental ideas of LGQC is the quest for textual evidence, or rather cues, in the literary interpretation of texts. In most cases, these cues are blatant homoerotic imagery and same-sex interactions, but sometimes these cues are subtle and create a homoerotic atmosphere in a heterosexual work. Several examples of subtle "unspoken or unconscious" cues exist, but this study predominantly focuses on *homosocial bonding*. In Tyson (2006), *homosocial bonding* is explained as portraying a strong emotional bond between characters of the same sex. The study aimed to examine which *queer cues* could be identified in the scripts through a *queer reading* and how that influenced the transposition of the scripts into new queer adaptations. The focus of this study was mainly on *gay sensibility*.

A preliminary analysis made it clear that after examining the characters' interactions with each other, there were subtle *queer cues* evident in *Richard III* and *Hamlet*. Other events and interactions were then

analysed to see if they supported these cues. In my opinion, the results pointed to elements of *homosocial bonding* between the relevant characters, which I interpreted as indications that Richard and Hamlet were gay men.

As mentioned above, the study applied the coding process of Constructivist-Grounded Theory. The first step is Initial Coding, followed by Focussed Coding, where categories are refined, and then finally, theory development. The Initial Coding process and the process of *queer reading* identified *queer cues* in the scripts of *Richard III* and *Hamlet*. For these *queer cues* to be identified, the study focussed on the concept of *homosocial bonding* and queer interpretation, seeing that the main focus of this study's inquiry was the relationship between Richard and Tyrrel, and Hamlet and Horatio. The study found that the scripts indeed supported a queer interpretation of *Richard III* and *Hamlet*.

During the Focused Coding process, other moments and events in the scripts were identified that can now be interpreted from a queer perspective. During the memo-writing process of Focused Coding, the characters of Tyrrel (in *Richard III*) and Horatio (in *Hamlet*) were examined to establish how their interactions supported a queer interpretation. The last part of the coding process (Memo-Writing) was transposing *Hamlet* and *Richard III* into queer adaptations, where Richard and Tyrrel and Hamlet and Horatio were placed in same-sex relationships.

Nevertheless, when reading the queer adaptations, the study found that the queer interpretations of these plays could still not 'present' themselves in the scripts alone. A new question emerged: 'How to present the *queer cues* in the new queer adaptations of *Hamlet* and *Richard III*?' The study, therefore, included examining performances of *Hamlet* and *Richard III*, where it was found that the transposition to the stage was necessary to bring to life the 'queer interpretations' of the title characters. Clearly, the study needed to include actors' performances to determine how the characters' sexuality influenced their identities and desires. The actor's interpretation and delivery of the lines, their gestures, and actions brought the queer interpretation of the scripts to the forefront.

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*Second*, I would like to acknowledge Prof. Nico Luwes, my mentor, colleague, and friend. Thank you for believing in me during my undergraduate studies, for your encouragement and inspiration as a performing artist, for giving me the opportunity and support to visit the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Canada, and for my studies at East 15 Acting School, England, and GITIS, Russia. I am so lucky to have you in my life as an artist and theatre practitioner; you make it so much richer!

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1. Background/Rationale

During my Masters in Theatre Directing at East 15 Acting School in London, Tony Clark, lecturer, repeatedly posed the question: ‘If you were to direct a Shakespeare play now, why would you do it? What would the play say today?’ Aune (2006:41) maintains that, for a play to be relevant, it has to use current events to criticise, expose, or warn against tyrants and against the environment that allows their rise. Aune’s statement seems to refer to a political environment, but could this not be translated into an environment personal to the reader? This question motivated this study: ‘If I were to transpose a Shakespeare play into a modern context, what new perspectives and interpretations could be arrived at if I read it from a queer perspective? How would that influence the identity and desires of the characters and the interpretation thereof?’

Even though Shakespeare is a European playwright, his works speak to an audience beyond the European context when one looks at the number of performances and translations of Shakespeare’s plays around the globe. In my opinion, Shakespeare is not historically bound; his characters and narratives still speak to modern audiences. Laurence Wright<sup>1</sup> (2004:76) argues that it is a strong possibility that “[Shakespeare] will continue sporadically to be produced, re-processed, argued with and re-invented in all the art forms ... as part of South African and African efforts at self-understanding ...”. He adds that Shakespeare, “as a vehicle for exploring local and global concerns, will flourish as readily in South Africa<sup>2</sup> as elsewhere”.

The primary goal of this study is to investigate how transposing *Hamlet* and *Richard III* into a modern context using a queer interpretation, changing the sexuality of Richard and Hamlet, would change the identity and desires of the title characters.

#### 1.1 Rational behind a queer interpretation

On 26 June 2015, the US Supreme Court made a historic ruling regarding same-sex marriage (Roberts & Siddiqui 2015). The court ruled that attempts by conservative states to ban same-sex marriages were unconstitutional, and that same-sex marriages would now be legal throughout the

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<sup>1</sup> Prof Wright has been a scholar, researcher and teacher at Rhodes University for over 25 years; he is President of the Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa and Vice-President of the English Academy.

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that in 2011 EduCape, a company focusing on organising educational events for young adults, established the South African Shakespearean Schools Festival (SSF SA). Since then more than 60 schools in South Africa participated in Shakespeare performances on professional stages throughout the country.

United States. Although most people, even President Obama, saw the decision as a positive step forward, not all Americans rejoiced. Mike Huckabee, the Republican presidential candidate, declared that the Supreme Court had tried to “unwrite the laws of nature and the laws of nature’s God” (Associated Press in Denver 2015). Interestingly, adverse reactions were not confined to the USA but were also voiced in South Africa.

Vice President of the UCT SRC, Zizipho Pae, was expelled after she posted the following Facebook status update on 28 June in reaction to the US Supreme Court’s ruling: “We are institutionalising and normalising sin! Sin. May God have mercy on us.” (Petersen 2015). At a congress in Bloemfontein, the evangelist Angus Buchan commented on this issue (Bürger 2015), saying that same-sex marriage was a sin. He also revealed that he had phoned Zizipho Pae, told her he was proud, and assured her of his support. There were also several reports that this issue was being discussed in South African churches<sup>3</sup>.

The queer debate also found its way to the performing arts. In the entertainment<sup>4</sup> industry, there is a debate as to whether straight actors should still play LGBTQ+ roles. Even though many straight actors’ performances of LGBTQ+ characters deserve praise, there is an argument that only queer actors can bring authenticity to these roles. Interestingly though, there are opposing opinions on both sides of the fence. Some feel that straight actors should portray only straight characters, while LGBTQ actors should portray only LGBTQ+ characters. More and more LGBTQ+-themed plays are produced on Broadway and the West End<sup>5</sup>. The question might arise as to why include this debate here, as this might be seen as a separate study. The aim is to show that queer characters, and plays, are no longer restricted to the fringe in the world of theatre but are part and parcel of

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<sup>3</sup> Die NG Kerk en gays: ‘Tyd vir herbesin’ (*Media 24* 28 June 2015), Nelus Niemandt se pleidooi: ‘Gooi NG Kerk óóp vir gays’ (*Media 24* 1 July 2015), Spesiale verslag: Gay mense en die kerk (*Media 24* 20 July 2015), Gaywees nie keuse, sê verslag (*Media 24* 29 July 2015), ‘Ingebore en onveranderlik’.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2019/jan/14/gay-roles-actors-assassination-gianni-versace-bohemian-rhapsody>  
<https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/should-straight-actors-still-play-gay-characters-it-s-complicated-n1252603>  
<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/awards/story/2021-08-18/queer-actors-in-television-roles>  
<https://www.queerty.com/actor-jonathan-bailey-says-fantastic-straight-guys-play-gay-roles-theres-20201222>  
<https://www.queerty.com/actor-andrew-scott-flips-script-says-gay-actors-play-straight-characters-20190305>  
<https://www.queerty.com/wilson-cruz-calls-straight-actors-playing-lgbtq-roles-awards-bait-20200402>  
<https://www.queerty.com/aaron-sorkin-says-casting-gay-actors-gay-roles-empty-gesture-20211220>  
<https://www.queerty.com/rupert-everett-force-casting-gay-actors-gay-characters-dont-think-thats-right-20210307>  
[https://www.theguardian.com/film/2022/jun/16/tom-hanks-says-couldnt-play-gay-role-today-philadelphia?CMP=fb\\_gu&utm\\_medium=Social&utm\\_source=Facebook#Echobox=1655381049](https://www.theguardian.com/film/2022/jun/16/tom-hanks-says-couldnt-play-gay-role-today-philadelphia?CMP=fb_gu&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook#Echobox=1655381049)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.londontheatre.co.uk/theatre-news/news/celebrate-lgbt-history-month-with-tickets-to-west-end-shows>  
<https://variety.com/2022/legit/reviews/cock-review-taron-edgerton-jonathan-bailey-west-end-1235207033/>  
<https://www.attitude.co.uk/article/taron-egerton-says-theres-a-certain-amount-of-trepidation-playing-a-gay-character/21738/>  
<https://www.attitude.co.uk/article/taron-egerton-says-theres-a-certain-amount-of-trepidation-playing-a-gay-character/21738/>

mainstream theatres. Since the early 1980s, a vast amount of research<sup>6</sup> has shown a keen interest in Shakespeare's works from a queer perspective, not to mention academic courses and presentations.

Menon (2011:12) claims that Shakespeare is a queer theorist, not because the word 'queer' appears in any title but because Queer Theory may be shown to inhabit his work. On the other hand, Stockton (2012:226) states in his review of *Shakespeareer: A Queer Companion to the Complete Works of Shakespeare* that the problem with Menon's claim "...is its concomitant implication that any and all resistance to [Queer Theory] necessarily amounts to the protection of a heteronormative<sup>7</sup> view of history ...".

## 1.2 Queer Theoretical Background

### 1.2.1 Queer Theory and the term 'queer'

Queer Theory emerged as a reaction to the limitations of traditional feminist and gay/lesbian studies, which were criticised for promoting binary conceptions of gender and sexuality. This theory suggests that gender and sexuality are socially constructed and flexible, not binary categories. Queer Theory argues that power dynamics and cultural practices constantly reshape and redefine gender and sexuality. Judith Butler's work in 1990 helped to establish this perspective.

The idea of performativity is crucial to Queer Theory. Gender and sexuality are formed through repeated acts or 'performances', reinforced by cultural practices and social conventions, per Judith Butler's (1990) theory. Instead of being fundamental or natural characteristics, gender and sexuality are deconstructed. Therefore, gender and sexuality are not innate characteristics but created through our actions and interactions with others. According to Halberstam (2011), this viewpoint has caused literary analysis to be rethought, which traditionally concentrated on how gender and sexuality are portrayed rather than how these categories are enacted and constructed through language and story.

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<sup>6</sup> Gilbert, S. 2018. Shakesqueer in love: Exploring the Bard's queer themes. *The Conversation*. [online]

<<https://theconversation.com/shakesqueer-in-love-exploring-the-bards-queer-themes-98220>>

Stanivukovic, G. (Ed.). 2017. *Queer Shakespeare: Desire and Sexuality*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Menon, M. (Ed.). 2011. *Shakespeareer: A Queer Companion to the Complete Works of Shakespeare*. London: Duke University Press.

Guy-Bray, S. 2020. *Shakespeare and Queer Representation*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. London: Routledge.

<sup>7</sup> 'Heteronormative' refers to a person's sexuality where the 'norm' is straight, and assumption is that everyone is by default 'naturally' straight, and homosexuality, or any other form of sexuality, is inferior.

<https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1237>

Queer Theory has significantly impacted literary analysis because it has broadened the field's focus beyond conventional binary conceptions of gender and sexuality. The study of how gender and sexuality are disrupted and challenged in texts and how these categories are created and performed through language and narrative are made possible using Queer Theory.

Scholars such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (2016) have used Queer Theory to analyse literature. Her writing examines the idea of homosocial desire, which disregards women and describes emotional relationships between men that are not always homoerotic. According to Sedgwick (2016), societal standards affect this desire and are evident in cultural expressions like literature, art, and film. She contends that prejudice towards women and LGBTQ+ people stems from male *homosocial bonding's* dread of homosexuality. Sedgwick (2016) illustrates how power dynamics, gender, and sexuality impact interpersonal relationships through her investigation of male homosocial desire.

The notion that homosexuality is a contemporary invention is discussed in Bray's work, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (1995). He emphasised that homosexuality did not refer to a person's broader identity *per se* but rather the sexual act between people of the same sex, but that "homosexual identity" emerged in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. He further argues that same-sex attraction existed but was not tolerated (condemned as sodomy and tribadism) in early modern England<sup>8</sup>. Bray's work on Queer Theory aimed to disprove the notion that heterosexuality is the only healthy and appropriate sexual orientation. His contributions allowed other experts in Queer Theory to explore further the social, cultural, and historical background of sexuality and challenge preconceived notions about gender and sexuality (Halperin 2002).

Bray's theories have influenced historians and literary academics who have used Queer Theory to examine literature through the lens of gender and sexuality. By exploring how these themes reflect cultural constructions of gender and sexuality, Queer Theory in literature challenges traditional interpretations that ignore or minimise queer elements in literary texts (Holland 2000).

Queer Theory and Lesbian, Gay, and Queer Criticism (LGQC) share similarities as interdisciplinary fields examining gender and sexuality. However, LGQC focuses more on analysing specific cultural representations, while Queer Theory deconstructs binary categories. Queer Theory challenges traditional conceptions of gender and sexuality, while LGQC focuses on how they are represented in cultural texts (Garber 1992, Sinfield 1994, Jagose 2016).

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<sup>8</sup> See also: Dollimore, J. 2021. *Desire: A Memoir* and Smith, B.R., 1995. *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics*

LGQC is defined and distinguished in various ways within the canon of literary criticism sources. The analysis and comprehension of sexual orientation is the distinguishing aspect of lesbian/gay criticism, according to Barry (2002:135). In lesbian and gay criticism, the genders are separated. The discussion of lesbian feminism is then used by Barry (*ibid*) to further distinguish between lesbian and gay critique; however, in this case, the emphasis is from a gender perspective. The term ‘queer’ (Barry 2002:138) subsequently evolves into an inclusive one that is no longer ‘woman-centred’ (as Barry explains) but rather “...sees an identity of political and social interest with gay men”. Dobie (2012) asserts that gay and lesbian movements were previously categorised as male and female studies and that the term Queer Theory reflects an evolving alliance between gay men and lesbians. According to Dobie, ‘queer’ is more inclusive than ‘gay and lesbian’ and can encompass a broader range of identities and experiences.

Tyson (2006) differentiates between lesbian, gay, and queer criticism. According to Tyson, lesbian criticism concerns personal identity and politics, much like feminist criticism (322). On the other hand, gay criticism focuses more on *gay sensibility* or how being gay influences one’s perception of the world, oneself, and others (330). Tyson (336) suggests that ‘queer’ encompasses various meanings in literary studies. Using it as an inclusive term in literary criticism means interpreting a text from a ‘non-straight perspective’. Plummer (2005:359) states the following: “‘Queer’, for me, is the postmodernisation of sexual and gender studies”. For him, the conventional categories of sexuality and gender are deconstructed. For this study, I will use the word ‘queer’; even though the focus will be on male characters, it is understood that the term is inclusive.

### **1.2.2 Homosocial bonding and the default reader**

Kubowitz (2012:201) argues that being heterosexual has advantages in identifying with cultural narratives. This is because cultural narratives often have an *implied reader*<sup>9</sup> who is assumed to be heterosexual. Kubowitz (*ibid*) proposes to call this a *default reader* instead of an *implied reader*. He assumes that one of the default settings for this reader is heterosexuality, which can make it difficult for non-heterosexual individuals to identify with cultural narratives.

Tyson (2006:339) infers that in an ‘accepted’ heterosexual text, subtle textual cues can create a ‘homoerotic atmosphere’ or give way to a queer interpretation. A single cue cannot be used as evidence for such an ‘atmosphere’; however, when there is a prevalence of cues that create a

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<sup>9</sup> Discussed further in Chapter 2 (Article 1).

‘homoerotic atmosphere’, especially when combined with biographical or other textual evidence, a queer interpretation of a heterosexual text can be supported. There are several examples of different types of subtle ‘unspoken or unconscious’ cues, in this study referred to as *queer cues*<sup>10</sup>, where there is predominantly a focus on *homosocial bonding*. Tyson (2006:339-340) explains *homosocial bonding* as portraying a strong emotional bond between characters of the same sex. This creates “... a homosocial atmosphere that may be subtly or overtly homoerotic<sup>11</sup>”. Irrespective of the homoerotic elements present, the portrayal of *homosocial bonding* highlights the significant role that emotional ties between individuals of the same gender play in shaping human identity and fostering a sense of community. The quest for textual evidence, or cues, in literary interpretation, is integral to the LGQC perspective. Even though homoerotic imagery and same-sex interactions are the most overt, subtle textual cues can create a homoerotic atmosphere in a heterosexual work (Tyson 2006).

Bray’s influence on literary studies is discussed relative to the use of Queer Theory to examine literature from the perspectives of gender and sexuality. Kubowitz’s model of *queer reading* strategies outlines techniques readers can use to find queer meanings in apparently *straight texts* (2012:204). Kubowitz (*ibid*) argues that such a model is necessary for the context of Queer Theory, as it is interdisciplinary and only partially practical as a tool for literary interpretation. He believes that although Queer Theory offers important ideas for critical reading, it does not adequately explain how queer fictional worlds are created, including those written and read. Kubowitz (*ibid*) suggests that his model can help answer questions about contradictory interpretations and the potential reasons behind different reading strategies.

Kubowitz (2012:205) argues that readers try to make literary texts meaningful to themselves, and his model of *queer reading* is based on this idea. He notes that readers do not always approach a book with fundamental questions like: “What is the text saying?”, “What does the text mean?” or “What is the author saying?”. Instead, readers are more likely to ask questions such as “What does the text tell *me*, or do to *me*?”, “What can *I* do with the text?”. A question closely associated with his *default reader* model is: “Does the text *address me* at all?”.

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<sup>10</sup> The concept of *queer cues* is defined later in the chapter.

<sup>11</sup> Other works on the topic: Dollimore, J. 2021. *Desire: A Memoir* & Smith, B.R., 1995. *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics*.

As a gay man, I found Kubowitz's *default reader* model very true to my own reading of plays, the default being my homosexuality. In most cases, I sometimes identify with the characters and situations, albeit not in the original heterosexual context, but from a gay perspective. One such play is Shakespeare's Hamlet. Hamlet reflects, '*To be, or not to be, that is the Question*'<sup>12</sup>, which in most productions, as Crystal (2013:119) argues, is often interpreted as being about suicide, but for me, it further begs the question of own acceptance of one's sexuality. The study examines which *queer cues*, evidence of *homosocial bonding*, could be identified in the scripts through a *queer reading* and how that will influence the transposition of the scripts into new queer adaptations. *Homosocial bonding* and queer interpretation form the basis of this study's inquiry into the relationship between Richard and Tyrrel and Hamlet and Horatio.

### 1.3 Rational behind the choice for *Richard III*: identity and deformity

In 2011 I saw a Richard III production at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Stratford, Ontario, Canada. I was fascinated by Richard's villainy but, more importantly, in my opinion, the lack of motivation. I have always had an interest in the psychology of the criminal mind. One aspect, in particular, fascinates me: Why do they do the things they do? I find it difficult to answer this question when it comes to Richard. In my opinion, Richard is much more complicated than Shakespeare's other villains. He outright states in his opening soliloquy:

*And therefore, since I cannot proue a Louer,* 30<sup>13</sup>  
*To entertaine these faire well spoken dayes,*  
*I am determind to proue a Villaine,*  
*And hate the idle pleasures of these dayes.*

Why does Richard choose to be a villain? Depending on how you interpret his opening monologue, he may be motivated by greed and self-loathing; he feels unloved because of his physical deformity. For me, Richard has no reason to be a villain based on hatred, revenge, or social disadvantage; he simply decides to be one, an emotionally personalised choice. Even in *Henry VI, Part 3*, while stabbing King Henry VI, Richard, very similar to his opening soliloquy in *Richard III*, states that he will become a villain.

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<sup>12</sup> Act 3, scene 1, line 1710. Shakespeare, William. *The Tragedy of Hamlet*. DjVu Editions E-books, Global Language Resources, Inc, 2001. <http://triggs.djvu.org/djvu-editions.com/SHAKESPEARE/HAMLET/Download.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Richard the Third: with the Landing of Earle Richmond, and the Battell at Bosworth Field*. DjVu Editions E-books, Global Language Resources, Inc, 2001. url: <http://triggs.djvu.org/djvu-editions.com/SHAKESPEARE/RICH3/rich3.pdf>

At East 15, one of the questions often asked in discussions of *Richard III* was: ‘How would one approach his deformity?’ In his opening soliloquy, Richard declares:

... I, that am curtail'd of this faire Proportion, 20  
Cheated of Feature by dissembling Nature,  
Deform'd, vn-finish'd, sent before my time  
Into this breathing World, scarce halfe made vp,  
And that so lamely and vnfashionable,  
That dogges barke at me, as I halt by them.

For me, there is a link between his villainy to his deformity. From a *queer reading*, I interpret his deformity as his sexuality and not only physical. Because he cannot be a lover in a same-sex relationship<sup>14</sup>, it influences his choice to be a villain. Other instances supported my *queer reading*.

The character of Richard in *Richard III* has been interpreted in various ways, with different approaches to his physical deformity. In the 2011 production of the play at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Canada, the title character was played by an actress, Seana McKenna. She introduced subtle femininity to the role, suggesting that his handicap was his physical deformity and supposed deficiency as a man. This interpretation is linked to the early modern Galenic one-sex model (which viewed women as deficient men) and Richard's deformity as making him more feminine. His mother's insults in Act 1, scene 3 reinforce this idea. The reviewer of the production, Laura Estill (2012:147), argues that the actress' portrayal of Richard emphasised his unmanliness. This production initiated this study and the search for *queer cues* in Shakespeare's work.

The search for *queer cues* was further influenced by Sir Ian McKellen's screen adaptation of *Richard III*, based on Richard Eyre's stage production for the Royal National Theatre. Of this adaptation, Friedman (2009:568) comments that the defeat by Richmond, whose heterosexuality is stressed in the film, over Richard "... represents the triumph of married sexuality over depraved sexual defiance". Additionally, the character Tyrrel appears in more scenes than in the original script, and after his first appearance, he is always at Richard's side. There are hints of *homosocial bonding* between Richard and Tyrrel, which may be more noticeable because McKellen is openly gay.

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<sup>14</sup> Homosexuality during the English Renaissance was generally not accepted or tolerated, as it was seen as a sin and a deviation from the natural order of sexuality. This view was strongly influenced by the Christian Church's teachings, which condemned homosexuality as immoral and sinful (Saslow 2003). Despite this legal and societal hostility toward homosexuality, works of English Renaissance literature and art occasionally depict homoeroticism and same-sex desire, especially those by authors like William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe (Dollimore 1991). These representations, nevertheless, were frequently cryptic and unclear, and society at the period did not publicly praise or support them.

Richard's overtly feminine behaviour in the Stratford production and Ian McKellen's adaptation's subtly suggestive portrayal of his sexuality led to the queer interpretation of the play. This study investigates how Richard's identity and desire may be affected by the idea that he was a "less perfect" man at birth. It also examines how Richard's self-consciousness regarding his deformity and sexuality, as well as any potential struggles with his sexuality, may have influenced his villainy and desire for the throne. Notably, Richard is responsible for the deaths of twelve characters, but not one by his own hand. This bolsters the notion of a 'less perfect' man.

#### **1.4 Rational behind the choice of Hamlet: struggle and identity**

This idea of characters 'struggling' is a recurring theme in Shakespeare's plays. I believe the character that best displays this never-ending 'struggle' is Hamlet. Bickley & Stevens (2013:99) claim that *Hamlet* has never fallen out of favour with audiences, critics and scholars, even with all the variations performed over the centuries<sup>15</sup>. Frank Kermode (1985:62, cited in Bickley & Stevens 2013:99) attributes this to the play's 'perpetual modernity', which allows the play to be 'remade in the image of each new generation'.

Hamlet is a play that sparks debate about its meaning in artistic and scholarly circles. It is seen as a "political drama and a play about the journey of an individual self" by Bate (2008a:4). At the same time, Crystal (2013:3) describes it as a play about "murder, grief, guilt, possible suicide, incest, fratricide, regicide". Freud (1966:265–266, cited in Gil Harris 2012:84) compared the characters of *Oedipus* and *Hamlet* and considered "falling in love with the mother and jealousy of the father ... as a universal event of early childhood". Ernest Jones used this theory in his psychoanalytical literary critique of *Hamlet* and *Oedipus*. Laurence Olivier's portrayal of *Hamlet* in his 1947 adaptation was based on the Freudian theme of Hamlet's repressed Oedipal desire for his mother, Gertrude.

The theme of Hamlet's madness and melancholy is often discussed with different interpretations. Crystal (2013:117–118) suggests three possible answers: "Yes, no, and he starts sane and ends up mad". Although the consensus is that Hamlet is mad, Crystal (ibid) also notes that he appears lucid in some instances. He further mentions that Horatio warns Hamlet that the ghost might drive him into madness, and the ghost warns Hamlet not to let his mind be tainted. Hamlet also confesses to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that he is not actually mad.

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<sup>15</sup> Interesting to note the 2022 Pulitzer Prize-winning new play on Broadway by playwright James Ijames and director Saheem Ali. A queer reinvention of Hamlet; Juicy who is familiar with Hamlet's difficult situation, is a queer Southern college kid grappling with questions of identity. Juicy is a Black man searching for his own happiness and liberation when his father's ghost appears and demands that he must avenge his murder. A comical play examining love and loss, pain and joy.

Hamlet's 'To be, or not to be' soliloquy is a famous and debated speech. As noted before, Crystal (2013:119) argues that in most productions, it is often interpreted as being about suicide. In a recent production with Benedict Cumberbatch, the director emphasised Hamlet's desire to commit suicide by having him come on stage with a noose around his neck for this soliloquy. In contrast, others claim it is about whether or not to kill Claudius. However, Crystal (*ibid*) suggests that the speech could be about 'life' and 'death' or 'being' and 'not being'.

The relationship between Horatio and Hamlet in Shakespeare's play is significant and could support a queer interpretation. Horatio is present in crucial moments of the play and interacts mainly with Hamlet. He is not part of the court but is well-versed in Danish politics. Horatio's presence at Elsinore is questioned, and his explanation that he came for old King Hamlet's funeral is questioned by Hamlet. Horatio's knowledge of the political situation in Denmark could imply a close relationship between Horatio and Hamlet; more than just friends.

How does all the above influence the interpretation of the play and Hamlet and Horatio's, if they were in a same-sex relationship (Heydenrych 2017:48). How will this affect the interpretation of the 'To be, or not to be' speech exploring the aspect of 'being or not being'? How would it affect Hamlet's rejection of Ophelia and her consequent madness? Could Hamlet's sexuality be seen as motivation for Claudius's immediate decision to deport Hamlet, not only for being guilty of killing Polonius, but also for being a 'disgrace' to the family and kingdom? Could a possible sexual relationship be why Horatio is so eager to share the poisoned wine in the final scene and die with Hamlet? The image of Hamlet dying in Horatio's arms, and Horatio's intent on drinking the poison, may be considered reminiscent of the tomb scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, and thus a clear cue of *homosocial bonding*.

## 2. Research problem and objectives

The primary goal of this study is to examine what happens if *Hamlet* and *Richard III* are staged from a modern queer perspective, with the assumption that the title characters themselves are gay. How would that change the identity and desires of the title characters in the new adaptations?

The following questions and statements are used to formulate the research questions. Tyson (2006:341) offers several questions to summarise lesbian, gay or queer approaches to literature. Relevant to this study were:

How might the works of heterosexual writers be reread to reveal an unspoken or unconscious lesbian, gay, or queer presence? That is, does the work have an unconscious lesbian, gay, or queer desire or conflict that it submerges (or that heterosexual readers have submerged)?

According to Barry (2002:143), lesbian/gay ('queer' for the purpose of this study) critics do the following:

Identify lesbian/gay episodes in mainstream work and discuss them as such (for example, the relationship between Jane and Helen in *Jane Eyre*), rather than reading same-sex pairings in non-specific ways, for instance, as symbolising two aspects of the same character (Zimmerman).

The study aims to identify *queer cues*, utilising the coding process of Constructivist-Grounded Theory<sup>16</sup> (CGT), as a blueprint, in *Hamlet* and *Richard III* by William Shakespeare.

Critical questions are:

- How does a queer interpretation of *Richard III* and *Hamlet* change the identity and desire of the title characters?
- What elements in *Richard III* and *Hamlet* can be identified as *queer cues*, and do the characters' interactions with each other support these cues?
- What is the effect of these *queer cues* on the identity and desire of the title characters in the queer adaptations of *Richard III* and *Hamlet*?

Research objectives are:

- the identification of *queer cues* in the scripts of *Richard III* and *Hamlet*, using the Initial Coding process of data analysis in a CGT practice;
- the identification of other moments in the play, after identifying *queer cues* in the scripts, that can now be interpreted from a queer perspective using the Focused Coding data analysis process; and
- the transposition of *Richard III* and *Hamlet* into queer adaptations as part of the Memo-Writing process in a CGT practice after Focused Coding.

### 3. Research design and research methodology

The study will involve a literature study exploring the qualitative CGT coding process. The study will then employ these processes as a blueprint to analyse *queer cues* in *Richard III* and *Hamlet*.

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<sup>16</sup> Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) is a research approach that emphasises developing new theories by deducing them from collected data rather than from pre-existing theoretical frameworks. Further discussed in Chapter 2 (Article 1).

The structure of the research design will comprise three phases:

- a study of the qualitative CGT coding process;
- an analysis of *Hamlet* and *Richard III* at the hand of the identified coding processes;
- incorporating the information obtained in the first two phases in the transposition of *Hamlet* and *Richard III* to a South African context, including reflections on the changes made during the transposing process.

#### 4. Outline of study

This study consists of three related research articles.

- Chapter 1, the current chapter, introduces the study. This chapter explains a) the research proposal and includes the background and reasons for the study based, b) the preliminary literature study, c) the research aims and demarcation thereof, and d) the research questions. The chapter will also discuss the research methodology and design and indicate the possible value of the research. It is important to note that even though this study will be read as a thesis, each following chapter should be considered and read as separate articles. As a result, the reader will find several instances where repetition will occur. I intend to submit these articles for publication and am aware that the length of each article will necessitate a rework, but for the sake of the thesis, I opted for more complete articles.
- Chapter 2, Article 1 (Reimagining Desire and Identity in the Title Characters of *Hamlet* and *Richard III*: a Constructivist-Grounded Theory approach) discusses the CGT processes as a blueprint. After the discussion, the coding processes are applied to the scripts of *Hamlet* and *Richard III*, commenting on the *queer cues* identified and the queer interpretations made to the adaptations of these scripts.
- Chapter 3, Article 2 ('*Then since the Heavens haue shap'd my Body so*': Will the Political 'Queer' Richard Please Stand Up?) explores and comments on the production of the queer adaptation of *Richard III*. The article indicates changes to the script and discusses the actors' performances in certain scenes to bring forth the queer adaptation with photographic images of the production.
- Chapter 4, Article 3 ('*To tell our Storie*': Reflections on a Queer Adaptation of *Hamlet* in Twenty-first Century South Africa) explores and comments on the production of the queer adaptation of *Hamlet*. The article indicates changes made to the script and discusses the actors' performances in certain scenes to bring forth the queer adaptation with photographic images of the production. In 2016 the paper was presented at a national colloquium on decolonising

Shakespeare<sup>17</sup>. The article was published in the *South African Shakespeare Journal* in 2017. More images have been included in this thesis than in the published article, which is attached as an addendum.

- Chapter 5, the conclusion, aims to determine whether a foundation can be established for future adaptations of Shakespeare.
- Addenda
  - Scripts of the adaptations
  - Published article ‘*To tell our Storie*’: Reflections on a Queer Adaptation of *Hamlet* in Twenty-first Century South Africa

## 5. Value of the research

The study aims to explore the adaptation of a Shakespeare play, using literary theory as a basis; in this case, Queer Theory and CGT. While adapting the specified Shakespeare plays, using a selected literary theory, the study aims to establish a possible academic foundation for future adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays. The study also explores changes that might be made in order to set a Shakespearean play within a modern South African context. Academics, theatre practitioners, dramatists, and others may benefit from this example of the possible use of a literary theory to adapt a Shakespeare play.

Analysing *queer cues* in the work of Shakespeare, particularly the relationship between Richard and Tyrrel and Hamlet and Horatio, could make a valuable contribution to Queer Theory in several ways. It could expand the scope of queer literary analysis by applying a queer lens to a canonical work. This demonstrates that queer readings can be applied to diverse texts, enriching the field of queer literature analysis. The study could increase the visibility and representation of queer characters and narratives by highlighting potential queer subtexts in classic literature. This challenges the notion that queer representation is a recent phenomenon and emphasises queer representation’s historical presence; not to say that this has not been done before, but this study could add to the already existing work.

Most importantly, the study disrupts heteronormative assumptions by interpreting the Richard-Tyrrel and Hamlet-Horatio relationships as potentially queer. Doing so, questions the dominant narrative that assumes all close male friendships are purely platonic. The study can further stimulate dialogue and debate within Queer Theory and literary criticism by presenting an alternative interpretation and

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<sup>17</sup> Colloquium on “Decolonising Shakespeare?” Contestations and re-imaginings for a post-liberation South Africa which formed part of KZN Shakespeare Festival hosted by the Drama and Performance Studies Programme, College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal. This colloquium coincided with the global celebrations of the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare’s death.

providing a platform for discussions on queer representation in classical literature, the significance of subtext, and the implications of 'queering' historical texts.

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Shakespeare's

# RICHARD III

*in modern English*

Adapted and Directed by Thys Heydenrych



## Chapter 2 (Article 1)

Reimagining Desire and Identity in the  
Title Characters of *Hamlet* and *Richard  
III*: a Constructivist-Grounded Theory

Shakespeare's

# HAMLET

DIRECTED BY THYS HEYDENRYCH & PETER TALJAARD

*"The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,  
That ever I was born to set it right!"*

*- Hamlet*



## **Chapter 2 (Article 1): Reimagining Desire and Identity in the Title Characters of *Hamlet* and *Richard III*: a Constructivist-Grounded Theory Approach.**

### **1. Prologue**

During my Masters in Theatre Directing at East 15 Acting School in London, Tony Clark, lecturer, repeatedly posed the question: ‘If you were to direct a Shakespeare play now, why would you do it? What would the play say today?’ These questions motivated this study: ‘If I were to transpose a Shakespeare play into a modern context, what new perspectives and interpretations could be arrived at if I were to read it from a queer perspective? How would such a perspective influence the identity and desires of the characters?’

#### **1.1 Why Richard**

Part of my Masters in Theatre Directing concentrated on several Shakespeare plays. One was *Richard III*, where the play’s relevance to today and Richard’s deformity were discussed. What follows is a discussion of a possible reason why Shakespeare wrote *Richard III* and the subsequent portrayals of the character.

##### **1.1.1 Richard, as a political figure**

Hughes (2013:7 of 14) states that, by comparing the date of the play’s first registration, 20 October 1597, and the events that happened around that time, it is impossible to deny that Richard’s traits and deformities emphasised by Shakespeare were very similar to those of Sir Robert Cecil. The latter was appointed as State Secretary the year before. Several verse libels and letters written about Cecil expose connections between him and the character of *Richard III*. Both Richard and Robert Cecil are described as being deformed. According to Aune (2006:26), Cecil complained in a letter, which he knew the Queen would read, that she referred to him as her ‘little elf’ or ‘pigmy’. Sir Robert Naunton, his best friend, even described him as ‘a little, crooked person’, and King James I referred to him as ‘little beagle’.

According to Hotine (1991:480), there most certainly is a connection between Cecil’s ambitions and his regular promotions with the writing of *Richard III* and its subsequent performances. One might even consider it the reason for Shakespeare’s writing of the play. According to Aune (2006:27), Cecil’s ambition was evident from the beginning. The Queen first took notice of Robert Cecil as a writer of propaganda that supported her decision to execute Mary Queen of Scots in 1586. Cecil benefited from his father’s influence when he was appointed Elizabeth’s Secretary of State ten years

later. He had a significant influence until he died in 1612, facilitating James's ascension through a covert correspondence before Elizabeth died, continuing as Secretary of State, rising to the position of Treasurer, and receiving numerous titles.

After his death, people openly expressed the hatred they felt towards him. In 1658, Francis Osborne, eighteen at that time, wrote a verse about Robert Cecil (Hotine 1991:480):

*Here lyes throwne, for the wormes to eate,  
Little bossive Robin, that was so great,  
Not Robin good-fellow, Nor Robin Hood,  
But Robin th'encloser of Hatfield wood,  
Who seem'd as sent from ugly fate,  
To spoyle the prince and rob the state.*

Also, after Cecil's death, several quartos were published until 1634 and, according to Aune (2006:31), there is no evidence of any similar association with any political figure other than Cecil.

*Richard III* remained popular throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; however, Richard's character became less particular, as with Cecil, and more general. Aune (2006:32) claims that it did not seem that actors, from David Garrick to Kean, used Shakespeare to attack specific figures. Knowles (1984:1 of 8) adds that, during the eighteenth century, actors like Garrick, Edmund Kean, Kemble, Booth and others preferred to perform Colley Cibber's adaptation. Cibber shortened the play and reduced the number of characters. Loehlin (1993:80) concludes that the adaptation made the character of Richard more central and that *Richard III* was only '... a favourite star vehicle for actors'. The character visually stayed the same but only became a figure of the past (Aune 2006:32).

Although continental influences had started to have an impact, by the early twentieth century, Anglo-American productions of *Richard III* still primarily reflected nineteenth-century actor-centred, historically oriented practices. This was the case in Britain, where *Richard III* was still played as a type of "museum Shakespeare," even as Harley Granville-Barker and others infused modernist features into some Shakespeare stagings, even though Shakespeare performances became more political in Europe. Dennis Kennedy (2004:29, cited in Aune 2006:32), writes: "British Shakespeare generally in this period, but particularly in Stratford and London, backed away from connecting the national dramatist to the conditions of the contemporary world", a practice that continued until the 1930s. It seems it was easier to understand the play as a history lesson rather

than a comment on contemporary social or political conditions (Aune 2006:32). This, however, changed in the 1920s in Germany.

In Germany, *Richard III* was staged in one of the most significant continental productions, under the direction of Leopold Jessner, at the National Theatre of Berlin in the fall of 1920. According to Jessner, plays should be current rather than historical (Grange 1987:92, Höfele 1992: 141-43, Hortmann 1900: 57-58, cited in Aune 2006:32). He already had a reputation for staging shows that were critical of German militarism. His stage interpretation was non-realistic and metaphorical, which reflected this belief. Richard wore a gigantic crown and a large red cloak. Most of the action following Richard's coronation occurred on a red stairway leading up to the throne. Kortner's performance of the character Richard did not refer to a specific individual or seek situations from the distant past. Instead, the production itself highlighted the harm done by the ambition of two men who attempted to overthrow the German government: Wolfgang Kapp, who was executed, and Karl Liebknecht, leaders of the Kapp-Littwitz Putsch in 1920 and the Spartakist Rising in 1919, respectively (Grange 1987:92, cited in Aune 2006:32). In 1937, Jurgen Fehling followed by giving *Richard III* a contemporary setting with clear commentary on the repressive political and social circumstances in Germany at the time (Aune 2006:33).

Performances of *Richard III* in Britain in the 1900s started reflecting the rise of fascism without making explicit connections. In 1939 John Laurie's performance of Richard at Stratford-upon-Avon reminded audiences of Hitler and Mussolini. Donald Wolfitt portrayed Richard in 1942, and in his autobiography, it became clear that he recognised similarities between Richard and Hitler; he, however, chose not to incorporate them into his performance. In an interview in the mid-1960s, Laurence Olivier, who portrayed Richard in 1944, remembered: "One had Hitler over the way, one was playing it definitely as a paranoiac, so there was a core of something to which the audience would immediately respond". Both Olivier and Wolfitt saw allusions to Hitler to connect with their audience. However, regardless of their ideas about Richard and the play, the focus remained on them as performers (Aune 2006:34–35). Of his 1947 production, Swedish director Alf Sjöberg said: "[Richard] was not hard to identify while Europe was still living in the rubble of the world war, and we continually watched great ideological con-men rise up and try to seize power" (Leiter 1986:601, cited in Aune 2006:36). Sjöberg seems to imply that in addition to the play being considered topical, Richard's persona and ascent to power acted as a cautionary tale, forewarning audiences of the perils posed by post-war idealists who were overly ambitious. The emphasis on Richard's success and the circumstances that made it possible shows how the play's world might be viewed as a societal critique. This brings to mind early modern England, where the persona of

Richard was employed to make political allusions to specific people like Cecil or Cromwell (Aune *ibid*).

The portrayal of Richard has continually recalled European fascism since World War II, even though Anglo-American productions of *Richard III* were not openly political in the 1940s. One critic of the 1961 Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) production of *Richard III* with Christopher Plummer found that it reminded him of World War II and contemporary events. These productions and others at the time appeared to be providing a cultural function of reassurance. The invocation of Nazism can be understood as a sign of relief that the danger was safely over, similar to how it may have been with the posthumous Cecil libels. (Aune 2006:36).

In 1960 Peter Hall and John Barton attempted to contextualise their RSC production of *Richard III*. Rather than linking Richard to a specific person, they created a cycle based on the three *Henry VI* plays and *Richard III* called *The Wars of Roses*. Here Richard's position was at the end of the cycle rather than centred in his own play. Hall remarked that, despite the play's historical setting, the RSC produced drama relevant to the present (Aune 2006:37). In the Theatre Company of Boston's staging of *Richard III* in 1973, with Al Pacino in the lead role, the production seemed to have escaped the shadow of Stalin and others. The production instead used Richard to shed light on, if not question, Nixon. It provided insight into political events rather than using historical figures (like Hitler and others) to highlight Richard (Aune 2006:38).

According to Aune (2006:41), “[A] reinvention of Richard's stage potential as a means of social or political critique seems to have required the emergence of a figure that could, at least for a moment, eclipse the image of the European black leather tyrant”. However, she recognises that using figures like Hitler or Stalin established a bridge between the audience, who had little knowledge of the play and the play itself. On the other hand, such a production becomes uncritical and does not comment on current and recent events. With Ian McKellen's portrayal of *Richard III* in the 1990 production of the Royal National Theatre, director Richard Eyre depended on the audience's knowledge of European fascism. By relying on this knowledge, he presented a play that, instead of using simple history to contextualise the production, ‘proposed a historical possibility’<sup>18</sup> (Aune 2006:42).

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<sup>18</sup> Premise for the concept of the *Richard III* adaptation to be discussed later.

### 1.1.2 Richard's deformity

An evident trend in interpreting *Richard III* and subsequent performances was to focus on Richard as a political figure. At East 15, on the other hand, we also discussed the question, 'How would you, as a director, approach Richard's deformity?' Over the years, there have been several interpretations of Richard's deformity. Bate (2008b:168) states, "Richard's 'unnatural' tendencies are linked in the text with animal imagery". Old Queen Margaret refers to Richard as a '*Bottle'd Spider*' and a '*Bunch-backt Toade*'<sup>19</sup>. Critics were repulsed in 1970 by Norman Rodway's portrayal of Richard resembling a pig: "He lumbers on stage at Stratford, blinking at the sun: his great pig-head appears to have been crew-cut, and some animal's skin is slung over his hump" (Nightingale 1970<sup>20</sup> in Bate 2008b:168). In 1984 Anthony Sher approached Richard, focusing on the '*Bottle'd Spider*' reference. Sher performed Richard using crutches that looked like "... huge black arachnid-legs which flew him across the stage in giant leaps..." (O'Conner 2003:113<sup>21</sup> in Bate 2008b:168). In 1992 Simon Russel Beale performed Richard as a '*Bunch-backt Toade*'. Nightingale (1992<sup>22</sup> in Bate 2008b:170) describes Beale's Richard as a "... scrubbed skull, pink jowls and a vast hump ...". In 1980 Alan Howard portrayed Richard as a "... cripple getting even with those who have the use of their legs ...". Besides the surgical boot, "Mr Howard is encumbered with a chain round the left thigh which he has to tug to get the leg moving" (Wardle 1980<sup>23</sup> in Bate 2008b:170). In 1995 David Troughton portrayed Richard "in the manner of a sinister clown", whereas, in 2003, the theme of childhood was essential in the design of Sean Holmes's production. Norman Rodway's performance of Richard in 1970 bordered on a 'naughty adolescent' (Bate 2008b:170–172).

There are as many interpretations of the character of *Richard III* as there are different approaches to his deformity. In 2011, *Richard III* formed part of the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Ontario, Canada. Seana McKenna, an actress in the title role, introduced 'a sort of' femininity to the character. It was almost as though his handicap was not so much his physical deformity but that he was born immature, more feminine. In her review, Laura Estill (2012:147) argues that "... McKenna's Richard can best be understood in its relation to the early modern Galenic one-sex model<sup>24</sup>. For Galen and later Renaissance physicians who adopted his views, women were deficient men; for them, a vagina was simply an inverted penis, and a lack of heat in utero caused the phallus

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<sup>19</sup> Act 1, scene 3, Lines 712–717

<sup>20</sup> Nightingale, B. 1970. *New Statemen*, 24 April.

<sup>21</sup> O'Conner, J. 2003. *Shakespearean Afterlives: Ten Characters with a Life of Their Own*. Cambridge: Icon Books Ltd.

<sup>22</sup> Nightingale, B. 1992. *The Times*, 13 August.

<sup>23</sup> Wardle, I. 1980. *The Times*, 5 November.

<sup>24</sup> Estill (2012:148) states: In the Galenic one-sex model, a person can only be identified as a man or a "less-perfect" man.

not to turn out. Like a woman, Richard is a deficient man because of his physical deformity ...”

This aspect is underscored in Queen Margaret’s insult:

*Thou eluish mark’d, abortiue rooting Hogge,* 697  
*Thou that wast seal’d in thy Natiuitie*  
*The slaue of Nature, and the Sonne of Hell:*  
*Thou slander of thy heauie Mothers Wombe,*

Estill (2012:148) found that the subtle femininity in McKenna’s portrayal of Richard underscored his unmanliness. I was fortunate to see this production, which initiated this study and the search for *queer cues*<sup>25</sup> in Shakespeare’s works.

The search for *queer cues* was further influenced by Sir Ian McKellen’s screen adaptation of *Richard III*, based on Richard Eyre’s stage production for the Royal National Theatre with Sir McKellen as the titular character. In McKellen’s screen adaptation, the character Tyrrel is in more scenes than in the original script. After his appearance early in the film, he is always at Richard’s side. The first time Richard sees Tyrrel, he does a double-take while Tyrrel, with blond hair and blue eyes, gives Richard a seductive look. Tyrrel is also the first character to become a member of Richard’s private guard after Richard is crowned king. This hint of *homosocial bonding* between McKellen’s Richard and Tyrrel might be more noticeable because Sir Ian McKellen is one of the most prominent openly gay actors in the film industry. Friedman (2009:568) even comments that defeat by Richmond, whose heterosexuality is stressed in the film, over Richard “... represents the triumph of married sexuality over depraved sexual defiance”.

As seen in the Stratford performance, Richard’s feminine behaviour, together with Ian McKellen’s subtle hint at Richard’s sexuality, lead to the questions of this study. How would a queer interpretation of the play, using the notion that Richard was born as a ‘less perfect’ man, influence his identity and desire? Would his sexuality, or rather his self-consciousness about his deformity and sexuality and possibly his subsequent struggle with his sexuality, influence his villainy and desire to be King? It is interesting to note that Richard is responsible for the deaths of twelve characters, but not one by his own hand; most people are murdered by hired killers or executed for ‘treason’ after disobeying his orders. This further supports the idea of Richard as a ‘less perfect’ man. Suppose Richard could be in a relationship with a male character who commits these murders for him; what possibilities does this notion open up for a new adaptation from a queer perspective?

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<sup>25</sup> The concept of *queer cues* are defined later in the chapter.

The study will therefore look at possible ways in which such a relationship can be created in the adaptation process of *Richard III*.

## 1.2 Why Hamlet

This idea of characters ‘struggling’ is a recurring theme in Shakespeare’s plays. Hamlet is the character that displays this never-ending ‘struggle’ most comprehensively: ‘*To be, or not to be, that is the Question*’.

Bickley & Stevens (2013:99) claim that *Hamlet* has never fallen out of favour with audiences, critics and scholars, even with all the variations performed over the centuries. Frank Kermode (1985:62, cited in Bickley & Stevens 2013:99) attributes this to the play’s ‘perpetual modernity’, which allows the play to be ‘remade in the image of each new generation’.

Mention *Hamlet* in artistic and scholarly circles, and immediately there is a debate about what the play is all about. Bate (2008a:4) calls *Hamlet* a “political drama and a play about the journey of an individual self”. Crystal (2013:3) summarises *Hamlet* as a play of “murder, grief, guilt, possible suicide, incest, fratricide, regicide”. He adds that it concerns a prince struggling with abstract ideas about morality and philosophy.

In a letter to a friend in 1897, Freud (1966:265–266, cited in Gil Harris 2012:84) compared the characters of Oedipus and Hamlet, and came to consider “falling in love with the mother and jealousy of the father ... as a universal event of early childhood”. The Welsh psychoanalyst, Ernest Jones, used this Freudian theory in his psychoanalytical literary critique of *Hamlet and Oedipus*.<sup>26</sup> This Freudian theme of Hamlet’s repressed Oedipal desire for his mother, Gertrude, was the basis for Laurence Olivier’s portrayal of Hamlet in his 1947 adaptation (Gil Harris 2012:84).

Another theme often discussed is Hamlet’s so-called madness and melancholy. Crystal (2013:117–118) asks, “So, is Hamlet mad?”. He gives three possible answers: “Yes, no, and he starts off sane and ends up mad”. There are several interpretations but there seems to be consensus on “Yes - he is mad”. But Crystal (*ibid*) also mentions the following: Horatio warns Hamlet that the ghost might ‘*draw you into madness*’; the ghost warns Hamlet ‘*Taint not thy mind*’; Hamlet makes Horatio and Marcellus swear not to say anything if he ‘*put an Anticke disposition on*’; he confesses to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (without their realising it) that he is not mad when he says ‘*I am but mad North,*

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<sup>26</sup> Jones, E. 1954. *Hamlet and Oedipus: A classical study in the psychoanalysis of literature*. New York: Doubleday.

*North- West: when the / Winde is Southerly, I know a Hawke from a Handsaw*', and he is also quite lucid when he returns from England in Act 5.

There are several interpretations of the '*To be, or not to be*' speech. It is one of the most famous Shakespeare speeches and one of the most debated speeches in *Hamlet*. Crystal (2013:119) argues that, in most productions, this speech is clearly taken to be about suicide. In a recent production at the Barbican, London, with Benedict Cumberbatch in the title role, the director heavily focused on Hamlet's ultimate desire to commit suicide by having the actor come on stage with a noose around his neck for this soliloquy.

Other claims have been made that the '*To be, or not to be*' speech is about whether to kill Claudius or not. Crystal (2013:119) makes an interesting observation; as a point of departure for the speech, one could adopt "the notion of life and death, or being and not being". Here we can refer to Bate's statement (2008a:4) that it is also about "the journey of an individual self". In my case, 'to accept being gay or not to accept being gay'. As a teenager and even into my early 20s, this was my biggest struggle, not coming out but accepting that I am gay. That was the part of me this speech seriously addressed, viz., the struggle of acceptance. But can it be interpreted that Hamlet could, in the '*To be, or not to be*' speech, be struggling with his sexuality? But how could this speech be about his sexuality? For me, the answer lies in the unexpected entrance of Hamlet's friend, Horatio.

It is interesting to observe the relationship between Horatio and Hamlet. Horatio is present in key moments of the play. Most of Horatio's interactions are with Hamlet. Only after Hamlet's exile does Horatio interact with other characters, e.g. Gertrude and Claudius. It is not clear from where Horatio originates. All we know is that he is not part of the court. He is from a lower social class than Hamlet. He is, however, well-versed in Danish politics. In his recounting of the King's victory to the soldiers, one could assume the possibility that he was there. He is a scholar studying with Hamlet in Wittenberg, and they are friends. How is it possible that Horatio, who is not part of the court and (as we are informed in the next scene) has only recently arrived at the castle, knows so much about the historical and political situation in Denmark? Hamlet is also surprised to see Horatio at Elsinore, clearly not expecting him to be there. Why, then, was Horatio there? Horatio explains that he came for old King Hamlet's funeral. Later, after Hamlet's exile to England, Horatio receives a letter from Hamlet informing him that he is on his way back to Denmark and that Horatio should meet him. Why was Horatio still at the castle after Hamlet had left? How did Hamlet know that Horatio would still be there? All of this could imply a close relationship between Hamlet and Horatio. The question can

be asked as to how it will influence the interpretation of the play and their relationship if Hamlet and Horatio were in a same-sex relationship (Heydenrych 2017:48).

### 1.3 Why Queer

Since the early 1980s, a vast amount of research<sup>27</sup> has shown a keen interest in Shakespeare's works from a queer perspective, not to mention academic courses and presentations. Menon (2011:12) claims that Shakespeare is a queer theorist, not because the word 'queer' appears in any title but because Queer Theory may be shown to inhabit his work. On the other hand, Stockton (2012:226) states in his review of *Shakesqueer: A Queer Companion to the Complete Works of Shakespeare* that the problem with Menon's claim "...is its concomitant implication that any and all resistance to [Queer Theory] necessarily amounts to the protection of a heteronormative view of history ...".

There are several definitions and explanations of the differences between lesbian, gay and queer criticism throughout the canon of sources on literary criticism. According to Barry (2002:135), the analysis and understanding of sexual orientation is the defining feature of lesbian/gay criticism. However, with lesbian and gay criticism comes a separation of the genders. Barry (*ibid*) continues by separating lesbian and gay criticism by focusing on lesbian feminism. It, therefore, is clear that the focus here is from a gender perspective. 'Queer' (Barry 2002:138) then becomes an all-inclusive term and not 'woman-centred' (as per Barry's explanation), but instead "...sees an identity of political and social interest with gay men". Dobie (2012:109) affirms this idea by explaining that gay and lesbian movements were considered more as male and female studies and that "an evolving alliance between gay men and lesbians" are reflected in the term Queer Theory. She says the word 'queer' is a more inclusive term.

Tyson (2006) draws definitive distinctions between lesbian, gay and queer criticism. He argues that lesbian criticism focuses on issues of personal identity and politics, similar to feminist criticism (*ibid*:322). On the topic of gay criticism, Tyson claims that the focus is more on *gay sensibility*, or rather "[h]ow ... being gay influence[s] the way one sees the world, sees oneself and others ..." (*ibid*:330). He proposes that the word queer encompasses a range of meanings in literary studies.

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<sup>27</sup> Gilbert, S. 2018. Shakesqueer in love: Exploring the Bard's queer themes. *The Conversation*. [online]

<<https://theconversation.com/shakesqueer-in-love-exploring-the-bards-queer-themes-98220> >

Stanivukovic, G. (Ed.). 2017. *Queer Shakespeare: Desire and Sexuality*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Menon, M. (Ed.). 2011. *Shakesqueer: A Queer Companion to the Complete Works of Shakespeare*. London: Duke University Press.

Guy-Bray, S. 2020. *Shakespeare and Queer Representation*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. London: Routledge.

However, using it as an inclusive term in literary criticism implies that a text is interpreted from a ‘nonstraight perspective’ (*ibid*:336).

Plummer (2005:359) believes as follows, “‘Queer’, for me, is the postmodernisation of sexual and gender studies”. To him, the conventional categories of sexuality and gender are deconstructed. For this study, I use the word *queer* as an inclusive term, therefore not focusing on either gay or lesbian interpretations but rather homosexuality.

Tyson (2006:339) explains that in an ‘accepted’ heterosexual text, there can be rather subtle textual cues that can create a ‘homoerotic atmosphere’ or rather give way to a queer interpretation. A single cue cannot be used as evidence for such an atmosphere; however, when there is a prevalence of *queer cues*, especially when combined with biographical or other textual evidence, a queer interpretation of a heterosexual text can be supported. Several examples of these subtle cues exist, but I focused on *homosocial bonding* for this study.

According to Tyson (2006:339–340), *homosocial bonding* is a strong emotional bond between characters of the same sex. This bond can create a homosocial atmosphere in the play, maybe even homoerotic, subtly or blatantly. Whether subtle or blatant, this homosocial bond highlights how vital same-sex emotional ties are in “... the development of human identity and community ...” (Tyson 2006:340).

This concept of *homosocial bonding* is the basis of this study’s inquiry into the relationship between Richard and Tyrell and Hamlet and Horatio.

## 2. Research questions

The primary goal of this study is to examine what would happen if the sexuality of Richard and Hamlet were changed by transposing *Hamlet* and *Richard III*, using a queer interpretation, into queer adaptations and how that would change the identity and desires of the title characters in the new adaptations.

The following questions and statements are used to formulate the research questions. Tyson (2006:341) offers several questions to summarise lesbian, gay or queer approaches to literature.

Relevant to this study was:

How might the works of heterosexual writers be reread to reveal an unspoken or unconscious lesbian, gay, or queer presence? That is, does the work have an unconscious lesbian, gay, or queer desire or conflict that it submerges (or that heterosexual readers have submerged)?

According to Barry (2002:143), lesbian/gay [queer for the purpose of this study] critics do the following:

Identify lesbian/gay episodes in mainstream work and discuss them as such (for example, the relationship between Jane and Helen in *Jane Eyre*), rather than reading same-sex pairings in non-specific ways, for instance, as symbolising two aspects of the same character (Zimmerman).

The study aims to identify “unspoken or unconscious lesbian, gay, or queer presence”, or what will be referred to as *queer cues*, utilising the coding process of Constructivist-Grounded Theory (CGT), as a blueprint, in the transposition of *Hamlet* and *Richard III* by William Shakespeare.

The primary question for this study is: ‘How does a queer interpretation of *Richard III* and *Hamlet* change the identity and desire of the title characters?’ The study also explores the questions ‘What elements in *Richard III* and *Hamlet* can be identified as *queer cues*?’. ‘Do the characters’ interactions with each other support these cues?’. ‘What is the effect of these *queer cues* on the identity and desire of the title characters in *Richard III* and *Hamlet*?’ Another question that might arise is whether all these cues could be recognised in the written text alone or whether a performance might be needed to bring out these cues.

The study’s objective is to identify *queer cues* in the scripts of *Richard III* and *Hamlet* using the Initial Coding process of data analysis in a CGT practice. After identifying *queer cues* in the scripts, the next step will be identifying other moments in the play that can now be interpreted from a queer perspective. This forms part of the Focused Coding of data analysis in a CGT practice, after which *Richard III* and *Hamlet* will be transposed into queer adaptations. ‘Transposition’ refers to the Memo-Writing process after Focused Coding. In contrast, ‘adaptation’ refers to the completed manuscript after Memo-Writing, which constitutes the ‘draft report’. The final adapted script and possible performance become the CGT process’s theory development and ‘final report’. These concepts will be discussed in detail in the next section.

### **3. The Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative CGT coding process as a blueprint to analyse *queer cues* in *Richard III* and *Hamlet*. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:18-19) explain that, as a process, qualitative research is defined by “[t]hree interconnected, generic activities”. They discuss these generic activities under five phases that define the research process. With his own personal biography, the researcher is present in each phase and enters the research process from an interpretive community. The phases are:

- Phase 1: The researcher as a multicultural subject;
- Phase 2: Theoretical paradigms and perspectives;

- Phase 3: Research strategies;
- Phase 4: Methods of collection and analysis;
- Phase 5: The art, practices and politics of interpretation and presentation.

Phase 1 comprises ‘history and research traditions’, ‘conceptions of the self and the other’ and ‘ethics and politics of research’ (Denzin & Lincoln 2000:19). It is clear that the researcher is situated in a culturally influenced research tradition, either by history or research traditions which either guide or constrain work done in any study. This research tradition is characterised by diversity and conflict between the researcher (the self) and subject (the other) while, at the same time, confronted by ethics and the politics of research. Therefore “qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive methods, always seeking better ways to make more understandable the worlds of experience they have studied” (Denzin & Lincoln *ibid*). Denzin and Lincoln (2000:6) explain that qualitative research has no theory or paradigm specifically classifiable as ‘qualitative research’.

The core aim of qualitative research is that qualitative researchers aim to understand better the researched subject matter. To do this, the researcher has a variety of empirical materials to study (Denzin & Lincoln 2000:4). These range from case studies, personal experiences, interviews, observations, visual texts, etc. Qualitative researchers, therefore, study things in their natural state to interpret the subject matter “... in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (*ibid*:3).

Creswell’s (2013:44) definition of qualitative research emphasises the process of research:

Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change.

It is evident in Creswell’s definition that the interpretive nature of inquiry is emphasised with qualitative research. It is vital that the study is placed within the researcher’s own political, social and cultural context, and that the researcher’s ‘presence’ is present in the presentation of the findings.

A qualitative research design, therefore, seemed appropriate for this study. Qualitative research allows the study to engage actively with the scripts of *Richard III* and *Hamlet*. It also allows gathering data through constant analysis of the scripts instead of relying on instruments developed by other researchers.

### 3.1 Queer Theory and the Case of *Queer Cues*

Queer Theory emerged as a response to the limitations of traditional feminist and gay/lesbian studies. It was inspired by the work of feminist and LGBT scholars who criticised how their respective areas tended to promote binary conceptions of gender and sexuality. The concept that gender and sexuality are binary categories - male or female, straight or homosexual - is contested by Queer Theory. Instead, it contends that these categories are socially constructed and flexible and that power dynamics and cultural practices continually remodel and redefine them (Butler 1990).

Performativity is one of the critical concepts in Queer Theory. Gender and sexuality are formed through repetitive acts or performances that are repeated and reinforced by social norms and cultural practices, according to Judith Butler (1990). Instead of being fundamental or natural characteristics, gender and sexuality are constructed. Butler contends that gender and sexuality are things we “do” through our behaviour and interactions with others; we do not “have” gender and sexuality. This viewpoint has caused traditional literary analysis to be rethought, which previously focused on how gender and sexuality are represented in literature rather than how these categories are built and enacted through language and story (Halberstam 2011).

As stated in the introduction, Queer Theory has significantly impacted literary analysis because of its focus beyond conventional binary conceptions of gender and sexuality. The work of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, who has investigated the idea of homosocial desire in literature, is one example of how Queer Theory is applied in literary analysis. According to Sedgwick (2016), male homosocial desire is an emotional connection between men that disregards women rather than being inherently homoerotic. She suggested that cultural standards influence this desire and that this effect may be seen in various cultural expressions, such as literature, art, and film. Sedgwick further argued that the persecution of women and LGBTQ+ persons originates from male *homosocial bonding*'s dread of homosexuality. Overall, Sedgwick (2016) shows how gender, sexuality, and power dynamics influence interpersonal interactions through her investigation of male homosocial desire.

Bray questioned the idea that homosexuality was a contemporary invention in his book *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (1995)<sup>28</sup>. He made the case that same-sex attraction existed but was, at least officially, not tolerated (condemned as sodomy and tribadism) in early modern

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<sup>28</sup> See also: Dollimore, J. 2021. *Desire: A Memoir* and Smith, B.R., 1995. *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics*

England (Bray 1995). In his research, Bray emphasised the historical fluidity of sexual identity while focusing on same-sex interactions between men in friendship and marriage.

By arguing that same-sex desire has existed in many forms throughout history, Bray's work on Queer Theory challenged the notion that homosexuality is a recent, Western phenomena. Bray sought to challenge the notion that heterosexuality is the only natural and accepted kind of sexual desire. His contributions opened the door for other experts in Queer Theory to explore the social, cultural, and historical settings of sexuality and to question conventional ideas about gender and sexuality (Halperin 2002).

Not only have Bray's theories influenced historians but also literary academics who have used Queer Theory to examine literature from the perspectives of gender and sexuality. Aiming to understand how these themes reflect cultural constructions of gender and sexuality, Queer Theory in literature challenges conventional interpretations that downplay or overlook queer elements in literary texts (Holland 2000).

There are certain similarities between the interdisciplinary fields of Queer Theory and Lesbian, Gay, and Queer Criticism (LGQC), which both examine gender and sexuality. Their approaches and points of focus are, however, slightly different. While LGQC focuses more on analysing particular cultural representations, Queer Theory deconstructs binary categories (Garber 1992, Sinfield 1994, Jagose 2016).

The quest for textual evidence, or rather cues, in literary interpretation is one of the characteristics of LGQC. Even though homoerotic imagery and same-sex interactions are the most overt, subtle textual cues can create a homoerotic atmosphere in a heterosexual work (Tyson 2006).

There exist several examples of different types of subtle "unspoken or unconscious" cues referred to in this study as *queer cues*, predominantly *homosocial bonding*. Tyson (2006:339-340) explains *homosocial bonding* as portraying a strong emotional bond between characters of the same sex. This creates "... a homosocial atmosphere that may be subtly or overtly homoerotic". Irrespective of the homoerotic elements present, the portrayal of *homosocial bonding* highlights the significant role that emotional ties between individuals of the same gender play in shaping human identity and fostering a sense of community. The study examines which *queer cues*, evidence of *homosocial bonding*, could be identified in the scripts through a *queer reading* and how that influenced the transposition of the

scripts into new queer adaptations. *Homosocial bonding* and queer interpretation form the basis of this study's inquiry into the relationship between Richard and Tyrrel, and Hamlet and Horatio.

Kubowitz (2012:201) reflects on a statement made by Beloff that “[b]eing heterosexual has several benefits ... One can enter into most cultural narratives, that is novels, films, fine art, on the basis of simple and satisfying identification”. For Kubowitz (*ibid*), this controversial, and regrettably still true, claim about the advantages of heterosexuality imply that it is difficult for non-heterosexual recipients to enter into and identify with most cultural narratives. Kubowitz (*ibid*) links this to the theoretical construct of the *implied reader*. Iser (1972) noted that the *implied reader* is not a real person but an ‘ideal reader’ created by the text itself. Assumptions, expectations, and prior knowledge that the text assumes or requires are inferred from the text’s use of language, structure, and different cues and signals to form the *implied reader*. In Iser’s view (1972), a literary work is incomplete until it is read, and the implied reader completes the work by adding their own experiences, beliefs, and interpretations to the text. In the case of the bulk of cultural narratives, such as those found in films, books, plays, poems, music, and fine art, Kubowitz (2012:201) argues that the *implied reader* is not as abstract a concept as Iser initially proposed. However, he recognises that the *implied reader* is defined using a few fairly distinct distinguishing traits. Due to this, he proposes to call, what is commonly referred to as the *implied reader*, instead the *default reader*, showing particular default characteristics or settings. These default settings touch on topics fundamental to understanding who we are as people, such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, and belief systems. Kubowitz (*ibid*) assumes that one of these default settings is heterosexuality, the default setting for sexual orientation.

As mentioned earlier, Bray’s influence on literary academics is to use Queer Theory to examine literature from the perspectives of gender and sexuality. This links to Kubowitz’s model of *queer reading strategies*, techniques that readers can use to find queer meanings in texts that appear to be straight. For Kubowitz (2012:204), we can respond to inquiries like: “What does the reader who comes up with a *queer reading* of a text do differently from the reader who comes up with a non-queer reading of a text?” by having a model of *queer reading* on hand. Other questions are answered, such as: “How can both readers be ‘right’ in their contradictory interpretations (i.e. ‘right’ in the sense of being able to offer plausible readings)? In which aspects do their reading strategies differ? And what could be potential reasons for why they apply different reading strategies?”. Kubowitz (*ibid*) suspects that a sceptic reader might question the necessity of creating such a model. One could argue that, given that Queer Theories exist, such a model is unnecessary. He contends that the exact reverse is true. Such a model is a necessary part of Queer Theory, rather than an unnecessary add-on. This is because Queer Theory is not strictly speaking a literary theory because it is interdisciplinary in nature.

It is rather general and hence only partially effective as a tool for literary interpretation. Kubowitz (*ibid*) further explains that although Queer Theory undoubtedly offers essential ideas that can be used in critical readings of texts, it does not adequately explain the various ways queer fictional worlds are created, including those that are written and read. He does not imply that no queer theorists have ever written on the subject, but he does claim that he has not found a convincing framework.

Kubowitz (2012:204) based his model of *queer reading* on the idea that readers typically attempt to appropriate literary texts or “make them meaningful” to themselves. It might be argued that a reader does not always approach a book with the fundamental questions “What is the text saying?”, “What does the text mean?” or “What is the author saying?”. He, however, sees these basic questions more likely to be along the lines of “What does the text tell *me*, or do to *me*?”, “What can *I* do with the text?”. A question more closely associated with his *default reader* model: “Does the text *address me* at all?”.

As a gay man, I found the concept of *default reader* very true in my own reading of plays, the default being my homosexuality. In most cases, I sometimes identify with the characters and situations, albeit not in the original heterosexual context, but from a gay perspective. One such play is Shakespeare’s Hamlet. Hamlet reflects, ‘*To be, or not to be, that is the Question*’<sup>29</sup>, which in most cases is interpreted as a question about suicide, to name but one, but for me, it further begs the question of own acceptance of one’s sexuality.

### **3.2 Constructivist-Grounded Theory (CGT) as blueprint**

As a qualitative research genre, *Grounded Theory* is an analytical research process that constantly compares small data units collected through a series of coding phases (Saldaña 2011:6–7). The methodical analysed data are primarily used to understand human processes in order to construct a theory. Important to note is that the theory is ‘grounded in the data’. Creswell (2013:86) explains that the researcher focuses on a process or an action. This process or action has clearly defined steps that take place over time. A *Grounded Theory* study has some ‘action’ that the researchers aim to explain or a process the researcher intends to develop. This inductive critical analysis process in grounded theory is suitable for identifying *queer cues* in the scripts.

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<sup>29</sup> Act 3, scene 1, line 1710. Shakespeare, William. *The Tragedy of Hamlet*. DjVu Editions E-books, Global Language Resources, Inc, 2001. <http://triggs.djvu.org/djvu-editions.com/SHAKESPEARE/HAMLET/Download.pdf>.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000:20) propose that qualitative research is structured by four interpretive paradigms, viz. “positivist and post-positivist, constructivist-interpretive, critical (Marxist, emancipatory), and feminist-poststructural”. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:21) explain that the constructivist paradigm assumes “a relativist ontology ..., a subjectivist epistemology ..., and a naturalistic set of methodological procedures”. External validity, reliability and objectivity, i.e. the positivist criteria for presenting findings, are replaced by the grounded theory criteria for presenting findings such as ‘credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability’.

The theoretical paradigm for this research study stemmed from the constructivist tradition. Schwandt (2000:197) explains the constructivist approach to knowledge: in everyday life, we do not discover knowledge but construct it, not in isolation, however, but against “... a backdrop of shared understanding, practices, language ...”. Through this process of constructing, we invent constructs to make sense of experiences and, in the light of new experiences, we continually test and modify these constructs. They are ever-evolving. In qualitative research, the researcher recognises that his own background influences his interpretation. He positions himself in the research and interprets what he finds, influenced by his personal experiences and background (Creswell 2013:25). This theoretical paradigm manifests in the CGT approach of Charmaz (2006).

Charmaz (2006:130) explains that “a constructivist approach places a priority on the phenomena of study and sees both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants and other sources of data”. A CGT research design expressly suits the aim of this study.

According to Charmaz (2005:509), grounded theory methods provided many qualitative researchers with a template for doing research. However, this ‘template’ was situated in the positivist paradigm. Charmaz (*ibid*) adds that Glaser (1978, 1992) was rooted in mid-20th-century positivism, which brought an objectivist form to grounded theory. He emphasised, “... logic, analytical procedures, comparative methods and conceptual development and assumptions of an external but discernible world, unbiased observer and discovered theory”.

Strauss, however, further developed his version of grounded theory. The focus was now on meaning, action and process. Together with Corbin, they introduced new technical procedures for data collection (Corbin & Strauss: 1988; Strauss: 1993; Strauss & Corbin: 1990, 1998), where verification was an explicit goal. This brought grounded theory closer to the positivist ideals (Charmaz 2005:509). Charmaz (2000:510) explains that Strauss and Corbin’s stance “... assumes an objective external reality, aims towards unbiased data collection, proposes a set of technical procedures, and espouses

verification”. They propose allowing the participants a voice in the study and representing them as accurately as possible.

As stated earlier, Classic grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss) and Straussian grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin) are both rooted in positivism. According to Charmaz (2005:509), many scholars wanted to move away from the positivist position of grounded theory. She shared this goal and aimed to build on the constructivist elements in grounded theory, known as constructivist-grounded theory.

Charmaz (2005:509) explains that CGT adopts the guidelines of Classical and Straussian grounded theory. However, a constructivist approach is followed instead of subscribing to the objectivist and positivist traditions. In CGT, the emphasis is on the phenomenon being studied and not on the methods used to study it. Therefore with constructivist-grounded theory, the “modes of knowing and representing studied life” are reflective, meaning “... giving close attention to empirical realities and our collected renderings of them - *and* locating oneself in these realities”.

Charmaz (2005:509) claims that, by focusing on the emergence of a theory, the researcher does not take an objective approach to collect data but instead approaches it with an “... interpretive frame of reference”. Instead, the researcher is influenced by “... prior interpretive frames, biographies, and interests as well as the research context, their [his] relationships with research participants, concrete field experiences, and modes of generating and recording empirical materials”. In short, the theoretical analysis of the data is “interpretive renderings of a reality, not objective reporting of it”.

The interpretive nature of CGT as a blueprint made this methodology most appropriate for the study. Instead of describing the scripts of *Hamlet* and *Richard III*, I could bring my own personal history to the analysis of the scripts. This meant that, as a gay man, I could approach the scripts from that background. The coding processes of CGT allowed me to analyse the scripts from a queer perspective and, through constant comparison, explore how a queer interpretation of the scripts influenced the identities and desires of the title characters.

Through the coding process of grounded theory and the fact that CGT allows for constructing a theory, *queer cues* identified in the scripts can be used to construct new queer adaptations. Charmaz (2008:160) states, “[C]onstructivists argue that researchers’ perspectives will direct their attention but not determine their research”. The grounded theory method of data collection and analysis “consists of systematic inductive guidelines for collecting and analysing data [identifying *queer cues*] to build a middle-range theoretical framework [an adaptation] that explains collected data” (Charmaz 2000:509).

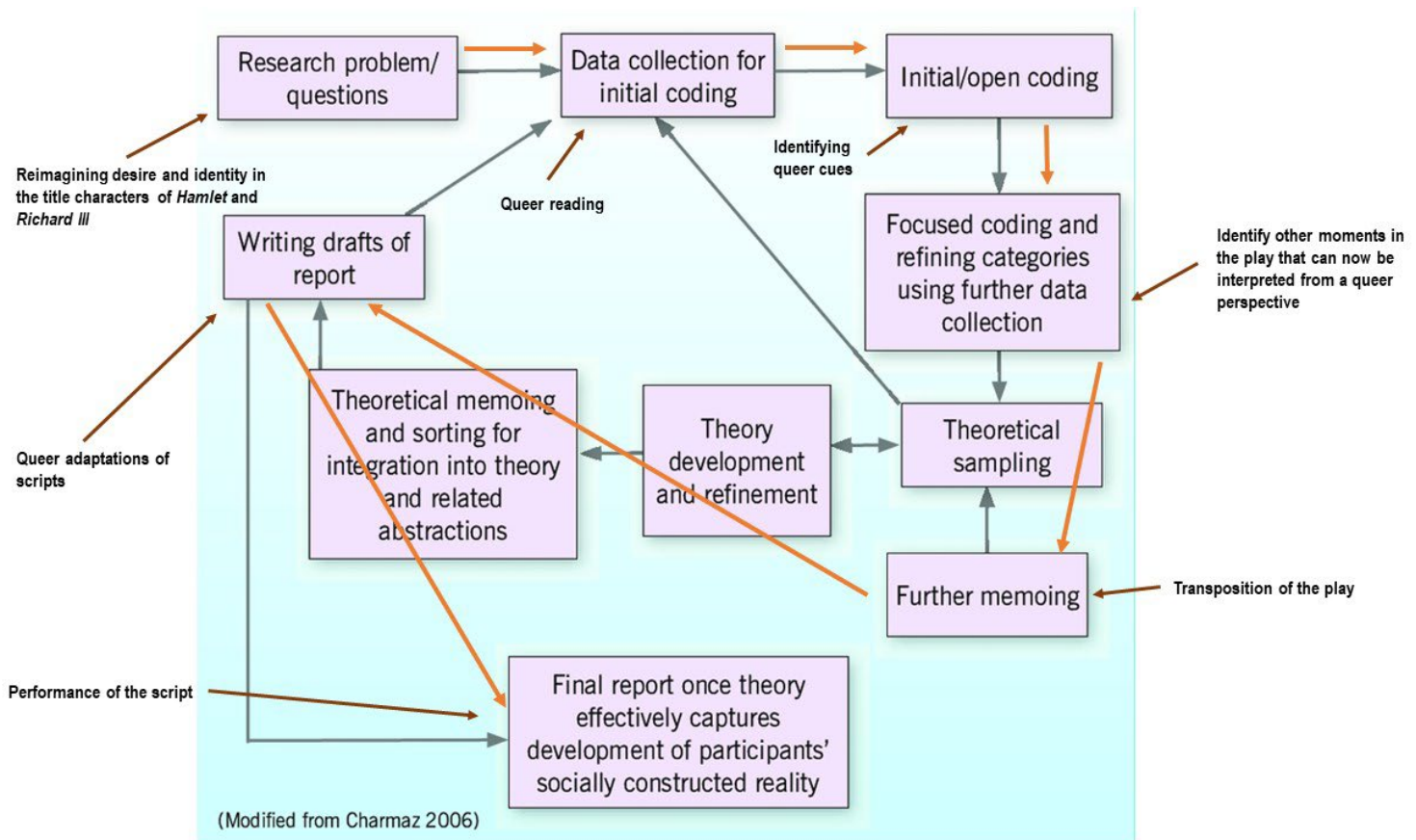


Figure 1<sup>30</sup> offers a bird’s-eye view of the complete coding process of the study.

What follows is a systematic discussion of a CGT’s data collection and analysis process as a blueprint and then the application thereof to the scripts of *Richard III* and *Hamlet*. The first step in the process is identifying *queer cues*, Initial Coding, followed by identifying other moments or events in the play that can be interpreted from a queer perspective, Focussed Coding. Then finally, the theory development is the queer adaptations of the plays.

<sup>30</sup> Higginbottom G, Lauridsen EI. 2014. The Roots and Development of Constructivist-Grounded Theory. *Nurse Researcher* 21(5):8–13. DOI: 10.7748/nr.21.5.8.e1208

### 3.3 Initial Coding and the process of *queer reading*

According to Charmaz (2000:514), the grounded theory method is not a method of collecting data, but rather a method specifying analytic strategies. The first step in the coding process of grounded theory is Initial Coding (Charmaz 2006:47). Birks and Mills (2011:9) describe this step as a process of identifying words or a group of words in the data, and then labelling them. Charmaz (2006:50) suggests three ways in which the coding can be done: word-by-word coding, line-by-line coding or incident-by-incident coding. Charmaz (2006:53) claims the incident-by-incident coding process is “a comparative study of incidents”, and will be used in this study to identify *queer cues* in the selected scripts.

At this point it is essential to define what is meant by *queer* or, as Kubowitz (2012) refers to it, as *queerness*. Kubowitz (2008:172, cited in Kubowitz 2012:201) heuristically defines queerness as follows:

One meaning of queer is considered to be closely linked to sexuality, while the second meaning is taken to signify strangeness, oddity, peculiarity or extra-ordinariness irrespective of sexuality. By the first meaning of queerness I understand a relational term indicating a certain distance or deviance from the norm, especially from heteronormativity, which denotes some sort of sexual otherness. This can be same-sex sexuality but may also be any other form of marginalised, ‘non-straight hetero-sexual or hetero-normative’ sexuality, with the norm implying a monogamous and monoamorous lifestyle.

Kubowitz (2012:202) defines *queer reading* as a strategy a reader applies to ‘unearth’ *queer* meanings in scripts generalised as *straight texts*. Kubowitz’s (2012:211) model for *queer reading* strategies is divided into two types, viz. ‘foregrounding queerness’ and ‘downplaying queerness’. In essence, this means that by foregrounding queerness, a reader applies a *queer reading*. Sean O’Connor (1998:8, cited in Kubowitz’s 2012:206) claims that queer readers:

... are practiced at interpreting art, never taking anything at face value and locating themselves within texts that seem, superficially, to exclude them. *We have had no choice but to read ourselves in[to] works about heterosexual relationships. . . .*

Andy Medhurst (1991:152–53, cited in Kubowitz’s 2012:206) writes:

Denied even the remotest possibility of supportive images of homosexuality within the dominant heterosexual culture, gay [and/or queer] people have had to fashion what we could out of the imageries of dominance, *to snatch illicit meanings from the fabric of normality*, to undertake a corrupt decoding for the purposes of satisfying marginalized desires.

Strauss and Corbin (1998:1002, cited in Saldaña 2009:81) maintain that with Initial Coding, the qualitative data are broken down into distinct parts and then carefully examined and compared for similarities and differences. Charmaz (2006:46) adds that the goal of Initial Coding is “to remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by your reading of the data”. Saldaña (2009:81) believes that Initial Coding allows the researcher to reflect on the content and nuances of the data and take ownership of them. Initial Coding is a first-cycle coding stage and an ‘open-ended approach’. It is not a ‘specific formulaic method’ but rather an approach with ‘recommended general guidelines’. The most common coding processes used are In Vivo Coding and Process Coding, but Saldaña (*ibid*) claims other methods can also be used.

Charmaz (2008:162) views grounded theory strategies as flexible, and in her opinion, the researcher “has latitude not simply to *choose* the methods but also to *create* them as inquiry proceeds”. She adds that “[G]rounded theory coding is interactive and comparative” (Charmaz 2008:164).

This study deviates from the standard Initial Coding goal to ‘remain open’; instead, it codes the scripts through a *queer reading*, searching for *queer cues*. A mixture of line-by-line and incident-by-incident coding processes was used. Another deviation from the coding process was the use of Verbal Exchange Coding. Saldaña (2009:113) explains Verbal Exchange Coding as “... the verbatim transcript analysis and interpretation of the types of conversation and personal meanings of key moments in the exchanges”.

Goodall (2000, cited in Saldaña 2016:36) outlines Verbal Exchange Coding in his book *Writing the New Ethnography*. He recommends that researchers use an interpretive approach to data. He also does not give a ‘formulaic’ framework but recommends guidelines, as in the case of Initial Coding. Saldaña (*ibid*) claims that this method can be used for “both transcribed dialogic exchanges and preexisting [sic] fictional and non-fictional texts”, as was the case in this study. From the title of his book, it is clear that this method applies to ethnography, but this concept was adapted to fit in a grounded theory practice.

In the method, Goodall (2000, cited in Saldaña 2016:36) followed, the first step is to determine the generic type of conversation and then to examine the meaning of the conversation (or dialogue as in the case of this study) through analytical memos and reflection. Goodall (2000:103–104, cited in Saldaña 2016:36–37) suggests the following five verbal exchanges:

1. *Phatic Communion or Ritual Interaction*, a “class of routine social interactions that are themselves the basic verbal form of politeness rituals used to express social recognition and mutuality of address”. Simple exchanges can communicate cultural patterns such as status, gender, race, class differences, etc.;
2. *Ordinary Conversation*, “patterns of questions and responses that provide the interactants with data about personal, relational, and informational issues and concerns, as well as perform the routine “business” of ... everyday life”;
3. *Skilled Conversation*, which represents “a ‘higher’ or ‘deeper’ level of information exchange/discussion” between individuals, and can include exchanges such as debates, conflict management, professional negotiations, etc.;
4. *Personal Narratives*, consisting of “individual or mutual ‘self-disclosure’ of ‘pivotal events in a personal or organizational life’”; and
5. *Dialogue*, in which conversation ‘transcends’ information exchange and the ‘boundaries of self’, and moves to higher levels of spontaneous, ecstatic mutuality.

The study examined the dialogue between characters and the personal meanings of these moments and coded the conversations and moments that can be identified as *queer cues*. Böhm (2004:270) explains that it is essential to note that the process involves comparison in this analytical process. Böhm describes coding as “the *deciphering* or *interpretation* of data”. The aim is not to search for identical contents but rather to look for similarities (Busse 1994, cited in Böhm 2004:270). Charmaz (2006:187) claims that the core method of grounded theory is “constant comparison methods and your engagement”.

### 3.4 Initial Coding in *Richard III* and *Hamlet*

What follows is the Initial Coding process of *Richard III* and *Hamlet*, the process of identifying *queer cues* and not an approach to the script as a queer text. It is important to note that it does not reflect all possible cues that might exist, but rather what the researcher [me] identified. The focus is not on the cues per se but on how the identified cues were interpreted during the Initial Coding process. There is room for different interpretations by other practitioners. No particular interpretation could be seen as right or wrong, but the focus is on what the researchers instinctively identified. Following the same process, someone else will identify other words, events, phrases, etc. This section reflects on the work *done*, not what could have been done. The value of such an individual interpretation lies in the uniqueness of the product.

The discussion below gives a short synopsis of the moments or events wherein I identified *queer cues* or the event presented as a *queer cue*, followed by excerpts from the script in a table. The left-hand column contains the relevant excerpts from the script, and in the right-hand column, I define or discuss specific conversations, words or phrases identified as *queer cues*. Then a discussion follows

on the interpretation of the identified words or phrases as to how they apply to the queer interpretation.

**Richard III**

**A. Plan to marry Anne**

In his opening speech, Richard uses the image of being born before he was adequately ‘developed’, not quite finished. He refers to his hump and deformed arm, but he could also refer to himself as a person. What if he was not fully developed as a man, having much more oestrogen, born before fully developed as a man? The last thing that develops during pregnancy is the gender of the foetus.

<p><b>Act 1. Scene 1</b></p>	<p><b>Initial coding: identified conversations, words or phrases interpreted as <i>queer cues</i>.</b></p>
<p>[...]  16 <b>Rich.</b> But I, that am not shap'd for sportiue trickes,  17 Nor made to court an amorous Looking- glasse:  18 I, that am Rudely stampt, and want loues Maiesty,  19 To strut before a wonton ambling Nymph:  20 I, that am curtail'd of this faire Proportion,   21 Cheated of Feature by dissembling Nature,  22 Deform'd, vn- finish'd, sent before my time  23 Into this breathing World, scarce halfe made vp,</p>	<p><i>curtail'd</i><sup>31</sup> [curtail] meaning <i>cut short</i> or <i>diminish</i>  <i>dissembling</i><sup>32</sup> meaning <i>the act of deceiving</i></p>

In lines 16–20, Richard states that he has an unsightly appearance and cannot seduce women. He uses the word ‘*curtail'd*’, implying that his development as a man was cut short. In line 21, he mentions ‘*dissembling Nature*’, which reads that nature deceived the world that he is a man; he may look like a man, but there is much more woman in him. In line 23, Richard again refers to that with ‘*scars halfe made vp*’.

After his encounter with Clarence, his brother on his way to jail on King Edward’s orders, he lets the audience in on his plan. He intends to marry Lady Anne as part of his plot to become king.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.shakespeareswords.com/Public/Glossary.aspx>

<sup>32</sup> dissembling. (n.d.) *WordNet 3.0, Farlex clipart collection*. (2003–2008). Retrieved January 7 2020 from <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/dissembling>

<b>Act 1. Scene 1</b>	<b>Initial coding: identified conversations, words or phrases interpreted as <i>queer cues</i>.</b>
[...] 162 <b>Rich.</b> For then, Ile marry Warwickes yongest daughter. 163 What though I kill'd her Husband, and her Father, 164 The readiest way to make the Wench amends, 165 Is to become her Husband, and her Father: 166 The which will I, not all so much for loue,  167 As for another secret close intent, 168 By marrying her, which I must reach vnto.	<b>Wench</b> <sup>33</sup> meaning <i>girl</i> or <i>lass</i>  Richard here admits that he does not love Lady Anne.

In Act 1, scene 2, Richard corners Lady Anne on her way to bury her father-in-law, King Henry VI, whom Richard has killed. Richard convinces Anne that he loves her, and by the end of the scene, she reluctantly accepts his marriage proposal. After she leaves, he makes his intention known that he will kill her.

<b>Act 1. Scene 2</b>	<b>Initial coding: identified conversations, words or phrases interpreted as <i>queer cues</i>.</b>
[...] 426 <b>Rich.</b> Ile haue her, but I will not keepe her long.	

Richard only wants to marry Lady Anne to get closer to the crown and intends to kill her after he accomplishes that. He even refers to her as a girl [*wench*]. As mentioned above, *wench* means young girl or lass, but it was also used to mean ‘a strumpet [prostitute]’<sup>34</sup> in Middle English. I interpreted his use of *wench* here to mean prostitute: he has no interest in her as a woman or wife and is not in love with her, as mentioned in Act 1, scene 1.

## **B. The use of *thee* and *you* between Richard and Tyrrel**

According to Ben Crystal (2009:100), using *thee* and *you* is significant when analysing Shakespeare. In general, when upper-class characters talk to each other, they address each other using *you*. When lower-class characters speak to each other, they use the word *thou*. When a superior talks to an inferior, the superior will use the word *thou* and the inferior will use *you*. Crystal (*ibid*) indicates that where there is a special intimacy between two characters, the speaker could use *thou* and the person replying could use *you* or *thou*.

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.shakespeareswords.com/Public/Glossary.aspx>

<sup>34</sup> wench. (n.d.) Random House Kernerman Webster’s College Dictionary. (2010). [online] <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/wench>

Richard uses *thou* in the scene below (Act 4, scene 2), while Tyrrel uses *you*. This clearly indicates a superior talking to an inferior, but I interpret this as a *queer cue*, which implies intimacy between Richard and Tyrrel.

Act 4. Scene 2	Initial coding: identified conversations, words or phrases interpreted as <i>queer cues</i> .
<p>2660 <i>Enter Tyrrel.</i>            2661 <b>Rich.</b> Is thy Name <i>Tyrrel</i>?            2662 <b>Tyr.</b> <i>Iames Tyrrel</i>, and your most obedient subiect.            2663 <b>Rich.</b> Art thou indeed?            2664 <b>Tyr.</b> Proue me, my gracious Lord.            2665 <b>Rich.</b> Dar'st thou resolute to kill a friend of mine?            2666 <b>Tyr.</b> Please you:            2667 But I had rather kill two enemies.            2668 <b>Rich.</b> Why then thou hast it: two deepe enemies,            2669 Foes to my Rest, and my sweet sleepes disturbers,            2670 Are they that I would haue thee deale vpon:            2671 <i>Tyrrel</i>, I meane those Bastards in the Tower.            2672 <b>Tyr.</b> Let me haue open meanes to come to them,            2673 And soone Ile rid you from the feare of them.            2674 <b>Rich.</b> Thou sing'st sweet Musique:            2675 Hearke, come hither <i>Tyrrel</i>,            2676 Goe by this token: rise, and lend thine Eare,  <i>Whispers.</i>            2677 There is no more but so: say it is done,            2678 And I will loue thee, and preferre thee for it.            2679 <b>Tyr.</b> I will dispatch it straight. <i>Exit.</i></p>	<p><i>loue</i> [love] meaning <i>be friend to</i> or <i>be attractive to</i>  <i>preferre</i> [prefer] meaning <i>to promote</i> or <i>to advance</i></p>

In line 2678, Richard uses *loue*, which I see as a *queer cue* that can be interpreted as follows: Richard ‘*being attractive* [or attracted]’ to Tyrrel, and using the word ‘*preferred*’ he means ‘will promote him [Tyrrel] to the status of Richard’s lover or partner’.

The next encounter between Richard and Tyrrel in the same scene supports the initial interpretation above.

Act 2. Scene 4	Initial coding: identified conversations, words or phrases interpreted as <i>queer cues</i> .
<p>2727 <i>Enter Richard.</i>            2728 <b>Tir.</b> And heere he comes. All health my Soueraigne Lord.            2729 <b>Rich.</b> Kinde <i>Tirrell</i>, am I happy in thy Newes.            2730 <b>Tir.</b> If to haue done the thing you gaue in charge,            2731 Beget your happinesse, be happy then,</p> <p>2732 For it is done.            2733 <b>Rich.</b> But did'st thou see them dead.            2734 <b>Tir.</b> I did my Lord.            2735 <b>Rich.</b> And buried gentle <i>Tirrell</i>.            2736 <b>Tir.</b> The Chaplaine of the Tower hath buried them,            2737 But where (to say the truth) I do not know.            2738 <b>Rich.</b> Come to me <i>Tirrel</i> soone, and after Supper,            2739 When thou shalt tell the processe of their death.            2740 Meane time, but thinke how I may do the good,            2741 And be inheritor of thy desire.</p> <p>2742 Farewell till then.            2743 <b>Tir.</b> I humbly take my leaue.</p>	<p>Richard never uses the word '<i>kinde</i>' as an adjective for any other male character in the play.  <b>Kinde</b> [kind] meaning <i>loving</i> or <i>affectionate</i> or <i>fond</i></p> <p>See below Richard's use of '<i>gentle</i>' as an adjective for male characters in the play  <b>Gentle</b> meaning <i>soft</i> or <i>tender</i> or <i>kind</i></p> <p><b>Inheritor</b> meaning <i>owner</i> or <i>possessor</i> or <i>acquirer</i></p>

Richard never uses the word *kinde* as an adjective for any other male character in the play. Richard uses *kinde entreaties* in reply to Catesby, in line 2445, when he pleads with Richard to take the crown. However, here where Richard uses the word *kinde*, line 2729, I interpret it as a term of endearment, a *queer cue* meaning 'loving Tyrrel or 'affectionate Tyrrel'. In line 2735, Richard uses the word *gentle* as an adjective for Tyrrel, which I infer means *kinde* in this instance; again, a term of endearment. He only uses *gentle* on two other occasions; the first time he meets the young Prince of York [1700 **Rich.** *I, gentle Cousin, were it light enough*] and the evening before the Battle of Boswick [3496 **Rich.** *Stir with the Larke to morrow, gentle Norfolk*]. In line 2738, Richard tells Tyrrel to come and see him in the evening after supper. Richard wants Tyrrel to recount precisely what happened.

In lines 2740–2741, Richard tells Tyrrel, in the meantime, to think about what he would want from Richard as a reward for killing the two princes. He uses the word *inheritor*, which means to become 'owner of' or 'acquirer of' Tyrrel's desire. In line 2741, '*And be inheritor of thy desire*' I infer a

*queer cue* that Richard implies that he can be attracted to Tyrrel and, if Tyrrel so desires, he will become his partner/lover.

**Hamlet**

**A. Horatio at Elsinore**

The play starts with the guards on duty talking about the ghost they saw the previous few nights and saying that it looked remarkably like the dead King Hamlet. They have asked Horatio, Hamlet’s friend from Wittenberg, to talk to the ghost. Current events are discussed in this scene; Horatio explains the historical background and suggests to the guards why Denmark appears to be preparing for war.

Act 1. Scene 1	Initial coding: identified conversations, words or phrases interpreted as <i>queer cues</i> .
<p>18 <i>Enter Horatio and Marcellus</i>            19 <b>Fran.</b> I thinke I heare them. Stand: who’s there?            20 <b>Hor.</b> Friends to this ground.            21 <b>Mar.</b> And Leige- men to the Dane.            22 <b>Fran.</b> Giue you good night.            [...]            83 <b>Hor.</b> In what particular thought to work, I know not:            84 But in the grosse and scope of my Opinion,            85 This boades some strange eruption to our State.            [...]            168 <b>Hor.</b> Let vs impart what we haue seene to night            169 Vnto yong <i>Hamlet</i>. For vpon my life,            170 This Spirit dumbe to vs, will speake to him:            171 Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,            172 As needfull in our Loues, fitting our Duty?</p>	<p>Why is Horatio at <i>Elsenour</i>? In scene 2 he claims to have come for the King’s funeral.</p> <p>The fact that ‘<i>State</i>’ is capitalised is interpreted as a reference to Hamlet, the person, causing ‘<i>our State</i>’ to mean ‘my world/life’.</p> <p><b>Love</b> (Old English form(s): loue, loues) meaning an <i>act of kindness</i> or <i>affectionate deed</i></p>

In line 85, Horatio says ‘*our State*’, and as explained in the table above, I interpret the fact that it is in capital letters to reference Hamlet. ‘*State*’ would mean Denmark and, by implication, as a *queer cue* that Hamlet is his ‘Denmark’. The use of the plural ‘*our*’, makes the references to ‘*State*’ as his Hamlet stronger. This is an example of identifying what I see as a *queer cue*, not analysing the script as a queer script.

In the next scene, Horatio and Marcellus go to inform Hamlet of the ghost.

Act 1. Scene 2	Initial coding: identified conversations, words or phrases interpreted as <i>queer cues</i> .
<p>[...]</p> <p>294 <b>King</b>. Do I impart towards you. For your intent</p> <p>295 In going backe to Schoole in Wittenberg,</p> <p>296 It is most retrograde to our desire:</p> <p>297 And we beseech you, bend you to remaine</p> <p>298 Heere in the cheere and comfort of our eye,</p> <p>299 Our cheefest Courtier Cosin, and our Sonne.</p> <p>300 <b>Qu</b>. Let not thy Mother lose her Prayers <i>Hamlet</i>:</p> <p>301 I prythee stay with vs, go not to Wittenberg.</p> <p>302 <b>Ham</b>. I shall in all my best</p> <p>303 Obey you Madam.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p><i>Enter Horatio, Barnardo, and Marcellus.</i></p> <p>345 <b>Hor</b>. Haile to your Lordship.</p> <p>346 <b>Ham</b>. I am glad to see you well:</p> <p>347 <i>Horatio</i>, or I do forget my selfe.</p> <p>348 <b>Hor</b>. The same my Lord,</p> <p>349 And your poore Seruant euer.</p> <p>350 <b>Ham</b>. Sir my good friend,</p> <p>351 Ile change that name with you:</p> <p>352 And what make you from Wittenberg <i>Horatio</i>?</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>355 <b>Ham</b>. I am very glad to see you: good euen Sir.</p> <p>356 But what in faith make you from <i>Wittemberge</i>?</p> <p>357 <b>Hor</b>. A truant disposition, good my Lord.</p> <p>358 <b>Ham</b>. I would not haue your Enemy say so;</p> <p>359 Nor shall you doe mine eare that violence,</p> <p>360 To make it truster of your owne report</p> <p>361 Against your selfe. I know you are no Truant:</p> <p>362 But what is your affaire in <i>Elsenour</i>?</p> <p>363 Wee'l teach you to drinke deepe, ere you depart.</p> <p>364 <b>Hor</b>. My Lord, I came to see your Fathers Funerall.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>450 <b>Ham</b>. Giue it an vnderstanding but no tongue;</p> <p>451 I will requite your loues; so fare ye well:</p> <p>452 Vpon the Platforme twixt eleuen and twelue,</p> <p>453 Ile visit you.</p> <p>454 <b>All</b>. Our duty to your Honour. <i>Exeunt</i>.</p> <p>455 <b>Ham</b>. Your loue, as mine to you: farewell.</p>	<p>Hamlet goes to school in Wittenberg, the same school Horatio attends.</p> <p>Hamlet is glad to see Horatio.</p> <p>Hamlet refers to him as a friend.</p> <p>Hamlet refuses that Horatio refer to himself as Hamlet's servant.</p> <p>Hamlet did not know that Horatio was at <i>Elsenour</i>.</p> <p>It is a very long journey to make just for the funeral of your friend's father.</p> <p>Hamlet will meet them later that evening to see the ghost.</p> <p>Again the use of <i>loue</i> (<i>affectionate deed</i>)</p>

Hamlet is surprised to see Horatio, clearly not expecting him to be there. Then why was Horatio there? Horatio answers this question that he came for old King Hamlet’s funeral. As with the discussion above regarding the use of *thee* and *thou*, it is interesting to note that Hamlet and Horatio use *you*. Ben Crystal (2009:100) gives another explanation for the use of *you* between two characters. It can indicate that two higher-class characters are talking to each other, or a character is talking to someone far away from them on stage. My interpretation here is that Hamlet esteems Horatio to be ‘on his level’ and, as per my previous discussion on the use of *you* and *thou*, that Hamlet is talking to his lover.

Regarding Horatio’s travel from Wittenberg: he does refer to Old King Hamlet as ‘*our King*’; in the first scene, he recognises the ghost as the Old King, and it can be presumed that he fought together with the Old King in the war, and that would be why he was attending the funeral. However, keeping the concept of *homosocial bonding* in mind, I interpret this as a *queer cue*. To the question as to why he is in Elsinore, Horatio claims that he felt like playing ‘*truant*’ [absent from school without permission]. Hamlet replies that he knows Horatio will never leave school without permission and again asks why he is there. Horatio then answers that he is there for the funeral. It is rather a long journey to take for a friend’s father’s funeral, and I interpret this as Horatio coming to Elsinore to support his friend.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, friends of Hamlet’s from Wittenberg, are at Claudius’s request at Elsinore. Gertrude asks them to talk to Hamlet to see if they can get him to tell them what is bothering him and, in doing so, to ascertain the source of his apparent madness.

Act 2. Scene 2	Initial coding: identified conversations, words or phrases interpreted as <i>queer cues</i> .
<p>[...] 1350 <b>Ham.</b> What a piece of worke is a man! how Noble in  1351 Reason? how infinite in faculty? in forme and mouing  1352 how expresse and admirable? in Action, how like an An-  gel?  1353 in apprehension, how like a God? the beauty of the  1354 world, the Parragon of Animals; and yet to me, what is  1355 this Quintessence of Dust? Man delights not me; no,  1356 nor Woman neither; though by your smiling you seeme  1357 to say so.</p> <p>1358 <b>Rosin.</b> My Lord, there was no such stufte in my  1359 thoughts.  1360 <b>Ham.</b> Why did you laugh, when I said, Man delights  1361 not me?</p>	<p>Interpreted here as Hamlet’s opinion about a man’s build and beauty.</p> <p>Hamlet claims that he finds no delight in woman, though denying this also for a man, but could be interpreted that he only finds delight in one man, Horatio.</p> <p>Interpreted here as <i>Rosincrance</i> possibly knowing something.</p>

During their discussion above, Hamlet talks about ‘man’ or as a *queer cue* about ‘a man’. In Act 3, scene 2, Hamlet meets up with Horatio and states, ‘*thou art eene as iust a man.*’, linking Horatio to his discussion above about ‘a man’.

Act 3. Scene 2	Initial coding: identified conversations, words or phrases interpreted as <i>queer cues</i> .
<p>1902 <b>Ham.</b> What hoa, <i>Horatio</i>?</p> <p>1903 <b>Hora.</b> Heere sweet Lord, at your Seruice.</p> <p>1904 <b>Ham.</b> <i>Horatio</i>, thou art eene as iust a man</p> <p>1905 As ere my Conuersation coap’d withall.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>1913 Where thrift may follow faining? Dost thou heare,</p> <p>1914 Since my deere Soule was Mistris of my choyse,</p> <p>1915 And could of men distinguish, her election</p> <p>1916 Hath seal’d thee for her selfe. For thou hast bene</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>1922 To sound what stop she please. Giue me that man,</p> <p>1923 That is not Passions Slaue, and I will weare him</p> <p>1924 In my hearts Core. I, in my Heart of heart,</p> <p>1925 As I do thee. Something too much of this.</p>	<p>Horatio addresses Hamlet as ‘<i>sweet Lord</i>’.</p> <p><b>Sweet</b> (old form(s): <i>sweete, sweet</i>) meaning <i>dear</i> or <i>lover</i> or <i>sweetheart</i>.</p> <p>It is also the first time Horatio addresses Hamlet as ‘<i>sweet Lord</i>’.</p> <p>Hamlet’s statement here can be interpreted as a confession of love toward Horatio.</p> <p>Here Hamlet states that his soul has chosen Horatio. Another confession of love.</p> <p>Hamlet refers to Horatio as the man he ‘<i>weare</i>’ in his ‘<i>Heart of heart</i>’ - yet another confession of love.</p>

Act 4. Scene 5	Initial coding: identified conversations, words or phrases interpreted as <i>queer cues</i> .
<p>2744 <b>Enter Queene and Horatio.</b></p> <p>2745 <b>Qu.</b> I will not speake with her.</p> <p>2746 <b>Hor.</b> She is importunate, indeed distract, her moode</p> <p>2747 will needs be pittied.</p> <p>2748 <b>Qu.</b> What would she haue?</p> <p>2749 <b>Hor.</b> She speakes much of her Father; saies she heares</p> <p>2750 There’s trickes i’th’ world, and hems, and beats her heart,</p> <p>2751 Spurnes enuiously at Strawes, speakes things in doubt,</p>	<p>Horatio suggests to the Queen that she should speak to Ophelia. The question here is why Horatio is still at the castle after Hamlet’s exile; also, why he is the one to advise the Queen. Interesting to note that Horatio’s lines are spoken by ‘a <i>Gentleman</i>’<sup>35</sup> in other edited versions.</p>

<sup>35</sup> See: William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare on the Double! Hamlet*, translated by M.E. Snodgrass. New Jersey: Wiley Publishing inc.  
 Thompson, A. & Taylor, N. (Eds). 2016. *Hamlet*. New York: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare.  
 Mowat, B.A. & Werstine, P. (Eds). 2012. *Hamlet*. New York: The Folger Shakespeare Library.

<p>2752 That carry but halfe sense: Her speech is nothing,  2753 Yet the vnshaped vse of it doth moue  2754 The hearers to Collection; they ayme at it,  2755 And botch the words vp fit to their owne thoughts,  2756 Which as her winkes, and nods, and gestures yeeld them,  2757 Indeed would make one thinke there would be thought,  2758 Though nothing sure, yet much vnhappily.  2759 <b>Qu.</b> ‘Twere good she were spoken with,  2760 For she may strew dangerous coniectures  2761 In ill breeding minds. Let her come in.</p> <p>2762 To my sicke soule (as sinnes true Nature is)  2763 Each toy seemes Prologue, to some great amisse,  2764 So full of Artlesse iealousie is guilt,  2765 It spill’s it selfe, in fearing to be spilt.  2766 <i>Enter Ophelia distracted.</i></p>	<p>Queen starts with ‘<i>Let her come in</i>’.  ‘Gentleman’ exits.</p>
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After Hamlet’s exile to England, Horatio receives a letter from him, telling him that he is on his way back to Denmark and that Horatio should meet him.

Act 4. Scene 6	Initial coding: identified conversations, words or phrases interpreted as <i>queer cues</i> .
<p>2972 <i>Enter Horatio, with an Attendant.</i>  2973 <b>Hora.</b> What are they that would speake with me?  2974 <b>Ser.</b> Saylor’s sir, they say they haue Letters for you.  2975 <b>Hor.</b> Let them come in,  2976 I do not know from what part of the world  2977 I should be greeted, if not from Lord <i>Hamlet</i>.  2978 <i>Enter Saylor.</i>  2979 <b>Say.</b> God blesse you Sir.  2980 <b>Hor.</b> Let him blesse thee too.  2981 <b>Say.</b> Hee shall Sir, and’t please him. There’s a Letter  2982 for you Sir: It comes from th’ Ambassadors that was  2983 bound for England, if your name be <i>Horatio</i>, as I am let  2984 to know it is.  2985 <i>Reads the Letter.</i>  2986 Horatio, <i>When thou shalt haue ouerlook’d this, giue these</i>  2987 <i>Fellowes some meanes to the King: They haue Letters</i>  [...]  2999 <i>and Guildensterne, hold their course for England. Of them</i>  3000 <i>I haue much to tell thee, Farewell.</i>  3001 <i>He that thou knowest thine,</i>  3002 Hamlet.</p>	<p>How did Hamlet know that Horatio was still at <i>Elsenour</i>?</p> <p>The letter from Hamlet is clearly addressed to Horatio.</p> <p>Interpreted as ‘<i>He that thou knowest thine</i>’ - another confession of love.</p>

At the end of the play, Hamlet dies in Horatio's arms.

Act 5. Scene 2	Initial coding: identified conversations, words or phrases interpreted as <i>queer cues</i> .
<p>[...]</p> <p>3822 <b>Ham.</b> But let it be: <i>Horatio</i>, I am dead,</p> <p>3823 Thou liu'st, report me and my causes right</p> <p>3824 To the vnsatisfied.</p> <p>3825 <b>Hor.</b> Neuer beleeeue it.</p> <p>3826 I am more an Antike Roman then a Dane:</p> <p>3827 Heere's yet some Liquor left.</p> <p>3828 <b>Ham.</b> As th'art a man, giue me the Cup.</p> <p>3829 Let go, by Heauen Ile haue't.</p> <p>3830 Oh good <i>Horatio</i>, what a wounded name,</p> <p>3831 (Things standing thus vnknowne) shall liue behind me.</p> <p>3832 If thou did'st euer hold me in thy heart,</p> <p>3833 Absent thee from felicitie awhile,</p> <p>3834 And in this harsh world draw thy breath in paine,</p> <p>3835 To tell my Storie.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>3848 <b>Hora.</b> Now cracke a Noble heart:</p> <p>3849 Goodnight sweet Prince,</p> <p>3850 And flights of Angels sing thee to thy rest,</p>	<p>Hamlet has been poisoned by Laertes's foil and is dying in Horatio's arms.</p> <p>Horatio refers to himself as an '<i>Antike Roman</i>'. 'On the surface, the reference to him being an ancient Roman refers to the practice in ancient Rome of committing suicide when defeated, as in the case with Cassius and Brutus in <i>Julius Caesar</i>. Another aspect to look at, "is the acceptance of same-sex relationships in Ancient Rome, usually between a man from the upper class and either a slave or man from the lower class, as in the case of Hamlet and Horatio" (Heydenrych 2017:54).</p> <p>A reference to their feelings for each other.</p> <p>Horatio addresses the corpse of Hamlet as '<i>sweet Prince</i>'. <i>sweet</i><sup>36</sup> (adj.) meaning <i>attractive, pleasing, appealing</i></p>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.shakespeareswords.com/Public/Glossary.aspx?letter=s>

## B. Ophelia

Laertes warns Ophelia against her presumed relationship with Hamlet and not to fall in love with him. He adds that Hamlet only uses her.

Act 1. Scene 3	Initial coding: identified conversations, words or phrases interpreted as <i>queer cues</i> .
<p>465 <i>Laer.</i> But let me heare from you.            466 <i>Ophel.</i> Doe you doubt that?            467 <i>Laer.</i> For <i>Hamlet</i>, and the trifling of his fauours,</p> <p>468 <i>Laer.</i> Hold it a fashion and a toy in Bloude;            487 Whereof he is the Head. Then if he sayes he loues you,            488 It fits your wisdome so farre to beleeeue it;            489 As he in his peculiar Sect and force            490 May giue his saying deed: which is no further,            491 Then the maine voyce of <i>Denmarke</i> goes withall.</p>	<p>Laertes refers to Hamlet’s attentions towards Ophelia as ‘trifle’. Interpreted here as ‘the act of delaying; inactivity resulting in something being put off until a later time’<sup>37</sup>. Hamlet doesn’t make any attempt to date or marry Ophelia.</p> <p>Hamlet will only show affection towards her as long as the public opinion about her lasts.</p>

In Act 3, scene 1, after his ‘*To be, or not to be*’ speech, Ophelia enters. This ‘chance meeting’ is a ploy by Ophelia’s father, Polonius and Claudius, to see if Hamlet will reveal the source of his apparent madness. Ophelia pretends to have brought Hamlet letters and other items he gave her, but Hamlet realises she is trying to trick him. His feelings towards her come up as a topic in their conversation.

Act 3. Scene 1	Initial coding: identified conversations, words or phrases interpreted as <i>queer cues</i> .
<p>[...]            1770 [<i>Ham</i>] prooffe. I did loue you once.</p> <p>1771 <i>Ophe.</i> Indeed my Lord, you made me beleeeue so.            1772 <i>Ham.</i> You should not haue beleeeued me. For vertue            1773 cannot so innoculate our old stocke, but we shall            rellish            1774 of it. I loued you not.</p>	<p>Hamlet declares that he did love Ophelia once.</p> <p>But here Hamlet outright states that he did not love her. It could be interpreted</p>

<sup>37</sup> trifling. (n.d.) WordNet 3.0, Farlex clipart collection. (2003–2008). Retrieved December 30 2013 from <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/trifling>

<p>[...]</p> <p>1819 <i>King</i>. Loue? His affections do not that way tend,</p> <p>1820 Nor what he spake, though it lack'd Forme a little,</p> <p>1821 Was not like Madnesse. There's something in his soule?</p>	<p>that all his affections towards her were false and just for the show to keep public opinion about him and his sexuality as being straight.</p> <p>Claudius notes that Hamlet's love towards Ophelia is not the issue here and also not the reason for his apparent madness.</p> <p>Claudius concludes that '<i>There's something in his soule</i>', which can be interpreted that Hamlet has as a personal struggle with himself. This can be linked to Hamlet's previous statement that he did not love Ophelia.</p>
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### 3.5 Focused Coding and Memo-Writing: the process of transposing.

An essential aspect of grounded theory is memo-writing. According to Charmaz (2006:72), Memo-writing is a pivotal step after Focused Coding, the second step in the coding process of a grounded theory practice. Memos force the researcher to analyse data and codes in the early collection process. She adds that “[M]emo writing is about capturing ideas in process and in progress” and is “a distinct contribution of grounded theory” (Charmaz 2008:166). According to her, it moves the qualitative inquiry to a more analytical activity.

Focused Coding brings the data, collected in the first step, back to a coherent whole. As Charmaz (2005:60) explained, this step relates categories to sub-categories. Initial Coding fractures the data, and this step reconstructs the data into a coherent analysis. Saldaña (2011:116) describes Focused Coding as “focussing of these codes [the *queer cues* identified in 3.1.1] and categories into even tighter and more conceptual categories [the adaptation process to follow in 3.2.1]”.

The next step in the study is identifying events or moments in the plays that can also be interpreted from a queer perspective based on the *queer cues* identified in 3.1.1. This is done through the Focus Coding process, which concludes in the transposition of *Hamlet* and *Richard III* into queer adaptations. These adaptations will be the ‘reconstruction of the data collected’ as part of the Memo-Writing.

At this point, it is important to explain the use of the terms ‘transposition’ and ‘adaptation’. Adaptation is an accepted term in the performing arts, but is there a valid explanation/definition of ‘adaptation’? In her book *A Theory of Adaptation*, Hutcheon (2006) looks at why, when, and how

adaptations are made. She also distinguishes between adaptation as a process and a product. In translation theory, it becomes evident that various translators interpret the term adaptation differently.

Regarding the *skopos theory*, Reiss & Vermeer (2014:79) talk about 'translation' within the framework of a general theory. They point out that the generic term 'transfer' includes a specific feature of 'translation'. In general, a 'transfer' refers to "the transformation of a sign (a script), as an element of a sign system (a stage performance) which possesses a potential for form and function (plot), into another sign (a new script), as an element of another sign system (a stage performance)".

Reiss & Vermeer (2014:84) mention three kinds of 'transfers'. Applicable to this study is "[a]n irreversible, only partially regulated transfer". They classify this type of transfer as 'adaptation' or 'paraphrase' in texts. This is relevant to linguistics but also on an allegorical level, i.e., the variety or form of an individual's language. It could be interpreted as the use of language specific to the individual but also the interpretation of symbolic signs. Within this framework, a given script can be transposed to dramatic art based on the adapter's juxtaposition in terms of his own semiotic system.

In his critique of the German director Doris Dörrie's film adaptations of her own work, Mathis Heybrock refers to Lawrence Venuti, the translator and theorist, "... who describes the translator as the perpetrator of 'the forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text with a text that will be intelligible to the target-language reader. [...] Whatever difference the translation conveys is now imprinted by the target-language culture, assimilated to its positions of intelligibility, its canons and taboos, its codes and ideologies'" (Malone 2007:334).

Hutcheon (2006:7–8) explains adaptation as referring to both the process and product. As a process, Hutcheon (*ibid*) explains the act of adaptation as "both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation". As a product, adaptation is seen as a publicised transposition of a work which she further describes as an "acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works" and "a creative and an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging". This transposition she calls 'transcoding', which can be either a change in medium or genre or a change in context. This change in context basically means telling the story from a different point of view, which can create a distinctively different interpretation. Hutcheon (2006:33) clearly distinguishes between adaptation and transposition. She defines adaptation is an extended manuscript of a "creative and interpretive transposition of a recognizable other work or works ... often a transcoding into a different set of conventions".

For Whittlesey (2012:2 of 9), transposition attempts to “produce the original as the author might have done if he or she appeared in the given sociohistorical time and place of the transposition and retained the consciousness that created each sentence of the original”. It is clear that there is a shift in context with transposition but staying true to the original script, whereas adaptation may deviate completely from the original script.

Whittlesey (2012:9 of 9) distinguishes between translation, transposition, and adaptation: “... **translation** understood as word-for-word replication, **transposition** involving a freer rendering of the original, and **adaptation** viewed as the furthest removed from the original ...”. However, according to Hutcheon (2006) there are two interpretations of adaptation - either product or process. Whittlesey (2012) indicates that transposition involves a process.

For the purposes of this study, the term ‘transposition’ is applied to the memo-writing process during Focused Coding, while the term ‘adaptation’ refers to the completed manuscript after memo-writing, which constitutes the ‘research text’.

### **3.6 Focus Coding and Memo-Writing in *Richard III* and *Hamlet***

What follows is a demonstration of the Focus Coding process and transposition of *Richard III* and *Hamlet* in the subsequent queer adaptations of the plays (Memo-Writing). During the Focus Coding process, other moments in the play were identified that could be interpreted from a queer perspective. This section does not reflect a queer approach to the text but changes made to other sections in the play due to the *queer cues* identified during the Initial Coding (3.1.1). It is important to note that this section does not focus on interpreting/identifying *queer cues*, but rather deals with deliberate transpositions made to further support the idea of same sex relationships in the two plays: Richard/Tyrrel and Hamlet/Horatio.

#### ***Richard III***

##### **A. The concept**

The setting for the adaptation is a post-apocalyptic South Africa in 2035. According to this scenario, civil war broke out in South Africa after the Marakana Massacre, and the York and Lancaster families now occupy the Free State<sup>38</sup>. After the Yorks won the civil war, the ‘new society’s’ government is a monarchy. Having transposed *Richard III* with a contemporary South African audience in mind, I

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<sup>38</sup> See Chapter 3 (Article 2) for further discussion regarding the concept

did the adaptation in modern English with some famous authentic *Richard III* phrases from the First Folio. As part of the queer interpretation, Richard and Tyrrel are in a relationship.

Act 1, scene 1 sets the tone for the whole play. Richard’s plan, and more importantly, his relationship with Tyrrel, are made clear to the audience. During the memo-writing process, the character of Tyrrel appears from the beginning as Richard’s partner, protector and male counterpart.

Act 1. Scene 1	Focused coding: explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/ identifying the queer interpretation.
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Crowd is gathered and <b>RICHARD</b> addresses them. <b>TYRREL</b> stands behind him.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>KING EDWARD, QUEEN ELIZABETH, DUCHESS, BUCKINGHAM, STANLEY, RIVERS present.</b></p> <p><i>Now is the winter of our discontent Made glorious summer by this sun of York;</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Crowd cheers.</i></p> <p>and all the clouds that were hanging over our family have sunk back into the sea. On our heads we carry victorious wreaths, our battered weapons are hung up as memorials, great chaos has been changed to pleasant greetings, grim marches to delightful music. The terrible war is over and now there is peace!!</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Crowd freezes.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Follow-spot on <b>RICHARD</b> and <b>TYRREL</b></i> <i>(speaks to <b>AUDIENCE</b>)</i> Instead of fighting with the Lancaster bastards, they spend all night fucking anything with a pulse. ... I hate fucking women! They hate fucking me. I’m not made to be a seducer. I am <i>Deform’d, unfinish’d, sent before my time Into this breathing world scarce half made up</i>, even the dogs bark when I limp by. <i>(pause)</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Crowd disperse.</i></p> <p><i>And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover To entertain these fair well-spoken days, I am determined to prove a villain And hate the idle pleasures of these days.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>General lights on stage</i></p> <p><i>(to <b>TYRREL</b>)</i> You can see it, can’t you? I’ve already set the wheels in motion. Started the whole shebang, oh it’s got everything ... lies, drunken prophecies, and stories about dreams. And all of this will turn my brothers Clarence and Edward against each other. If King Ed is as gullible as we think is, then sweet, sweet Clarence, fucking over-achieving George Clarence York, my wonderful brother, will be</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">line 2 <sup>39</sup></p> <p style="text-align: right;">line 5</p> <p style="text-align: right;">line 12</p> <p>Richard makes it clear that he is not interested in women.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">line 30</p> <p style="text-align: right;">line 34</p> <p>Richard shares his plan with Tyrrel, making him his confidant.</p>

<sup>39</sup> The line numbers in the righthand column refer to the First Folio.

locked away in prison for a long long time, because someone told someone - let's not go into details - about a prophecy that "C" will murder Edward's children.

[...]

**RICHARD**

(to **TYRREL**) I honestly hope Edward fucking dies, because if he doesn't, I'll have to kill him myself, but not before Clarence is dead. I'll have to go and see him and kiss a little ass and make sure that the sanctimonious prick hates Clarence more than he does at the moment. If my plan works, Clarence doesn't have another day to live. Then the big cahuna upstairs is free to call King Edward to heaven, too - or I'll do it - and then I can rule! And to seal the deal, I'll marry Anne. So what if I killed her fucktard of a husband and his father. The best way to make up for it is to become what she's lost: a husband. Not because I love her, that's for fucking sure, Christ, but because I'll get something out of it. But Clarence is still alive and Edward is not only alive, he's king. Only when they're dead I can start enjoying myself. Let's go!

*They exeunt.*

*line 154*

After his encounter with Clarence and Hastings, Richard continues telling Tyrrel his plan.

Richard assures Tyrrel that he is only marrying Anne to advance his chances of becoming king, not because he loves her.

## B. Richard's Tyrrel

As a result of a major change made during the Focus Coding phase, Tyrrel is present in all the scenes where Richard appears. It shows his support for and participation in Richard's endeavours. Tyrrel's appearance strengthens his image as Richard's partner. Tyrrel is always in the shadow, looking after Richard. The other characters should not feel safe; they never know where Tyrrel is. All the characters know who he is and that he is in a relationship with Richard. Tyrrel becomes Richard's male counterpart<sup>40</sup>, and Tyrrel executes every character Richard wants dead, save Lady Anne, whom Richard strangles.

Examples of changes to other events or moments to support/identify a queer interpretation follow. These examples are from the queer adaptation after these events or moments were identified as part of the Focused coding process.

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<sup>40</sup> See the discussion on the Galenic one sex model in 1.3

<p><b>Act 1. Scene 2</b></p>	<p><b>Focused coding:</b>  <b>explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/ identifying the queer interpretation.</b></p>
<p><b>RICHARD</b>  Fucking idiots! I said, put - the - fucking - corpse - down!  <i>TYRREL enters behind them, pointing his guns at them. They put down the stretcher.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>line 211</i></p> <p>Lady Anne, on her way to bury her husband Edward, whom Richard killed.</p> <p>In the First Folio, Richard enters alone. Including Tyrrel in this scene shows his support to Richard in his endeavours but also adds to the danger Richard poses.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> In the adaptation Lady Anne does not bury her father-in-law, King Henry VI, but her husband Edward, King Henry VI's son.</p>

<p><b>Act 1. Scene 3</b></p>	<p><b>Focused coding:</b>  <b>explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/identifying the queer interpretation.</b></p>
<p><b>RICHARD</b>  <i>(turns to TYRREL)</i> Tyrrel! My brother just gave me this pardon. It's for Clarence's release. Things are not going according to our plan. I think you know what to do.</p> <p><b>TYRREL</b>  <i>(smiles)</i> I just need to get into his cell.</p> <p><b>RICHARD</b>  Here, use this warrant to get into his cell ... <i>(he hands over the warrant)</i> ... but be discreet. Kill him quickly, and whatever you do, don't let him plead for his life. Clarence is a good talker and you might feel sorry for him if you let him get started.</p> <p><b>TYRREL</b>  We're not going to stand around and chit-chat. <i>(Richard laughs)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>line 815</i></p> <p>Tyrrel kills Clarence in prison instead of the two murderers. Tyrrel takes his cousin along.</p>

<p><b>Act 1. Scene 4</b></p>	<p><b>Focused coding:</b>  <b>explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/identifying the queer interpretation.</b></p>
<p><b>BRAKENBURY</b>  So I'm ordered to give Clarence to you. I won't ask why. I'd rather not know. Here are the keys, and there he is. <i>(he hands them the keys)</i> I'll go to the king to let him know I've handed my prisoner over to you.</p> <p><b>TYRREL</b>  You may, sir. That's a good idea. Goodbye.  <i>BRAKENBURY turns to exit. TYRREL kills him.</i>  <i>TYRREL looks at CLARENCE sleeping, aims gun at him</i></p> <p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER</b>  What are you doing? Are you going to kill him in his sleep?  [...]</p> <p><b>CLARENCE</b>  <i>(still kneeling now in front of 2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER)</i> Don't lie about my brother. He loves me.</p> <p><b>TYRREL</b>  <i>(behind CLARENCE - he doesn't see him)</i> Richard loved you enough to send us to kill you. <i>(he shoots him - execution-style)</i>  <i>silence</i></p> <p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER</b>  <i>(get up)</i> What the fuck, cousin? I was just starting to enjoy myself. I thought this one was mine.  <i>TYRREL shoots him and exits</i></p>	<p><i>line 815</i></p> <p>Tyrrel kills Brakenbury to keep him from informing King Edward.</p> <p><i>line 1073</i></p> <p>Tyrrel is so loyal to Richard that he will kill his cousin.</p>

<p><b>Act 2. Scene 1</b>  <b>Note:</b> In the adaptation this scene is a combination of Act 2, scenes 1 and 2.</p> <p><b>KING EDWARD IV</b>  <i>(shocked)</i> I condemned our brother to death. He didn't kill anyone yet. He did not deserve to die. <i>(during the following speech he gets worked up and very angry)</i> I was angry; I didn't think. And in my anger, I forgot everything he has done for me. <i>(to the other council members)</i> And you ... where were you? Did any one of you raise a voice in his defence? Did anyone of you try to remind me what a good, decent man my brother was? All of you are where you are today because of what he did. God will punish all of us. God will destroy my family and me because of this. I need to go and inquire about this. Hastings, Rivers, come with me.</p> <p><i>KING EDWARD IV exits with HASTINGS and RIVERS. QUEEN ELIZABETH follows.</i></p>	<p><b>Focused coding:</b>  <b>explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/identifying the queer interpretation.</b></p> <p><i>line 1230</i></p>
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*RICHARD indicates to TYRREL to follow and he exits.*

Richard instructs Tyrrel to follow King Edward.

[...]

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

We were attacked by a thief ... Edward has been murdered. Your son, my husband, is dead! *(she weeps)*

line 1314

**DUCHESS**

When my husband died, my sons were my only reason for living. They looked just like him, now they're both dead. And my only comfort is Richard, who is nothing like his father and only causes me shame.

**RIVERS**

*(to QUEEN ELIZABETH)* Elizabeth, get a hold on yourself, we are in terrible danger. Think, we need to protect your son. We need to fetch the prince and have him crowned right away.

line 1369

*RICHARD and BUCKINGHAM enter.*

**RICHARD**

We saw what happened and chased the attacker, but he got away. Rest assured I will not rest until I find him.

*(TYRREL enters and gives nods to RICHARD who nods back)*

The decision was made to have Tyrrel kill King Edward, instead of his dying from his illness. It needed to look like a mugging that went wrong.

[...]

*(RIVERS returns.)*

The decision was made to have the death of Rivers in this scene as well, instead of in Act 3, scene 3.

**RIVERS**

Richard, I just remembered something. That attacker looked very familiar.

**RICHARD**

He did?

**RIVERS**

He looked very much like your companion Tyrrel.

*(TYRREL, who is hidden from sight, creeps up behind RIVERS)*

**RICHARD**

I'll have to look into it ... but rest assured ... you are not fucking mistaken.

*While RICHARD is speaking TYRREL comes up behind RIVERS and stabs him in the back.*

*(to TYRREL)* Make sure his body is not found, and don't fuck up this time.

<p><b>Act 3. Scene 1</b></p>	<p><b>Focused coding:</b>  <b>explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/identifying the queer interpretation.</b></p>
<p><b>YOUNG EDWARD</b>  I don't want to stay in the prison compound. My uncle Clarence was murdered there.</p> <p><b>RICHARD</b>  You're not afraid of your dead uncle, are you?</p> <p><b>YOUNG EDWARD</b>  No, I'm not afraid of my dead uncle.</p> <p><b>RICHARD</b>  Nor living ones, I hope.</p> <p><b>YOUNG EDWARD</b>  Well, I hope not. <i>(to TYRREL)</i> Let's go. I can't wait to see my mother.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>RICHARD takes TYRELL to one side.</i></p> <p><b>RICHARD</b>  Tyrrel, make sure he doesn't get away.  <b>YOUNG EDWARD and TYRELL exit.</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>line 1728</i></p> <p>In the adaptation, Queen Elizabeth has only one son, Young Edward. Richard meets him after they send for him and informs him that he will be held in the tower for his own safety.</p> <p>As Tyrrel is Richard's companion, the young prince trusts him.</p>

<p><b>Act 3. Scene 2</b>  <b>Note:</b> In the adaptation this scene is a combination of Act 3, scene 2 and part of Act 3, scene 4</p>	<p><b>Focused coding:</b>  <b>explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/identifying the queer interpretation.</b></p>
<p><b>RICHARD</b>  If? You protect that whore? You're talking to me of 'ifs'? <i>(beat)</i>  Traitor, you will pay for this. Tyrrel, take care of it. The rest of you, if you are with me, follow me.  <i>Everyone but HASTINGS and TYRREL exits.</i></p> <p><b>HASTINGS</b>  Stanley warned me and I didn't listen. I bragged about how Rivers was killed and how Richard loves me. Oh, Margaret, now I have to pay with my life for your curse! <i>(he starts praying)</i></p> <p><b>TYRREL</b>  Come, come, it's pointless to pray now. <i>(he shoots him)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>line 2044</i></p> <p>Richard, realising that Hastings won't support him in becoming king, accuses Hastings of plotting against him and has him killed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>line 2076</i></p>

<p><b>Act 4. Scene 2</b></p>	<p><b>Focused coding:</b>  <b>explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/identifying the queer interpretation.</b></p>
<p><b>RICHARD</b>  Tyrrel spread a rumour that Anne, my wife, is very sick and likely to die. I will make sure she's kept out of view. <i>(beat)</i> I also want you to kill my brother's brat. <i>(beat)</i> And find my brother's daughter, so that I can marry her. Kill her mother if she refuses. It may not be the most foolproof way to secure my position, but I will have a rightful claim to the throne by marrying her. <i>(beat)</i> And find Stanley's son. We're going to need leverage against him; I don't trust him.</p> <p><b>TYRREL</b>  Consider it done.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>RICHARD kisses him and TYRREL exits</i></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>line 2661</i></p> <p>Richard, by now the King, is trying to secure his position. Tyrrel also now has an active part in Richard's rule. At this point, they are also much more affectionate towards each other.</p>

<p><b>Act 4. Scene 3</b></p> <p><b>Note:</b> In the original script the death of the princes and the death of Queen Anne are only recounted by Tyrrel and Richard in Act 4, scene 2. The deaths of Anne and the prince are written as a separate scene for the adaptation, which also shows the deaths. More importantly, the separate scene depicts the intimacy between Richard and Tyrrel.</p>	<p><b>Focused coding:</b>  <b>explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/identifying the queer interpretation.</b></p>
<p><i>PRINCE EDWARD can be seen kneeling next to his bed in his prison cell, praying. TYRREL enters behind him, aims the pistol at his head and shoots. He exits. All of this in silhouette.</i></p> <p><i>In another spot we see LADY ANNE still sitting in the chair. She has injected herself with a drug. RICHARD enters and sees her. He feels for a pulse and finds one; he strangles her. TYRREL enters.</i></p> <p><b>TYRREL</b>  Richard.</p> <p><b>RICHARD</b>  Good or bad news?</p> <p><b>TYRREL</b>  Both, Good news is that the brat is dead.</p> <p><b>RICHARD</b>  <i>(he laughs)</i> Thank you. <i>(he kisses him)</i> The bad news?</p> <p><b>TYRREL</b>  Bishop Ely, the Archbishop's replacement, fled to Richmond, and Buckingham escaped the compound yesterday and is marching south, backed by an army, to meet up with Richmond.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>line 2727</i></p> <p>Tyrrel kills the prince while Richard kills Queen Anne.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>line 2747</i></p>

<p><b>Act 4. Scene 4</b>  <b>Note:</b> For the adaptation this scene combines Act 4, scene 3 and Act 5, scene 1. In the scene, Richard informs Queen Elizabeth that he intends to marry her daughter, and then Buckingham is executed.</p>	<p><b>Focused coding:</b>  <b>explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/identifying the queer interpretation.</b></p>
<p><b>RICHARD</b>  Good. You may go</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>CATESBY exits</i></p> <p>Tyrrel, take care of our friend when he arrives, then meet me at the General's tent; we have another fucking Lancaster to defeat.  <i>RICHARD exits, TYRREL remains. BUCKINGHAM enters with guards.</i></p> <p><b>BUCKINGHAM</b>  <i>(pleading)</i> I want to speak to Richard.</p> <p><b>TYRREL</b>  You can't, so calm down.</p> <p><b>BUCKINGHAM</b>  Did I make him king for this? May God forgive me.</p> <p><b>TYRREL</b>  No, may Richard forgive you.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>TYRREL shoots him and exits.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>line 3347</i></p> <p>In the original play, Richard receives word that Buckingham has been captured. He then orders that Buckingham be brought to Salisbury.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>line 3373</i></p> <p>In the original play, Buckingham is brought in, denied access to Richard, and then led off to be killed.</p> <p>In the adaptation Tyrrel kills Buckingham.</p>

<p><b>Act 5. Scene 1</b>  <b>Note:</b> In the original script this is Act 5, scene 2, where the ghosts appear before Richard in his dreams.</p>	<p><b>Focused coding:</b>  <b>explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/identifying the queer interpretation.</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sometime in the night. RICHARD is asleep in his tent. RICHARD wakes up and screams. TYRREL enters.</i></p> <p><b>TYRREL</b>  Richard ...</p> <p><b>RICHARD</b>  Oh Tyrrel, I had a terrible dream last night! What do you think - will our friends all be loyal?</p> <p><b>TYRREL</b>  No doubt, your majesty.</p> <p><b>RICHARD</b>  Oh Tyrrel, I'm afraid, I'm afraid -</p> <p><b>TYRREL</b>  No, don't be afraid of dreams. Go back to sleep.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>he goes back to sleep in TYRREL's arms.</i></p>	<p>Tyrrel is the one to come to Richard in the morning and not Radcliffe, as in the original script.</p> <p>There is a tender moment in this scene where Richard is lying in Tyrrel's arms. For the first time, Richard shows a moment of weakness; and he can only be that in Tyrrel's presence.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>line 3675</i></p>

## *Hamlet*

### A. The concept

In the adaptation Hamlet and Horatio are a couple. The adaptation is set within a South African context, but references are still made to Denmark and Elsinore<sup>41</sup>. All the political aspects regarding young Fortinbras's revenge and the impending war are cut; the adaptation only focuses on Hamlet and his personal journey. The idea is to portray Hamlet as a young man struggling with his father's death and his mother's marriage to his uncle. He is confronted with his sexuality because of Horatio's presence.

### B. Hamlet's Horatio

Horatio's presence in the play is important for the concept to work. The adaptation is based on the premise that Horatio, being Hamlet's lover in Wittenberg, decided to come and support Hamlet during this trying time. Horatio had to have travelled for three weeks from Wittenberg just to attend the King's funeral - not an easy journey just to attend the funeral of a friend's father, but a worthwhile journey to support your lover. Hamlet did not expect Horatio to be there and now he must deal with his own sexuality and the burden of the state that is being placed on him, as Laertes mentions to Ophelia.

Act 1, scene 2 establishes Hamlet and Horatio's relationship. In Act 1, scene 1 Horatio is introduced in the play. He was asked by the guards on duty to come and speak to the ghost, seeing that he is a scholar. During this scene there is a discussion about Denmark and the imminent war, where it is clear that Horatio holds some knowledge about this. The premise here is that Hamlet has probably informed Horatio of Denmark's current state of affairs because of their relationship.

Act 1. Scene 2	Focused coding: explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/identifying the queer interpretation.
[...] 294 <b>King</b> . Do I impart towards you. For your intent 295 In going backe to Schoole in Wittenberg, 296 It is most retrograde to our desire: 297 And we beseech you, bend you to remaine	Hamlet has been in <i>Elsinour</i> for a month now since his father's death and has not gone back to Wittenberg.

<sup>41</sup> For a comprehensive discussion regarding the concept, see: Heydenrych, M. 2017. 'To tell our Storie/: Reflections on a Queer Adaptation of Hamlet in Twenty-first Century South Africa. *Shakespeare in Southern Africa*, 30:43–55.

298 Heere in the cheere and comfort of our eye,  
 299 Our cheefest Courtier Cosin, and our Sonne.  
 300 **Qu.** Let not thy Mother lose her Prayers *Hamlet*:  
 301 I prythee stay with vs, go not to Wittenberg.  
 302 **Ham.** I shall in all my best  
 303 Obey you Madam.  
 [...]  
 313 **Ham.** Oh that this too too solid Flesh, would melt,  
 314 Thaw, and resolue it selfe into a Dew:  
 315 Or that the Euerlasting had not fixt  
 316 His Cannon 'gainst Selfe- slaughter. O God, O God!  
 [...]  
 326 Visit her face too roughly. Heauen and Earth

327 Must I remember: why she would hang on him,  
 328 As if encrease of Appetite had growne  
 329 By what is fed on; and yet within a month?  
 330 Let me not thinke on't: Frailty, thy name is woman.

[...]  
*Enter Horatio, Barnardo, and Marcellus.*  
 345 **Hor.** Haile to your Lordship.  
 346 **Ham.** I am glad to see you well:

347 *Horatio, or I do forget my selfe.*  
 348 **Hor.** The same my Lord,  
 349 And your poore Seruant euer.  
 350 **Ham.** Sir my good friend,  
 351 Ile change that name with you:

352 And what make you from Wittenberg *Horatio*?

[...]  
 355 **Ham.** I am very glad to see you: good euen Sir.  
 356 But what in faith make you from *Wittemberge*?  
 357 **Hor.** A truant disposition, good my Lord.  
 358 **Ham.** I would not haue your Enemy say so;  
 359 Nor shall you doe mine eare that violence,  
 360 To make it truster of your owne report  
 361 Against your selfe. I know you are no Truant:  
 362 But what is your affaire in *Elsenour*?

Hamlet thinks about suicide.

Hamlet talks about his mother's quick marriage to his uncle, so soon after his father's funeral.

Hamlet uses the reference to frailty, which means moral weakness<sup>42</sup>, to show his disgust in women.

Hamlet is glad to see Horatio. After Hamlet's dark and sombre soliloquy, Horatio enters, which lifts Hamlet's depressing mood. This line is cut.

Hamlet refers to him as a friend. Hamlet refuses that Horatio refers to himself as Hamlet's servant. Hamlet did not know that Horatio was at *Elsenour*, he also did not expect to see him there.

Hamlet knows very well that Horatio is not lazy and will not leave school without permission.

<sup>42</sup> frailty. (n.d.) American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition. (2011). Retrieved December 30 2014 from <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/frailty>

<p>363 Wee'l teach you to drinke deepe, ere you depart.</p> <p>364 <i>Hor.</i> My Lord, I came to see your Fathers Funerall.  365 <i>Ham.</i> I pray thee doe not mock me (fellow Student)  366 I thinke it was to see my Mothers Wedding.  367 <i>Hor.</i> Indeed my Lord, it followed hard vpon.  [...]  450 <i>Ham.</i> Giue it an vnderstanding but no tongue;  451 I will requite your loues; so fare ye well:  452 Vpon the Platforme twixt eleuen and twelue,  453 Ile visit you.  454 <i>All.</i> Our duty to your Honour. <i>Exeunt.</i>  455 <i>Ham.</i> Your loue, as mine to you: farewell.</p>	<p>Hamlet says this line to 'act straight' in front of Marcellus and Bernardo, who are also present.</p> <p>Horatio tells Hamlet he is there to support him in this difficult time. Hamlet quickly denies that idea.</p> <p>Hamlet will meet them later that evening to see the ghost.</p> <p>Horatio and Marcellus only exit here so that Hamlet can address this line to Horatio.</p>
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<p><b>Act 1. Scene 3</b></p>	<p><b>Focused coding: explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/identifying the queer interpretation.</b></p>
<p>465 <i>Laer.</i> But let me heare from you.  466 <i>Ophel.</i> Doe you doubt that?  467 <i>Laer.</i> For <i>Hamlet</i>, and the trifling of his fauours,  468 <i>Laer.</i> Hold it a fashion and a toy in Bloude;  487 Whereof he is the Head. Then if he says he loues you,  488 It fits your wisdom so farre to beleuee it;  489 As he in his peculiar Sect and force  490 May giue his saying deed: which is no further,    491 Then the maine voyce of <i>Denmarke</i> goes withall.</p>	<p>There is a hint here that Laertes possibly knows about Hamlet's sexuality. Laertes uses the excuse that Hamlet will not be able to choose a wife for himself; as a prince, he will have to do what is expected of him. It is a way for Laertes to protect Ophelia's feelings if Hamlet should come out as gay.</p>

<p><b>Act 2. Scene 2</b></p>	<p><b>Focused coding: explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/identifying the queer interpretation.</b></p>
<p>[...]  1350 <i>Ham.</i> What a piece of worke is a man! how Noble in  1351 Reason? how infinite in faculty? in forme and mouing  1352 how expresse and admirable? in Action, how like an An-  gel?  1353 in apprehension, how like a God? the beauty of the  1354 world, the Parragon of Animals; and yet to me, what is  1355 this Quintessence of Dust? Man delights not me; no,  1356 nor Woman neither; though by your smiling you seeme  1357 to say so.  1358 <i>Rosin.</i> My Lord, there was no such stuffe in my  1359 thoughts.</p>	<p>Interpreted that Hamlet is attracted to men.</p>

1360 **Ham.** Why did you laugh, when I said, Man delights  
1361 not me?  
1362 **Rosin.** To thinke, my Lord, if you delight not in Man,  
1363 what Lenton entertainment the Players shall receive  
1364 from you: wee coated them on the way, and hither are  
1365 they comming to offer you Service.

[lines 1366 - 1588] cut

1417 **Ham.** Gentlemen, you are welcom to *Elsonower*: your  
1418 hands, come: The appurtenance of Welcome, is Fashion  
1419 and Ceremony. Let me comply with you in the Garbe,  
1420 lest my extent to the Players (which I tell you must shew  
1421 fairely outward) should more appeare like entertainment  
1422 then yours. You are welcome: but my Vnckle Father,  
1423 and Aunt Mother are deceiu'd.

1424 **Guil.** In what my deere Lord?

1425 **Ham.** I am but mad North, North- West: when the  
1426 Winde is Southerly, I know a Hawke from a Handsaw.

*Follow him Friends: wee'l heare a play to mor-row.*

1589 **Ham.** Now I am alone.

Hamlet reacts to *Rosincrance's* reaction. Interpreted here that there is a possibility that *Rosincrance* and *Guildensterne* might know about his sexuality. *Rosincrance* denies that he reacted to the idea that Hamlet does not love women, but the change here is that he reacts to Hamlet saying *Man delights not me*.

The scene ends with lines 1417–1426.

An added line

The 'To be, or not to be' soliloquy becomes a pinnacle moment in Hamlet's journey. His indication of whether he should kill Claudius or not, his thoughts about suicide, and, more importantly, his self-doubt regarding his sexuality and his relationship with Horatio are questioned in this soliloquy. The whole speech becomes an argument with himself regarding his choice, or rather lack thereof. After this 'argument' with himself, Hamlet makes a decision. Then Ophelia enters, and he is confronted with her. The premise in the adaptation regarding the relationship between Hamlet and Ophelia is rather complicated. Hamlet was using Ophelia and his advances towards her, to eliminate any doubts in the public eye regarding his sexuality. Ophelia, on the other hand, is really in love with Hamlet, but she is forced by her father to betray Hamlet. Hamlet, however, knows that Claudius and Polonius are listening<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> It is an accepted interpretation that Hamlet is aware of her betrayal, and that Claudius and Polonius are listening. See Hirsh, J. 2010. 'The "To Be, or Not to Be" Speech: Evidence, Conventional Wisdom, and the Editing of "Hamlet",' *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 23, 34–62. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24322554>

Act 3. Scene 1	Focused coding: explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/identifying the queer interpretation.
<p>1709 <i>Enter Hamlet.</i>  1710 <b>Ham.</b> To be, or not to be, that is the Question:</p> <p>1711 Whether 'tis Nobler in the minde to suffer  1712 The Slings and Arrowes of outragious Fortune,  1713 Or to take Armes against a Sea of troubles,  1714 And by opposing end them: to dye, to sleepe</p> <p>1715 No more; and by a sleepe, to say we end  1716 The Heart- ake, and the thousand Naturall shockes  1717 That Flesh is heyre too? 'Tis a consummation  1718 Deuoutly to be wish'd. To dye to sleepe,  1719 To sleepe, perchance to Dreame; I, there's the rub,  1720 For in that sleepe of death, what dreames may come,  1721 When we haue shuffel'd off this mortall coile,  1722 Must giue vs pawse. There's the respect  1723 That makes Calamity of so long life:  1724 For who would beare the Whips and Scornes of time,  1725 – 1730 cut  <del>1730 With a bare Bodkin?</del> Who would these Fardles beare</p> <p>1731 To grunt and sweat vnder a weary life,  1732 But that the dread of something after death,  1733 The vndiscover'd Countrey, from whose Borne  1734 No Traueller returnes, Puzels the will,  1735 And makes vs rather beare those illes we haue,  1736 Then flye to others that we know not of.  1737 Thus Conscience does make Cowards of vs all,  1738 And thus the Natiue hew of Resolution  1739 Is sicklied o're, with the pale cast of Thought,  1740 And enterprizes of great pith and moment,  1741 With this regard their Currants turne away,  1742 And loose the name of Action. Soft you now,</p> <p>1743 The faire <i>Ophelia</i>? Nimph, in thy Orizons  1744 Be all my sinnes remembred.</p>	<p>Hamlet's question becomes whether or not to be true to himself regarding his sexuality and relationship with Horatio. There is, however, a definite sense of death and suicide in this question, but the death aspect can also mean the 'death' of Hamlet's identity and the self, and by denying his sexuality, he commits 'suicide'.</p> <p>Hamlet asks whether he should accept the possible adverse reactions to his sexuality and relationship with Horatio, or deny his identity and feelings for Horatio.</p> <p>Lines cut in the adaptation  Here Hamlet refers to the fear of regret for denying who he is.</p> <p>Here there is still uncertainty in Hamlet regarding his decision, and this decision will have to be shown visually in a performance. Hamlet, however, does decide to accept his sexuality and his relationship with Horatio. This becomes evident in his dialogue with Ophelia further on.  Hamlet assumes she is reading a bible, and he feels guilty about using her.</p>

1745 **Ophe.** Good my Lord,  
 1746 How does your Honor for this many a day?  
 1747 **Ham.** I humbly thanke you: well, well, well.  
 1748 **Ophe.** My Lord, I haue Remembrances of yours,  
 1749 That I haue longed long to re- deliuer.  
 1750 I pray you now, receiue them.  
 1751 **Ham.** No, no, I neuer gaue you ought.  
 1752 **Ophe.** My honor'd Lord, I know right well you did,  
 [...]
 1770 prooffe. I did loue you once.

1771 **Ophe.** Indeed my Lord, you made me beleeeue so.  
 1772 **Ham.** You should not haue beleeeued me. For vertue  
 1773 cannot so innoculate our old stocke, but we shall rellish  
 1774 of it. I loued you not.

1775 **Ophe.** I was the more deceiued.  
 1776 **Ham.** Get thee to a Nunnerie. Why would'st thou

1777 be a breeder of Sinners? I am my selfe indifferent honest,  
 1778 but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were bet-  
 ter  
 1779 my Mother had not borne me. I am very proud, re-  
 uengefull,  
 1780 Ambitious, with more offences at my becke,  
 1781 then I haue thoughts to put them in imagination, to giue  
 1782 them shape, or time to acte them in. What should such  
 1783 Fellowes as I do, crawling betweene Heauen and Earth.  
 1784 We are arrant Knaues all, beleeeue none of vs. Goe thy  
 1785 wayes to a Nunnery. Where's your Father?  
 1786 **Ophe.** At home, my Lord.  
 1787 **Ham.** Let the doores be shut vpon him, that he may  
 1788 play the Foole no way, but in's owne house. Farewell.  
 1789 **Ophe.** O helpe him, you sweet Heauens.  
 1790 **Ham.** If thou doest Marry, Ile giue thee this Plague  
 1791 for thy Dowrie. Be thou as chast as Ice, as pure as Snow,

Note also the use of *Nymph*, referring to a sea creature that lured sailors to their destruction, following their singing<sup>44</sup>.

Hamlet instinctively denies that he gave her anything.

Hamlet only loved her as a friend. He has also decided to come out as a gay man, which will happen in Act 3, scene 2.

Then he admits he did not love her.

*Nunnerie* has two interpretations: 'brothel' as in the Protestant Elizabethan world<sup>45</sup> or a literal nunnery. Here Hamlet uses *Nunnerie* as a reference to a real nunnery where she would be safe from men who will use her.

Hamlet responds that men are not to be trusted, referring primarily to himself as a gay man who used her, and by going to a nunnery, she can avoid devious men. He says this in a moment of guilt.

Hamlet tests her.

<sup>44</sup> siren. (n.d.) *Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary*. (2010). Retrieved January 7 2014 from <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/siren>

<sup>45</sup> See more at: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/first-use-of-the-word-nunnery-to-mean-brothel-1593#sthash.36HK27pC.dpuf>

1792 thou shalt not escape Calumny. Get thee to a Nunnery.

1793 Go, Farewell. Or if thou wilt needs Marry, marry a fool:  
1794 for Wise men know well enough, what monsters you  
1795 make of them. To a Nunnery go, and quickly too. Far-  
well.

1797 *Ophe.* O heauenly Powers, restore him.

1798 *Ham.* I haue heard of your pratlings too wel enough.

1799 God has giuen you one pace, and you make your selfe an-  
other:

1800 you gidge, you amble, and you lisper, and nickname

1801 Gods creatures, and make your Wantonnesse, your Ig-  
norance.

1802 Go too, Ile no more on't, it hath made me mad.

1803 I say, we will haue no more Marriages. Those that are

1804 married already, all but one shall liue, the rest shall keep

1805 as they are. To a Nunnery, go. *Exit Hamlet.*

[...]

1818 *Enter King, and Polonius.*

1819 *King.* Loue? His affections do not that way tend,

1820 Nor what he spake, though it lack'd Forme a little,

1821 Was not like Madnesse. There's something in his soule?

Here Hamlet refers to a brothel <sup>46</sup> due to her betrayal. This might not come out in the text, and a performance of the moment is needed to indicate the metaphorical change of *nunnery* from an actual nunnery to a brothel.

Hamlet again puts on his '*Anticke disposition*' for the sake of Claudius and Polonius to make them think that his madness is due to his love for Ophelia.

Claudius is unconvinced of Hamlet's 'performance' and suspects more is going on with Hamlet.

Act 3, scene 2 is known as the mousetrap scene, where the 'real' Claudius, as well as his sins, is revealed. This scene now becomes Hamlet's moment to reveal to the court his sexuality and his relationship with Horatio. It is also the first time anybody sees Hamlet and Horatio together, except for the guards who have seen them together in previous scenes.

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<sup>46</sup> Note the spelling of 'Nunnerie' in line 1776 versus 'Nunnery' in line 1785, just before he asks about her father. From this point on the word is spelled 'Nunnery'. While spelling can vary greatly in early English texts, including this one, this particular variation influenced the interpretation in the adaptation that 'Nunnerie' in line 1776 means a literal nunnery and 'Nunnery' means brothel.

Act 3. Scene 2	Focused coding: explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/identifying the queer interpretation.
<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Horatio waits</i></p> <p>1901 <i>Enter Horatio. Hamlet</i>  1902 <i>Ham. What hoa, Horatio?</i>  1903 <i>Hora. Heere sweet Lord, at your Seruice.</i>  1904 <i>Ham. Horatio, thou art eene as iust a man</i>  1905 <i>As ere my Conuersation coap'd withall.</i>  1906 <i>Hora. O my deere Lord.</i>  1907 <i>Ham. Nay, do not thinke I flatter:</i>  1908 <i>For what aduancement may I hope from thee,</i>  1909 <i>That no Reuennew hast, but thy good spirits</i>  1910 <i>To feed &amp; cloath thee. Why shold the poor be flatter'd?</i>  1911 <i>No, let the Candied tongue, like absurd pompe,</i>  1912 <i>And crooke the pregnant Hindges of the knee,</i>  1913 <i>Where thrift may follow faining? Dost thou heare,</i>  1914 <i>Since my deere Soule was Mistris of my choyse,</i>  1915 <i>And could of men distinguish, her election</i>  1916 <i>Hath seal'd thee for her selfe. For thou hast bene</i>  1917 <i>As one in suffering all, that suffers nothing.</i>  1918 <i>A man that Fortunes buffets, and Rewards</i>  1919 <i>Hath 'tane with equall Thankes. And blest are those,</i>  1920 <i>Whose Blood and Iudgement are so well co- mingled,</i>  1921 <i>That they are not a Pipe for Fortunes finger.</i>  1922 <i>To sound what stop she please. Giue me that man,</i>  1923 <i>That is not Passions Slaue, and I will weare him</i>  1924 <i>In my hearts Core. I, in my Heart of heart,</i>  1925 <i>As I do thee. Something too much of this.</i>  1926 <i>There is a Play to night to before the King.</i>  1927 <i>One Scoene of it comes neere the Circumstance</i>  [...]</p> <p>1963 <i>Qu. Come hither my good Hamlet, sit by me.</i>  1964 <i>Ha. No good Mother, here's Mettle more attractiue.</i></p> <p>[...]</p>	<p>In the adaptation, the scene starts with Horatio waiting; then Hamlet arrives after his encounter with Ophelia. The part where Hamlet talks to the players is cut.</p> <p>These lines are cut. Hamlet enters, greeting Horatio with 'thou art eene as iust ...'</p> <p>Hamlet tells Horatio that he chose him as his partner. They were already a couple in Wittenberg, but now everybody will know.</p> <p>A sign from Hamlet that he is committed to Horatio and their relationship.</p> <p>The court enters, and Hamlet and Horatio are already there together. The Queen asks Hamlet to come and sit with her, but he refuses and states that he will stay with Horatio.</p> <p><b>Mettle;</b> meaning <i>substance or matter</i>  Originally it referred to Ophelia, but changing his reference to Horatio supports the queer interpretation. He now says being with Horatio is much more <i>attractiue</i>.</p> <p>Lines 1965 - 2131 are cut in the adaptation Hamlet only tells the court what the play is all about, Claudius reacts, and Hamlet has his answer.</p>

<p><b>Act 3. Scene 3</b></p>	<p><b>Focused coding: explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/identifying the queer interpretation.</b></p>
<p>2271 <i>Enter King, Rosincrance, and Guildensterne.</i>  2272 <b>King.</b> I like him not, nor stands it safe with vs,  2273 To let his madnesse range. Therefore prepare you,  2274 I your Commission will forthwith dispatch,  2275 And he to England shall along with you:  2276 The termes of our estate, may not endure  2277 Hazard so dangerous as doth hourelly grow  2278 Out of his Lunacies.  2279 <b>Guild.</b> We will our selues prouide:  2280 Most holie and Religious feare it is  2281 To keepe those many many bodies safe  2282 That liue and feede vpon your Maiestie.  [...]  2297 <b>King.</b> Arme you, I pray you to this speedie Voyage;  2298 For we will Fetters put vpon this feare,  2299 Which now goes too free- footed.   2300 <b>Both.</b> We will haste vs. <i>Exeunt Gent.</i></p>	<p>Claudius refers to Hamlet’s sexuality as ‘<i>madnesse</i>’.  Hamlet’s sexuality becomes the reason for his exile to England.  Claudius uses ‘<i>Hazard</i>’ to refer to other men that may come out as gay (<i>Lunacies</i>).   Claudius states that, by sending Hamlet to England, they will be able to stop the news about Hamlet’s sexuality which he so freely and blatantly has shown to the whole court.  <b>Fetters</b> meaning <i>restrain</i> or <i>overcome</i> or <i>suppress</i>  Note <b>free-footed</b> where foot (n.) means <i>foothold</i> or <i>position</i> or <i>presence</i>.</p>

After Hamlet’s exile to England Horatio is still at Elsinore, as discussed previously. Ophelia enters and starts to sing, while moving around the room and stopping at each person.

<p><b>Act 4. Scene 5</b></p>	<p><b>Focused coding: explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/identifying the queer interpretation.</b></p>
<p>2744 <i>Enter Queene and Horatio.</i>  2745 <b>Qu.</b> I will not speake with her.  2746 <b>Hor.</b> She is importunate, indeed distract, her moode  2747 will needs be pittied.  2748 <b>Qu.</b> What would she haue?  2749 <b>Hor.</b> She speakes much of her Father; saies she heares  [...]  2795 <b>Ophe.</b> Indeed Ia? without an oath Ile make an end ont.  2796 <i>By gis, and by S[aint]. Charity,</i>  2797 <i>Alacke, and fie for shame:</i>  2798 <i>Yong men wil doo’t, if they come too’t,</i>  2799 <i>By Cocke they are too blame.</i></p>	<p>Horatio is still at the castle after Hamlet’s exile, and he now advises the Queen. The premise is that she feels closer to her son by having Horatio there.  Ophelia enters and starts to sing to everyone.  Ophelia turns to Horatio.</p>

<p>2800 <i>Quoth she before you tumbled me,</i>  2801 <i>You promis'd me to Wed:</i>  2802 <i>So would I ha done by yonder Sunne,</i>  2803 <i>And thou hadst not come to my bed.</i>  2804 <b>King.</b> How long hath she bin thus?  2805 <b>Ophe.</b> I hope all will be well. We must bee patient,  2806 but I cannot choose but weepe, to thinke they should</p>	<p>In reference to Hamlet, almost as if she is talking to Hamlet through Horatio.</p> <p>Ophelia says this to Horatio as a way of accepting his and Hamlet's relationship, <i>but</i> her line of thought changes to her father's burial.</p>
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Horatio receives a letter from Hamlet, informing him that he is back and telling him what happened on the ship. Building on Horatio's presence at Elsinore, further research found a scene from Quarto 1<sup>47</sup>, not included in the First Folio. It is a scene between Horatio and Gertrude. This further supports the premise that Queen Gertrude kept Horatio at Elsinore to feel closer to her son.

<p><b>Act 4. Scene (6)</b></p>	<p><b>Focused coding: explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/identifying the queer interpretation.</b></p>
<p>2972 <i>Enter Horatio, with an Attendant.</i>  2973 <i>Hora.</i> What are they that would speake with me?  2974 <i>Ser.</i> Saylor's sir, they say they haue Letters for you.  2975 <i>Hor.</i> Let them come in,  2976 I do not know from what part of the world  2977 I should be greeted, if not from Lord <i>Hamlet.</i>  2978 <i>Enter Saylor.</i>  2979 <i>Say.</i> God blesse you Sir.  2980 <i>Hor.</i> Let him blesse thee too.  2981 <i>Say.</i> Hee shall Sir, and't please him. There's a Letter  2982 for you Sir: It comes from th' Ambassadors that was  2983 bound for England, if your name be <i>Horatio</i>, as I am let  2984 to know it is.  2985 <i>Reads the Letter.</i>  [...]  3003 Come, I will giue you way for these your Letters,  3004 And do't the speedier, that you may direct me  3005 To him from whom you brought them.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Enter the Queene.</p> <p><b>Hor.</b> Madame, your sonne is safe arriv'de in <i>Denmarke</i>,  2985 This letter I euen now receiv'd of him,  2985.1 Whereas he writes how he escap't the danger,  And subtle treason that the king had plotted,  Being crossed by the contention of the windes,</p>	<p>Only Hamlet would write to him.</p> <p>There is a sense of urgency for Horatio to get to Hamlet.</p> <p>Horatio tells her that Hamlet is back and that he discovered Claudius's plot to have Hamlet killed in England.</p>

<sup>47</sup> [http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/doc/Ham\\_Q1/page/53/](http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/doc/Ham_Q1/page/53/)

3515 He found the Packet sent to the king of *England*,  
3525 Wherein he saw himselfe betray'd to death,  
3525.1 As at his next conuersion with your grace,  
He will relate the circumstance at full.

**Queene** Then I perceiue there's treason in his looks  
That seem'd to sugar o're his villanie:

3525.5 But I will soothe and please him for a time,  
For murderous mindes are alwayes jealous,  
But know not you *Horatio* where he is?

**Hor.** Yes Madame, and he hath appoynted me  
To meete him on the east side of the Cittie

3525.10 To morrow morning.

**Queene** O faile not, good *Horatio*, and withall, commend me  
A mothers care to him, bid him a while  
Be wary of his presence, lest that he  
Faile in that he goes about.

3525.15 **Hor.** Madam, neuer make doubt of that:  
I thinke by this the news be come to court:  
He is arriv'de, obserue the king, and you shall  
Quickely finde, *Hamlet* being here,  
Things fell not to his minde.

**Queene** But what became of Gilderstone and Rossencraft?

**Hor.** He being set ashore, they went for *England*,  
And in the Packet there writ down that doome  
To be perform'd on them poynted for him:  
And by great chance he had his fathers Seale,  
So all was done without discouerie.

**Queene** Thankes be to heauen for blessing of the prince,  
*Horatio* once againe I take my leaue,  
With thowsand mothers blessings to my sonne *and you*.

3551.5 **Horat.** Madam adue.

Horatio tells her Hamlet instructed him to meet him on the city's eastern side. This supports their relationship and indicates that Hamlet trusts Horatio. This links back to why Horatio was still at *Elsenour* when Hamlet was banished.

Gertrude is delighted that her son is back, but she also fears for his safety, which she asks Horatio to tell him.

Horatio is determined to keep Hamlet safe.

Gertrude sends her blessing to Hamlet, but the adaptation added '*and you*' to include Horatio in that blessing. Gertrude loves Horatio as a son, indicating that she accepts Hamlet and Horatio's relationship.

Act 5. Scene 2	Focused coding: explanation/identification of changes made to other events or moments supporting/identifying the queer interpretation.
<p>[...]</p> <p>3822 <i>Ham.</i> But let it be: <i>Horatio</i>, I am dead,  3823 Thou liu'st, report me and my causes right  3824 To the vnsatisfied.  3825 <i>Hor.</i> Neuer beleeeue it.  3826 I am more an Antike Roman then a Dane:  3827 Heere's yet some Liquor left.  3828 <i>Ham.</i> As th'art a man, giue me the Cup.  3829 Let go, by Heauen Ile haue't.  3830 Oh good <i>Horatio</i>, what a wounded name,  3831 (Things standing thus vnknowne) shall liue behind me.  3832 If thou did'st euer hold me in thy heart,  3833 Absent thee from felicitie awhile,  3834 And in this harsh world draw thy breath in paine,  3835 To tell <del>my</del> <i>our</i> Storie.</p>	<p>Hamlet is dying in Horatio's arms.</p> <p>Horatio refers to the same-sex relationships in ancient Rome, and that he would rather die with his lover.</p> <p>Reference to their feelings towards each other.</p> <p>The adaptation changed 'my' to 'our' to refer to their story as lovers.</p>
<p>[...]</p> <p>3848 <i>Hora.</i> Now cracke a Noble heart:  3849 Goodnight sweet Prince,  3850 And flights of Angels sing thee to thy rest,</p>	<p>The adaptation ends here.</p>

The adaptation ends with the '*And flights of Angels sing thee to thy rest*'. Hamlet dying in Horatio's arms and Horatio trying to drink the poison, brings to mind the tomb scene from *Romeo and Juliet*

*A glooming peace this morning with it brings  
The sun for sorrow will not show his head.  
Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;  
Some shall be pardoned, and some punished;  
For never was a story of more woe  
Than this of [Hamlet and his Horatio.] (5.3.321 –26)*

#### 4. Epilogue: Post-Focus Coding

Denzin and Lincoln (2000:23) describe qualitative research's interpretation and evaluation phase as "[t]he interpretive practice of making sense one's findings" as both artistic and political. According to Denzin and Lincoln, interpreting data in qualitative research is constructive. A field text is created with field notes (in the case of this study, it was the identified *queer cues*), and then a research text, or rather draft report, is created. After using the *queer cues* identified in the scripts of *Hamlet* and *Richard III*, Initial Coding, and the subsequent changes made to other events or moments, Focussed Coding, transposing the two plays into queer adaptations, becomes the 'draft report'. These adaptations became an

“interpretive document that contains the writer’s initial attempts to make sense of what he or she has learned”. The final step in this phase is called the ‘public text’. Denzin and Lincoln (*ibid*) say this can come in different forms.

While reading the new queer adaptations, it became clear that, on paper, nothing has changed; another step is needed. A new question emerged: ‘How to present the *queer cues* in the new queer adaptations of *Hamlet* and *Richard III*?’

Hallberg (2006:147, cited in Kenny and Fourie 2015:1279) states that a Constructivist-Grounded Theory study “... concludes with the researcher’s interpretative understanding (rather than explanation) of the studied social process which is presented in the form of a ‘story’”. This story is an interpretive understanding instead of explaining the researcher’s observation of the studied phenomenon. In order to present the *queer cues* in the new queer adaptations of *Hamlet* and *Richard III*, performances of the scripts are needed.

The theory development of grounded theory in this study was the performances of *Hamlet* and *Richard III*. The subsequent articles, ‘*To tell our Storie: Reflections on a Queer Adaptation of Hamlet in Twenty-first Century South Africa*’ and ‘*Then since the Heavens haue shap’d my Body so: Will the Political ‘Queer’ Richard Please Stand Up?*’ will reflect on the performances of the queer adaptations, indicating how the performances by the actors brought forward queer interpretations. The eventual performances become the ‘public text’.

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Shakespeare's

# RICHARD III

*in modern English*



**Adapted & Directed by Thys Heydenrych**

**Chapter 3 (Article 2)**

*'Then since the Heauens haue shap'd my  
Body so': Will the 'Queer' Richard Please  
Stand Up?*



*I that haue neyther pittie, loue, nor feare,  
 Indeed 'tis true that Henrie told me of: 3145<sup>50</sup>  
 For I haue often heard my Mother say,  
 I came into the world with my Legges forward.  
 Had I not reason (thinke ye) to make hast,  
 And seeke their Ruine, that vsurp'd our Right?  
 The Midwife wonder'd, and the Women cri'de  
 O Iesus blesse vs, he is borne with teeth,  
 And so I was, which plainly signified,  
 That I should snarle, and bite, and play the dogge:  
 Then since the Heauens haue shap'd my Body so,  
 Let Hell make crook'd my Minde to answer it.*

Clemen (2013:26), however, points out that critics are too quick to treat the second part of Richard's opening soliloquy "as though it were a modern exploration of the psychological roots of Richard's misanthropic attitude ...". He continues to state that these critics interpret his villainy as follows:

Richard's physical deformities, which exclude him from the enjoyment of love, cause him to seek compensation in his villainous undertakings; not Richard himself, therefore, but the twisted body foisted upon him by nature, must be held responsible for his criminal behaviour. In fact, however, the main purpose of these lines is to make clear that the leading character is a villain, and, moreover, that he freely chooses to be a villain (*'I am determined to prove a villain'*).

Richard's lines in *Henry VI, Part 3* reflect a sense that he blames the world and wants to take revenge in general. Sigmund Freud (in Clemen 2013:87) commented as follows about Richard's opening monologue:

I think, therefore, that Richard's soliloquy does not say everything; it merely gives a hint, and leaves us to fill in what it hints at. When we do so, however, the appearance of frivolity [imparted by Richard's explanation of his motive for doing evil] vanishes, the bitterness and minuteness with which Richard has depicted his deformity make their full effect, and we clearly perceive the fellow feeling which compels our sympathy even with a villain like him. What the soliloquy thus means is: Nature has done me a grievous wrong in denying me the beauty of form which wins human love. Life owes me reparation for this, and I will see that I get it ... I may do wrong myself, since wrong has been done to me ...<sup>51</sup>.

Clemen (2013:26) furthermore suggests that, should we not be convinced that Richard's opening soliloquy is 'as Freudian as Freud suggests', then at least we observe a decisive expression of Richard's

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<sup>50</sup> William Shakespeare, *The third Part of Henry the Sixt, with the death of the Duke of YORKE*. DjVu Editions E-books, Global Language Resources, Inc, 2001. url: <http://triggs.djvu.org/djvu-editions.com/SHAKESPEARE/H6-3/Download.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> Freud, S. 1916. Einige Charaktertypen aus der psychoanalytischen. *Imago, Zeitschrift für Anwendung der Psychoanalyse auf die Geisteswissenschaften* 4(6):320.

own character in the soliloquy. From the beginning, it appears that you get a logical reason from him for doing what he intends to do. Throughout the play, he never struggles to explain his actions; he unashamedly and, without hiding anything, cynically justifies every murder he commits. Even at the end of the play, he laughs at his conscience.

In my opinion, Richard uses his deformity to gain sympathy from the other characters and the audience. Richard is an excellent actor, and I suspect that Richard felt he had a purpose during the war, but now that there is peace, he, to some extent, feels useless and therefore bides his time with politics; he wants possession of the crown and will stop at nothing to achieve this goal. When the question is asked why Richard is evil, there is an argument that he resembles a typical ‘Machiavellian villain’.

In discussing the influence of Machiavelli on Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, Ralph Melean (n.d.:1 of 1) claims that Richard is the most notorious Machiavellian character in all of Shakespeare’s works. He describes him as a “model of the political schemer out to secure his own position” and compares him to the characters of Iago (*Othello*), Edmund (*King Lear*), and Claudius (*Hamlet*). This ‘model of the political schemer’ resonated with me and immediately made me think about the political milieu in South Africa in 2013.

Jim Mukerjee (2001:slide 5 of 11) explains the influence of Machiavelli’s political philosophy as follows:

- ‘Learn well to disguise true character: feign and pretend.’ Richard pretends to be devoutly religious, living in prayer and meditation. He also pretends not to want the crown but immediately accepts it when he is pressed (Act 3, scene 7).
- ‘Learn how not to be good’ - by implication ‘the ends justify the means’. He explains that in order for a ruler to survive, he needs to do whatever it takes to get and keep the throne, whether it is moral or not. Ralph Mclean (n.d.:1 of 1), however, states that Machiavelli never advocated the ‘practice of being evil’. He did, however, agree that ‘evil sometimes has to be used’. The first thing Richard does to get the crown is to get his brother Clarence thrown into jail by his brother Edward and then arrange for him to be killed by two murderers.
- ‘It is necessary to seem to have the required qualities. In politics, appearance trumps reality.’. Mukerjee explains it as ‘form is more important than substance’. Richard makes fun of love and companionship in the scene with Lady Anne (Act 1, scene 2). It is interesting to note that, at Edward IV’s deathbed (Act 2, scene 1), other characters do it as well.

- ‘Avoid usurping property, woman & children of subjects.’ Richard kills the two princes in the tower; he also promises Buckingham property and dukedom for his assistance (a promise which he later breaks).

## 2. Shakespeare’s *Richard III*

What were Shakespeare’s sources and inspiration for *Richard III*? Why did he over-exaggerate Richard’s deformities? Several authors use Shakespeare’s reasons for writing the play to address the authorship question. The most valuable places to look for Shakespeare’s inspiration are works by Tudor historians, Shakespeare’s work with *The Lord Chamberlain’s Men*, political events around 1596/1597, and the anonymous work *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third* in 1594.

### 2.1 Shakespeare and the Tudor-history of *Richard III*

Shakespeare’s *Richard III* is considered the last play in his War of the Roses cycle<sup>52</sup>. Monarchs were humanised in plays like *Richard II* and *Henry IV*. Still, Shakespeare chose to make Richard a villain in *Richard III*. Hughes (2013:1 of 14) said this was a political necessity. Their company, *The Lord Chamberlain’s Men*, needed to remain in business and therefore had to use the Tudor version of history. The Tudors needed to portray Richard as a villain, seeing that they actually stole the throne from him.

In 1536 there was a revolt, called *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, against King Henry VIII due to his breaking away from the Roman Catholic Church. The King, frightened by this uprising, devised a new law stating that any hint of rebellion against the monarch would be considered treason, combined with heresy. This law was to be pronounced and explained from the pulpit. As it was a crime and a sin, anyone found guilty would be burned in this life and the ‘next’ (Hughes 2013:2 of 14).

Hughes (2013:2 of 14) is of the opinion that most Tudor historians felt compelled to make Henry IV a villain who usurped the throne from Richard II. Interestingly, what Henry VIII’s father, Henry VII, did to Richard III, resembles what Henry IV did to Richard II. Therefore, one can assume that they opted to make Henry VII a saint whose duty it was to rid England of a monster. Henry VIII’s Lord Chamberlain, Sir Thomas More, provided this biography, and later historians simply followed suit.

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<sup>52</sup> War of the Roses technically ended with the victory of the House of Tudor (represented by Henry VII) over the House of York (represented by Richard III) at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485, Shakespeare’s cycle includes plays that precede and follow this event to provide a comprehensive history of this tumultuous period in English history.

Most chronicles describe the real Richard III with a crooked back and a raised shoulder. However, the Tudor historians transformed the shoulder into a hump, added the withered arm, and gave him the ‘full set of teeth that he was supposedly born with’. Additionally, the murders he was accused of cannot be found in the chronicles. Richard can only be accused of his ambition for the throne, and the disappearance of his brother’s two sons is still argued. Important to remember is that Edward III had many descendants, and all of them had their eyes on the throne. Richard’s ambition to ascend the throne only became apparent after his brother Edward IV’s death (Hughes 2013:2 of 14).

According to Hughes (2013:2 of 14), Shakespeare purposefully decided to exaggerate Richard’s crimes. He rearranged events and made Richard responsible for more deaths. Not only does he amplify Richard’s deformities, he actually has Richard describe them at the beginning of the play and say that they are the cause for his evil deeds.

## **2.2 Shakespeare, *The Lord Chamberlain’s Men* and Sir Robert Cecil**

Robert Cecil was half the size of most men at the court. His back was twisted and, because of scoliosis inherited from his mother, his head was thrust forward. His defects were the source of many cruel jokes, and many court members generally disliked him. Lord Burghley, Secretary of State, was his father, and he was very quickly promoted over other worthier candidates. In 1590, at 27, he took over from Secretary Walsingham and shared the office duties with his father, who later allowed him to take over all the duties. Until the Queen decided who would officially take over from Lord Burghley, Robert Cecil continued with the work until 1596, when the Queen appointed him as First Secretary of State (Hughes 2013:3–4 of 14).

According to Hughes (2013:4 of 14), agents working for Sir Thomas Walsingham, a Member of Parliament, acted in the Queen’s interest to protect the London stage against the city mayors and senior council members determined to get rid of all theatres. After he died in 1590, however, it seemed as if some agency in the government was working with the city to destroy the English stage. As Hughes explains, historians are hesitant to attribute this to Sir Robert Cecil, who took over from Sir Walsingham, yet this was the only significant shift in the top levels of government at the time.

According to Hughes (2013:4–6 of 14), specific dates of events need to be taken into consideration for ‘evidence of the truth’ of Cecil’s attempted destruction of the London stage:

- From 1590 - 1591 records of both the *Paul’s Boys* and *Queen’s Men*, the most consistent Court entertainers, were removed from the Revels’ record after Cecil had taken over from Walsingham.

- In 1592 former agents of Walsingham tried to arrest Marlowe on fake counterfeiting charges. This, however, failed.
- In 1593 these same agents killed Marlowe in a supposed brawl in a hostel in Deptford, while, at the same time, the man who published his satires years earlier was hanged.
- The death of Marlowe caused chaos, and a shuffling of actors, patrons and publishers followed. Lord Strange took over as patron of Marlowe's company, and Henry Carey, 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Hunsdon and Lord Chamberlain, who was the overseer of Court entertainment, started establishing *The Lord Chamberlain's Men*.
- In 1594 Lord Strange was murdered before this arrangement was finished.
- In 1594 *The Lord Chamberlain's Men* was the leading acting company for whom Shakespeare wrote<sup>53</sup>. It was founded during the reign of Queen Elizabeth with Henry Carey, 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Hunsdon and Lord Chamberlain, as their patron. After Lord Strange's death, many of his actors joined them (Hughes 2013:5 of 14).
- In 1596 James Burbage, manager of *The Lord Chamberlain's Men*, with the help of Lord Hunsdon, bought the old Parliament Chamber in Blackfriars to renovate as their new theatre. Two weeks after Henry Carey, 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Hunsdon, died, Cecil's father-in-law, William Brooke, took office as Lord Chamberlain. Robert Cecil was also officially appointed as Secretary of State. Four months later, the Privy Council, dominated now by two Cecils (Robert and his father) and Lord Brooke, prohibited Burbage from opening his new theatre.
- In 1596 after his death, Henry Carey's son-in-law, Lord Admiral Charles Howard, took over as patron of *The Lord Chamberlain's Men*.
- In 1597 James Burbage died, and his sons Richard and Cuthbert took over the company. Later in that year Lord Brooke also died, and Charles Howard, Henry Carey's son-in-law, became 2<sup>nd</sup> Lord Hunsdon and Lord Chamberlain.
- After a performance in 1597 of *The Isle of Dogs* in *The Swan*, Cecil ordered *The Swan* and other theatres in London to be closed down. This caused many theatre companies to tour the country.
- On their return in September 1597 *The Lord Chamberlain's Men* found themselves without a performance stage. On 20 October 1597 records show that they registered *The Tragedy of Richard the Third* with the Stationers. Records also indicate that they were the only company that performed at Court over the winter holidays of that year. By the end of the year the play

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<sup>53</sup> In addition to writing for *The Lord Chamberlain's Men*, Shakespeare also wrote for other acting companies and venues in 1594. *The Lord Chamberlain's Men* became one of the most successful companies of the time, and Shakespeare was a shareholder in the company from 1595. He may have written for *The Admiral's Men*, who were another popular acting company at the time. Additionally, he may have written plays for the Rose Theatre, which was a competing venue to the Globe.

was anonymously published. In 1598 a second edition was published under the name *William Shakespeare*.

These events are important, especially those in 1597, when one considers that the Queen called her ninth parliament in that same year.

### **2.3 The Queen's Ninth Parliament and *Richard III***

According to Hughes (2013:6 of 14), by the fall of 1597, the Queen ran short of operating funds and called another parliament into session. This happened roughly every three to four years. It is important to note that during that time, the most influential men and men of standing in their communities were gathered in London. Most of them were intelligent, wealthy, and the nation's most influential men of affairs, eager to see the latest plays, read the latest publications and discuss them with one another. One can imagine how vital these gatherings were for theatre companies and publishers.

Hughes (2013:6 of 14) states that this was also the first parliamentary session where Robert Cecil would be present as the Queen's representative. It would be understandable to think that *The Lord Chamberlain's Men* would be geared to attack him for the damages he had wrought in the past seven years. The play *Richard III*, based on the evil biography by Thomas More, would then be a perfect choice, pleasing the Court. However, at the same time, *The Lord Chamberlain's Men* had a chance to convey their message "... through the MPs to the entire nation that the newly-appointed Secretary of State was the reincarnation of Richard the Third". In Hughes' (2013:7 of 14) opinion, this is undoubtedly the background to Shakespeare's creation of *Richard III*.

Spencer (in Hughes 2013:3 of 14) states that he cannot understand how the person who wrote *Richard II* could possibly have written *Richard III* due to the clumsy structure, the over-obvious characters and the mediocre quality of the verse. It is clear that Spencer greatly admires Shakespeare's poetry, but according to him, *Richard III* 'is not a masterpiece'.

Hughes (2013:7 of 14) suggests that the background to *Richard III*'s creation could be why Shakespeare did not bother with poetic language and interesting characters. Hughes (*ibid*) argues that he might have avoided it on purpose and that it also could be why Shakespeare went out of his way to make the play and the character of Richard as dark and evil as possible.

It is suspected that one of Shakespeare's sources for *Richard III* was the anonymous history play called *The True Tragedy of Richard III*, a play by *The Queen's Men* which may have been written in 1586 (Hotine 1991:481; Jiménez 2004:115). Hotine further claims that the play "can be seen as propaganda for the benefits conferred by the Tudors after the Plantagenet misrule". She continues by saying that Richmond's speech at the end of *Richard III* is very low-key compared to the long speech at the end of *The True Tragedy* where Elizabeth I is praised at length. If Shakespeare did not have the real King Richard in mind as the tyrant, but rather a contemporary politician, it would be useful to deceive the censors by resembling an earlier play, like *The True Tragedy*.

Hughes (2013:7 of 14) states that, by comparing the date of the play's first registration - 20 October 1597 - and the events that happened around that time, it is impossible to deny that Richard's traits and deformities Shakespeare emphasised, were very similar to those of Sir Robert Cecil, who was appointed as State Secretary the year before.

#### **2.4 Robert Cecil and *Richard III***

Hotine (1991:480) is convinced that it is impossible not to connect Cecil's ambitions and his regular promotions with the writing of *Richard III* and the subsequent performances. One might even consider it as the reason why Shakespeare wrote the play. In 1591 Robert Cecil succeeded his father, who actually promoted him, in the Secretary of State office. His father tried to persuade the Queen to make him Principal Secretary, but instead, she knighted him and swore him in as a member of the Privy Council. It is speculated that the first edition of *Richard III* was written anonymously and first performed in 1593. In 1596 Robert Cecil became First Secretary, and in 1597 the first quarto of *Richard III* was registered and published later in the year. A second quarto came out in 1598. Aune (2006:27) adds that in 1599 Robert Cecil became Master of Wards, and it is speculated that there was another performance of *Richard III* later that year.

Several verse libels and letters about Cecil show connections between him and the character of Richard III. Both Richard and Robert Cecil are described as being deformed. According to Aune (2006:26), Cecil complained in a letter, which he knew the Queen would read, that she referred to him as her 'little elf' or 'pigmy'. Sir Robert Naunton, his best friend, even described him as 'a little, crooked person', and King James I referred to him as 'little beagle'.

According to Aune (2006:27), “Richard’s crooked back indicates a moral crookedness, his withered arm the perversion of his actions”<sup>54</sup>. The toad metaphors [by Queen Margaret] suggest an ugly deformity and a lower, ‘toxic form of life’. She adds that Cecil’s and Richard’s moral deformity, symbolised by the crooked back, can be seen as ruthless ambition. Richard was driven to murder and betrayal by his ambition, while Cecil’s ambition brought him wealth and power, as well as criticism and animosity.

Two Early Stuart Libels highlight connections between Cecil and Richard. The first one makes a connection and, by drawing a parallel between Cecil and Judas, the traitor, also implies that Cecil was a worse tyrant than Richard.

(“Early Stuart” D4)

*Heere lieth Robin Crookt back, unjustly reckond*

*A Richard the third, he was Judas*

*In their lives they agree, in their deaths somewhat alter,*

*The more pittie the poxe soe cousend the halter.*

*Richard, or Robert, which is the worse?*

*A Crookt back great in state is England’s curse.*

(‘Early Stuart’ D5)

*Two R:R:rs twoe Crookebacks of late ruled Englands helme*

*The one spilte the Royall bloode, the other Spoylde the Realme.*

One can argue that the correlation between the publishing and performance dates of Shakespeare’s *Richard III* and the life of Robert Cecil establishes no proof that they were connected. However, when one combines it with the verse libels about Cecil after his death, it is clear that there definitely was a connection in the public’s imagination (Aune 2006:29–30).

## **2.5 The evolution of staging *Richard III***

The criticism that followed Cecil’s death may suggest that, since he was regarded as similar to Richard, Cecil could also become as destructive as Richard if not restrained (Aune 2006:29–30). One could argue that the play could have been some form of social critique. The audience was reminded of Richard’s tyranny as king and the corrupt system that allowed him to seize the throne from the

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<sup>54</sup> This was the approach I used for the adaptation’s performance, rather than making his deformity physical, it is more psychological; a moral crookedness. This will be discussed further.

legitimate king. Aune states (2006:29–30) that it was a similar situation with Cecil. In the same way as Richard, Cecil manipulated a system that rewarded cunning rather than rewarding noble virtue. It was as if the system favoured Machiavellian ambition and abandoned nobility. This attack on Cecil could also be interpreted as an attack on the politics he followed. Several libels written after his death demonstrate the absolute fear and contempt the people felt towards Cecil, and publicised relief that he is dead and “that this dangerous man was no longer a threat” (Aune 2006:31).

*Richard III* remained a popular character during the 18th and 19th centuries. Still, his depiction became less specific and more general, as was the case with Sir Robert Cecil. Aune (2006:32) argues that actors like David Garrick and Kean did not use Shakespeare’s play to criticise specific individuals. According to Knowles (1984:1 out of 8), during the 18th century, actors preferred Colley Cibber’s adaptation of the play, which reduced the number of characters and shortened the play’s length. Loehlin (1993:80) concludes that Cibber’s adaptation emphasised Richard’s character and made *Richard III* “... a favourite star vehicle for actors”. Despite this significant shift, the character remained visually the same but only became a figure of the past (Aune 2006:32).

In the early 20th century, despite some influence from continental styles, Anglo-American productions of *Richard III* continued to essentially follow 19th-century practices, which were focused on the actors and historical accuracy. In Britain, *Richard III* was still being performed as a kind of “museum Shakespeare,” even though people like Harley Granville-Barker introduced some modernist elements. Meanwhile, in Europe, performances of Shakespeare’s plays were becoming more politically charged. According to Dennis Kennedy (2004: 29, cited in Aune 2006: 32), “British Shakespeare generally in this period, but particularly in Stratford and London, backed away from connecting the national dramatist to the conditions of the contemporary world”. This continues until the 1930s. It seems people found it easier to view the play as a lesson on history rather than a commentary on current social and political conditions. However, in 1920s Germany, this began to change.

In the autumn of 1920, one of the most significant continental productions of *Richard III* was staged at Berlin’s National Theater under the direction of Leopold Jessner. Jessner (Grange 1987:92, Höfele 1992: 141-43, Hortmann 1900: 57-58, cited in Aune 2006:32) believed that plays should be relevant to the present rather than focusing solely on historical accuracy. He was known for staging shows critical of German militarism, and his interpretation of *Richard III* reflected this belief. The staging was non-realistic and metaphorical; Richard was portrayed wearing a giant crown and a large red cloak. After Richard’s coronation, all the action took place mainly on a red stairway leading up to

the throne. The character of Richard did not refer to any specific individuals from the past. Instead, it highlighted the dangers of ambition by drawing parallels to two men who attempted to overthrow the German government: Wolfgang Kapp and Karl Liebknecht (Grange 1987:92, cited in Aune 2006:32). In 1937, Jurgen Fehling gave *Richard III* a contemporary setting and used the play to comment on the repressive political and social conditions in Germany at that time.

During the 1900s, performances of *Richard III* in Britain began to reflect the rise of fascism, but without explicit connections. However, in 1939, John Laurie's portrayal of Richard at Stratford-upon-Avon reminded audiences of Hitler and Mussolini. Donald Wolfitt's autobiography revealed that he recognised similarities between Richard and Hitler in his 1942 performance but chose not to incorporate them into the show. Laurence Olivier also saw allusions to Hitler in his 1944 performance: "One had Hitler over the way, one was playing it definitely as a paranoiac, so there was a core of something to which the audience would immediately respond". Both Olivier and Wolfitt recognised allusions to Hitler to engage their audiences.

Nevertheless, regardless of what they thought of Richard and the play, the attention remained on "... a favourite star vehicle" for them (Aune 2006:34–35). Swedish director Alf Sjöberg said about his 1947 production, "[Richard] was not hard to identify while Europe was still living in the rubble of the world war, and we continually watched great ideological con-men rise up and try to seize power" (qtd in Leiter 1986:601, cited in Aune 2006:36). Sjöberg implied that Richard's story acted as a cautionary tale, warning audiences of the dangers posed by overly ambitious postwar idealists. The play's emphasis on Richard's success and the circumstances that made it possible suggests that it could be viewed as a critique of society. This use of Richard's persona to make political allusions to specific people is reminiscent of early modern England, where he was employed in this way with figures like Cecil or Cromwell (Aune 2006:36).

The portrayal of Richard has continually recalled European fascism since World War II, even though Anglo-American productions of *Richard III* were not openly political in the 1940s. One critic of the 1961 Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) production of *Richard III*, with Christopher Plummer, found that it reminded him of World War II and contemporary events. Richard Muller (in Aune 2006:36) writes:

That even now, at the very time of the Eichmann trial, some people should still find Richard of Gloucester too ruthless and too bloody to be a convincing protagonist, is something I find hard to understand ... [Richard] is of the exact same historical mode as Hitler or Himmler.

These productions and others at the time appeared to be providing a cultural function of reassurance. The invocation of Nazism can be understood as a sign of relief that the danger was safely over, similar to how it may have been with the posthumous Cecil libels (Aune 2006:36).

In *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, published in the early 1960s, Alexander Kott provided theoretical frameworks for understanding and staging Shakespeare productions in modern times. Based on his ideas, the performances of *Richard III* moved away from performing the play in historical settings. In 1960 Peter Hall and John Barton attempted to contextualise their RSC production of *Richard III*. Rather than linking Richard to a specific person, they created *The Wars of Roses*, a cycle of plays based on the three Henry VI plays and *Richard III*. Here Richard's position was at the end of a cycle of plays rather than centred in his own play. Despite the historical setting of the play, Hall, reflecting on Kott's book, remarked that the RSC produced drama relevant to the present. Trevor Nunn, co-director, later recalled that Hall insisted on "one simple rule: that whenever the Company did a play by Shakespeare, they should do it because the play was relevant, because the play made some demand on our current attention" (Aune 2006:37).

In the Theatre Company of Boston's staging of *Richard III* in 1973, with Al Pacino in the lead role, the production seemed to have escaped the shadow of Stalin and others. Instead, the production used Richard to shed light on, if not question, Nixon, and provided insight into political events rather than using historical figures (like Hitler and others) to highlight Richard (Aune 2006:38). Barbara Hodgdon (1973:374) described Pacino's delivery of Richard's opening soliloquy as a "voice-over documentary, a state-of-the-union message in underplayed, Nixon speech rhythms".

While trying to balance an 'actor-centre historical approach' and the approach of Peter Hall and John Barton based on Kott's ideas, Robin Phillips's 1977 production at Stratford, Ontario, with Brian Bedford, presented an interesting interpretation. Richmond is portrayed as yet another schemer in this production instead of a hero (Aune 2006:39). Knowles (1984:2 of 8) adds that it was the most controversial aspect of the production. He said it was an "ironic comment on the political functions of pageantry and patriotism".

In the 1970s, cast members and audiences of British productions of *Richard III* were still reminded of Hitler and Stalin, despite some very innovative productions. RSC actors portraying Richard still struggled with the relevance of Hitler and other tyrants in their approach to the character (Aune 2006:39)

According to Aune (2006:41), it seems that to reinvent ‘Richard’s stage potential’, a figure “that could, at least for the moment, eclipse the image of the European black leather tyrant” was needed for the production to become a means of social or political criticism. She recognises that using figures like Hitler or Stalin established a bridge between the audience and the play, who had very little knowledge of the play. However, the problem is that such a production becomes uncritical and does not comment on current and recent events. With Ian McKellen’s portrayal of *Richard III* in the 1990 production by the Royal National Theatre, director Richard Eyre depended on the audience’s knowledge of European fascism, and by relying on this knowledge, he presented a play that ‘proposed a historical possibility’ instead of using simple history to contextualise the production (Aune 2006:42).

To Aune (2006:43), it is clear that the image of a ‘twentieth-century fascist dictator’ is needed to understand Richard’s character. This is also clear in productions that do not even attempt to ‘explicitly engage with fascist iconography. Audiences still seem to find references to dominating tyrants like Hitler’. She adds: “Associating a current public figure with Richard can do double work: connecting that figure with Richard as well as with villains of the recent past such as Hitler or Stalin”.

### **3. The South African *Richard III***

*Richard III* is rich in socio-political commentary that can still resonate with contemporary audiences, especially if the play is contextualised and one moves away from presenting historical plays in a historical setting. Following the above statement of Aune (2006:43), associating Richard with a current public figure will produce the desired effect. The play’s characters, by pure coincidence, resemble various political figures and parties found in Africa, more pertinently South Africa, in 2013. In fact, various political incidences in South Africa in the years leading up to 2013 could be linked to specific events in the play. All the major characters can be linked to various political parties, both opposing and ruling, or political figures, past and present.

For my concept, the *Battle of Tewkesbury*, the second last battle of the *Wars of the Roses*, resembles the end of Apartheid in South Africa and the new government that came into power. There is a resemblance between former President Nelson Mandela and his work to reconcile South Africa and the work of King Edward IV in the play. Richard’s character resembles the persons that succeeded Mandela and the ambition and corruption that followed. His absolute ambition, slyness, corruption, and manipulation of both people and systems reflect heavily on how the South African government ran the country at that point.

I cannot say that Richard represents one particular political figure, but rather that certain events in the play can be paralleled with Julius Malema (former president of the ANC Youth League), the former president Jacob Zuma and the ruling ANC party. According to Aune (2006:29–30), Shakespeare's *Richard III* was probably used as a warning, and possibly political critique, and a personal attack on a specific political figure during the Elizabethan and Jacobean reigns.

Staying true to this spirit, I decided to set the play in the future to serve as a critical warning of what can happen if the current corrupt officials are not kept in check. The events in *Richard III* reflect situations in South Africa in 2013 very accurately. It also critiques the past - a government that took power after apartheid, forgot about the people, and only served themselves and their hunger for 'absolute power'.

As Aune (2006:41) maintains, "[A] topical performance seeks out current analogues and uses the play to criticize, expose, or warn, not just about tyrants but about the circumstances that allowed their rise".

### **3.1 Political incidents in South Africa that influenced the concept**

#### **3.1.1 Use of Religion in political propaganda**

On 17 April 2011, Visvin Reddy, an ANC councillor, introduced the ANC candidate for ward 69 at a local community hall, proclaiming that "[i]f Jesus were here on election day, he would vote ANC". Sihile Zikalala, an ANC spokesperson, said people should not take the statement literally. What he meant was that "[s]uch a comment reflects a comparison; it's not saying we [the ANC] are Jesus". In a comment a few days later, Mr Visvin said that he did not say the ANC was Christ. According to him, the mandate of the ANC is the same as Christ's (Kubheka in *IOL News* 2011).

According to Anelisa Kubheka (*IOL News* 2011), it was not the first time the ANC used religion during political rallies. In February 2011, a crowd in Mthatha (a town in the Eastern Cape Province) was told by President Zuma that voting for the ANC would get them into heaven. Kubheka (*ibid*) quoted Mthatha as saying, "When you vote for the ANC, you are also choosing to go to heaven. When you don't vote for the ANC, you should know that you are choosing that man who carries a fork who cooks people". His spokesperson claimed he was speaking metaphorically.

In 2008 the premier for the Free State, Ace Magashule, claimed that, just like Jesus, President Zuma was suffering. "Jesus was persecuted. He was called names and betrayed. It's the same kind of suffering Zuma has had to bear recently, but he's still standing strong. He's not giving up" (Kubheka in *IOL News* 2011). In 2007, Zuma was indicted to stand trial on various counts of

racketeering, money laundering, corruption, and fraud in the High Court. He only appeared in court in August 2008.

### **3.1.2 The chant ‘Kill the boer, kill the farmer’ and farm murders.**

In the winter of 2002, struggling veterans against apartheid, government ministers and many ANC icons attended the funeral of the former ANC youth league president, Peter Mokaba at the University of the North in Mankweng outside Polokwane. When it was announced that his body had arrived at the stadium, the crowd spontaneously erupted in the chanting of the song “Kill the boer, kill the farmer” (Bloom in *Daily Maverick* 2010).

According to Bloom (in *Daily Maverick* 2010), Mokaba sang this refrain for the first time at the funeral of Chris Hani, who was assassinated in 1993. Chris Hani was a fierce opponent of apartheid and was the leader of the ANC’s armed wing. The song expressed the youth league’s anger towards Hani’s murder by right-wing whites at the funeral. After the dismantling of apartheid, due to the efforts of former President Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a race war was averted. Nevertheless, nine years later, at the time of Mokaba’s funeral, there is still a community of South Africans that feel targeted and killed because of the colour of their skin. This time, however, the white farmers have the numbers to back it up.

Bloom reported (in *Daily Maverick* 2010) that Adriana Stuijt, a Dutch journalist, and former anti-apartheid activist, was quoted saying: “Why has the South African farmer become the world’s most endangered species? Why are South Africa’s few remaining commercial farmers now most at risk of being murdered in the whole world?”.

Eight years later, for no reason, the president of the ANC youth league, Julius Malema, again started using the slogan ‘Kill the boer, kill the farmer’. On Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2010, the South Gauteng High Court ruled that the phrase and song were now unconstitutional and amounted to hate speech (Bloom in *Daily Maverick* 2010).

According to Adriana Stuijt (in *Digital Journal* 2009), 3 037 white South African farmers were killed between 1994 (the end of apartheid) and 2009. In a letter titled ‘Farm attacks in South Africa’ (*News 24* 2012), the author, using the profile name ‘SA citizen’, stated the following statistics:

- since 2004, 3158 farmers out of the 35 000 commercial farms operating in South Africa, have been brutally murdered;
- commercial farming in SA employs 10 % of the total workforce; and

- some reports indicate that farmers are killed at a rate of 330 - 100 000 people annually.

In a book titled *Treurgrond: Die realiteit van plaasaanvalle, 1990 tot 2012* [Treurgrond (Mourning ground): The reality of farm attacks, 1990 to 2012], published by Kraal Publishers (Vicus Bürger in *Volksblad* 2013), the following statistics are given regarding farm attacks between 1990 and 2012:

- 3319 farm attacks have been recorded;
- the average age of the victims: 53 years;
- 5818 victims were recorded in the book; and
- 1610 murders were recorded between 1990 and 2012.

Interestingly, the attacks increased drastically in 2008 and escalated after 2010, which coincided with the singing of the song ‘Kill the boer, kill the farmer’ by ANC youth league president Julius Malema in 2010 (Vicus Bürger in *Volksblad* 2013).

### **3.1.3 ESKOM’s problem with supplying sufficient electricity for the country.**

In 2007 South Africa experienced widespread rolling blackouts caused by a serious supply shortfall. In a report titled *ESKOM’s power crisis: reasons, impacts and possible solutions*, Francois Caldo discusses several reasons for ESKOM’s experiencing a power crisis.

1. From 1996 to 2007, there was a decline in the electricity supply to the country and an increase in the electricity supply to the international sector.
2. A White Paper of 1998 stated that South Africa would run out of electricity by 2007. In 1998 ESKOM wanted to start building new power stations, but because the government wanted to privatise ESKOM, the building was stopped, and the budget was denied. Even in 2003, the former Minister of Energy, Phumzile Nlambo-Ngcuka, stated that no power crises were looming.
3. In 2004 South Africa’s economy grew faster than expected, and this caused an increase in electricity demand.
4. In 2008 ESKOM admitted they had a severe skills shortage. Its workforce of 60 000 dropped to half of that. Affirmative action also contributed to this decrease - many workers with years of experience left ESKOM, as there was no future for them in the company.
5. At the beginning of 2006, the trade union Solidarity sent a survey they conducted among their ESKOM members to the government. The survey concluded that “ageing and badly maintained power stations and a major skill shortage would lead to a power crisis in the next few years”.

6. ESKOM's Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policy can also be added to the causes of the South African power crisis. The Black-owned coal mines are situated far away from the power stations, resulting in delays in coal delivery. Some of the power stations are low on stock.
7. Not only is the ESKOM's BEE policy a cause in low coal stocks, but also its 2001 decision to sell off most of its stockpile, wanting to reduce working capital and the cost of storing coal. It was also decided not to renew long-term contracts for coal supply by mining houses, but to restrict the bulk of their coal to be supplied by BEE companies.

The impact of this power crisis and the subsequent rolling blackouts had a significant effect on the economy of South Africa. The crisis affected not only economic growth, but also negatively influenced the unemployment targets. According to the report, South Africa's economy lost millions of rands every day. The mining industry confirmed that they estimated their losses at R250 million per day. According to David Roodt, chief economist of the Efficient Group, the potential tax revenue losses for South Africa are about R5,9 billion. He also concluded that the daily loss for SA's economy amounted up to R1,9 billion (Calldo 2008:14–15).

Calldo (2008:16) sums up the impact of the power crisis as follows:

1. a negative impact on the economy of South Africa;
2. job losses are eminent;
3. potential losses in tax revenue;
4. possibility of companies closing down;
5. a decline in foreign investment.

## **3.2 Strikes by transport and mine workers.**

### **3.2.1 August 2012: The Marikana Massacre.**

After investigating the cause of the Marikana Massacre, named so by the press, Jared Sacks, a reporter for the *Daily Maverick* (2012), reported that most people in the community of Wonderkop blamed the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) for starting the violence. It is important to note that there are two mining unions: NUM, which is linked with the ruling ANC party, and their upcoming rival the apolitical and non-communist union Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU).

On Wednesday, 8 August 2012, miners from various Lonmin mines demanded a significant salary increase; however, NUM leaders refused to support the mineworker's demands. The mineworkers

then decided to speak directly to the Lonmin management. On Friday, 10 August, the mineworkers marched to the mine management offices, where management told them to go back to the NUM leadership and voice their grievances there. After this meeting, the NUM leadership reprimanded the workers, informing them that they will get nowhere if they do not follow the proper channels established by their union. As a result of this, 3 000 workers went on strike, refusing to go to work that evening (Sacks in *Daily Maverick* 2012).

On 11 August 2012, the mineworkers decided to present the NUM leaders with a memorandum stating that they demanded NUM to represent them in their call for a substantial salary increase. An AMCU member recalled that this protest comprised NUM members who rebelled against their union leaders. The NUM's main office, situated in Wonderboom, is shared by the local ANC branch. According to eyewitnesses, the 'top five' NUM leaders and other people came out of the office and started shooting at the procession, about 100 - 150 metres away. The protesters scattered and re-assembled at Lonmin's football stadium. There they decided to gather on public land, a small hillside between Wonderkop, Marikana and other various Lonmin mines. The shooting resulted in the deaths of two mineworkers (Sacks in *Daily Maverick* 2012).

Sacks (in *Daily Maverick* 2012) asked several people when and why the mineworkers armed themselves with traditional weapons. Everyone informed him that the workers armed themselves for self-defence after NUM leaders had shot at them. It became clear that the protest was peaceful and non-violent and that the protesters were unarmed. Leaders from the South African National Civic Organisation, aligned with the ANC, confirmed that the workers only armed themselves after the shooting.

Kwanele Sosibo reported (in *Mail and Guardian* 2012) that ten people were killed from 10 - 16 August, two of whom were security guards for the mine and two police officers. Many workers were interviewed by the *Mail and Guardian*, and all of them claimed that this caused them to arm themselves.

On 16 August 2012, police opened fire on the strikers, killing 34 and injuring another 78. According to the police, they were attacked by the armed mineworkers, and according to the South African Police Service advocate, Ishmael Semenya, they have proof "that some protesters had wanted a 'bloodbath', and that police had set out to perform to the best of their abilities in a difficult situation" (Sosibo in *Mail and Guardian* 2012).

In his blog on the *Mail and Guardian* website, Brent Meersen (in *Mail and Guardian* 2012) asked whether South Africa was still the same after the Marikana Massacre? He was in Rome at the time of this event and only watched it on the news. To him it felt as if the country had turned into Syria. He claimed that South Africa had a political economy that was not only spreading inequality but also intensifying it. Meersen (2012) is of the opinion that there were two significant consequences to this: a “system that can only be maintained through state violence” and also “extreme politics [that] will continue to gain traction”.

Meersen (in *Mail and Guardian* 2012) warned that South Africa was heading for a brutal future unless businesses and the government become more responsive. For him, the Marikana Massacre put the country on a road similar to the road the country was on during apartheid.

Lynley Donnelly reported (in *Mail and Guardian* 2012) that Enoch Godongwana, Deputy Minister of Economic Development, told *Bloomberg News*, that South Africa would face revolution unless radical political transformation took place. Statistics South Africa released the quarterly employment survey, indicating that 15 000 jobs were lost due to labour unrest in the mining sector.

### **3.2.2 September 2012: Violent strikes by transport workers**

On 24 September 2012 wage disputes ignited a major strike in the freight transport sector. The strikes began after employers and unions could not reach an agreement on wage increases. The Road Freight Employers Association (RFEA) proposed a wage increase of 8,5%, while the workers demanded a 12% increase<sup>55</sup> (SAPA in *news24.com* 2012a).

Natasha Marrian (in *Business Day Live* 2012) reported that “[T]he strike was characterised by violence and intimidation of non-striking workers and had hit fuel, grocery and fresh produce deliveries in South Africa and even in Zimbabwe”. SAPA confirmed (in *news24.com* 2012b) that the strikes became so violent that the Labour Court had to issue an interdict on 28 September. Striking truck drivers in Pinetown set a truck on fire. On 26 September, a truck was stoned by protesters in Kempton Park. In Germiston, protesters stopped a truck, assaulted the occupants, and set the truck alight. Two of the three assistants were hospitalised after being attacked by the protesters.

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<sup>55</sup> This is very similar to the demands made the previous month by mine workers that resulted in what was called the Marikana Massacre.

After three weeks, the then Labour Minister, Mildred Oliphant, personally intervened to end the damaging strike by drawing attention to its effect on the public. After the minister's intervention, Mr Mkhize, Executive Director of the National Economic Development & Labour Council, made the following statement: "The strike was beginning to have a negative impact, not only on the economy but also on the public at large and [the Minister] became worried that, whilst the right to strike is enshrined in the constitution, the exercise thereof should be done responsibly". The RFEA reported that the strikes, which ended on 12 October, cost R1.2 billion a week. It also cost workers R276 million in weekly wages (Marrian in *Business Day Live* 2012).

Journalist Gary Kendall (in *Mail and Guardian* 2012), reporting on the strikes by transport workers, believed South Africa was "on the precipice of serious societal breakdown". This came after the Marikana Massacre of August 2012. He acknowledged that the Marikana Massacre was a tragic event in its own right but may prove to be 'the spark that lit the fuse' for this breakdown of society. Gary Kendall painted a vivid picture of what might happen if South Africa got to a point where we had minimal fuel due to these strikes.

If the fuel supply, and by that Gary meant the distribution and the manufacturing thereof, lessened, motorists would choose to fill up their vehicles out of panic. This would cause fuel stations to run dry. The effect would be: supermarkets running out of stock, with no way to replenish it; resultant severe food shortages; factories closing down; and production coming to a halt with companies being unable to obtain raw material or ship out their inventories; (Kendall in *Mail and Guardian* 2012).

In addition, ATMs and banks would run out of cash; emergency services would no longer be able to respond to emergencies, as violence and desperation would spread; hospitals would be forced to cancel operations and would only be able to do the most critical operations as remote doctors and nurses would not be able to get to their place of work; burials would be postponed, and that would cause bodies to pile up in the morgues; in essence, the country would come to a standstill (Kendall in *Mail and Guardian* 2012).

Kendall (in *Mail and Guardian* 2012) admitted that it sounded 'fantastical' but reminded his readers of what happened in the UK in 2000 with the protest of road hauliers over the high diesel prices. According to him, the world's fourth-largest economy unravelled within days.

Peter Hetherington and David Ward (in *The Guardian* 2000) reported that Britain faced a fuel shortage on Sunday, 10 September 2000. Transporters and farmers protested at refineries and distribution depots, causing a halt in deliveries. Many parts of the country were affected. The protesting involved up to 80 rolling roadblocks on the A1 in Northumberland and the A55 in North Wales. These slow-moving convoys of trucks and tractors caused significant chaos. As fuel supplies decreased, queues formed at petrol stations due to panic buying. Several retailers reported that a week's fuel supply was sold in just a weekend. In North Wales and North West England, more than 100 filling stations ran dry - even the Liverpool Airport ran out of fuel.

Two days later, on 12 September, as many as 3 000 filling stations ran dry and had to close. The entire country started feeling the pressure. Panic buying continued, and it was estimated that the country would run out of fuel within 48 hours (in *BBC News* 2000a).

The government received special permission from the Privy Council and the Queen to make sure that 'priority users', such as health services, schools and public transport, received fuel. It was just not clear when they were going to bring it into effect. Non-emergency operations were cancelled all over Britain, and public transport started to experience the fuel crisis, and South West Trains had to reduce services in order to conserve fuel (in *BBC News* 2000a).

On 14 September, the protest leaders decided to call off the blockades at major refineries. Their spokesperson said that they were "backing down in the interests of the general public". He also warned the government that if they did not look into the matter of the extreme fuel increase, the protests and blockades at major refineries would continue (in *BBC News* 2000b). The Institute of Directors (IoD) estimated that the protests and blockades cost business £1 billion (in *BBC News* 2000c).

The events mentioned above are a few examples of riots, strikes and other political turmoil between 2007 and 2013. They are all seemingly unrelated, but once their impacts are calculated, it is clear that the fact that civil war has not broken out, is nothing short of a miracle. It is against this background that the production of *Richard III* was contextualised.

## 4. Concept

### 4.1 The modern adaptation of *Richard III*

I created a contextualised adaptation of *Richard III* in modern English, set in a 'post-apocalyptic' South Africa in 2035. The play's premise is that civil war broke out in South Africa, and that the

York and Lancaster families now occupy the Free State province with their followers. After the war, the victorious York dynasty settled in Bloemfontein, from where King Edward IV ruled the country. I decided to keep the governing of the ‘new society’ monarchical. No elections were held, and it would make sense that some form of leader would have been appointed by the people - a king, as it were.

Bloemfontein is located in central South Africa, making it an ideal location to rule a country, and it is also the judicial capital of South Africa. Any point in South Africa is relatively easy to travel to, and as Bloemfontein is called the ‘City of Roses’, it is ideal as a setting for the *Wars of the Roses*. A prominent landmark in Bloemfontein is Naval Hill. From there, one has a 360-degree view of Bloemfontein, making it the perfect and most logical place for a settlement - easily defensible with only one access road.

With all these major political events in South Africa over the past few years, I often wondered what would happen if these incidents got out of hand. What would happen in South Africa? The people of this country are tired of the government and the way the country is run. People will inevitably start to protest and revolt. However, my question in 2013 was: Will we be better off if civil war were to break out, or would we eventually be where we were then? It was almost 20 years after the abolishment of apartheid, and yet again, we found ourselves on the same precipice, where the people felt they were being violated and lied to.

I set the play in the future after the end of a civil war, but the situations in the play were representative of current events in South Africa. Hopefully, the production served as a warning that we, as a country, were heading towards a civil war - different societal structures vs the government.

The concept was influenced by the events mentioned above in South Africa leading up to 2013. As part of the concept, the adaptation also includes the queer interpretation of *Richard III* where the characters of Richard and Tyrrel are in a relationship. During the synopsis, excerpts and images from the production are provided in a table, explaining the events or moments between Richard and Tyrrel in the right-hand column. There are also comments on the actors’ performance to indicate their relationship. This interpretation from a queer perspective is based on the *queer cues* identified in Chapter 1.

## 5. Synopsis

The following is a synopsis of the adaptation and not the original work by Shakespeare.

### 5.1 Act 1, Scene 1 (outside in a street - midday)

Richard opens the play by addressing a crowd<sup>56</sup>:



*Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;*  
and all the clouds that were hanging over our family have sunk back into the sea. On our heads we carry victorious wreaths, our battered weapons are hung up as memorials, great chaos has been changed to pleasant greetings, grim marches to delightful music. The terrible war is over and now there is peace!!

While Richard addresses the crowd, Tyrrel stands to one side, watching the crowd (far left, leaning against the wall).

He then addresses the actual audience, not the *onstage audience*, in a spotlight, telling them he is disgusted by this peacetime, not being able to whore around like the other men because of his deformity. Using the lines from the original script, he states that since he cannot be a lover, he will be a villain<sup>57</sup>.

<sup>56</sup> This contextualises the performance for the audience.

<sup>57</sup> This introduces the true Richard to the audience.



*crowd freezes*  
*follow-spot on **RICHARD** and **TYRREL***

Richard addresses the actual audience, not the *onstage audience*.

*(speaks to **AUDIENCE**)*

Instead of fighting with the Lancaster bastards, they spend all night fucking anything with a pulse. ... I hate fucking woman! They hate fucking me. I'm not made to be a seducer. I am *Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time Into this breathing world scarce half made up*, even the dogs bark when I limp by. *(pause)*

Richard outright states to the audience that he hates women, a setup for revealing his relationship with Tyrrel.

*crowd disperse in darkness*

*And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover  
 To entertain these fair well-spoken days,  
 I am determined to prove a villain  
 And hate the idle pleasures of these days.*

He continues by talking to Tyrrel, his companion<sup>58</sup>, telling him how he schemed to make his brother Edward, the king, suspicious of his younger brother, Clarence<sup>59</sup>, by telling him about a prophecy that 'C' will kill Edward's children.

<sup>58</sup> Their relationship is introduced to the audience.

<sup>59</sup> For the adaptation I decided to keep the original characters' titles and use them as the characters' names, e.g. George, Duke of Clarence is called Clarence, Earl Rivers is called Rivers, etc.



*general lights on stage*

(to **TYRREL**)

You can see it, can't you? I've already set the wheels in motion. Started the whole shebang, oh it's got everything ... lies, drunken prophecies, and stories about dreams. And all of this will turn my brothers Clarence and Edward against each other. If King Ed is as gullible as we think is, then sweet, sweet Clarence, fucking overachieving George Clarence York, my wonderful brother, will be locked away in prison, for a long long time because someone told someone - let's not go into details - about a prophecy that "C" will murder Edward's children.

Richard sits between Tyrrel's legs while Tyrrel peels an apple. The image created is Richard protected/watched over by a protector, which in this case is his lover. They are at ease with each other, and Tyrrel playing with the knife above Richard's head shows Richard's trust in Tyrrel. There is also a sense of danger from both of them. At some point, Tyrrel feeds Richard a piece of apple.

Clarence (Richard's brother) enters with armed guards. He tells Richard that the king has heard a prophecy that 'C' will murder his children, and because his name begins with a 'C', Edward has decided to lock him up. Richard tells him that Queen Elizabeth is to blame for that and was also responsible for Hastings's arrest, but that Hastings has just been released from prison. Richard promises Clarence that he will attempt to get him out of jail, 'lying if I have to'. After Clarence is escorted off stage, Richard tells Tyrrel that he will ensure that Clarence's 'soul floats up to heaven very soon' if heaven will accept anything from him.

Hastings passes by, and Richard asks if he picked up some 'juicy bits' from the guards. Hastings shares that he heard the king's leg wound is worsening (*owing to a fungal infection*<sup>60</sup>) and is likely to succumb to the injury. When Hastings leaves, Richard is delighted about Edward's illness but hopes that Edward does not die before Clarence is dead. After that, if Edward does not die of natural causes, Richard will have to kill him. Richard informs Tyrrel of his next step to gain power: he will marry Lady Anne, widow of Edward [*known in history as Edward of Westminster*], son of King Henry VI.

<sup>60</sup> This type of injury can prove to be fatal if not properly treated and in a post-apocalyptic world there would be limited medical supplies, especially proper antifungal treatments.



(to **TYRREL**)

I honestly hope Edward fucking dies, because if he doesn't, I'll have to kill him myself, but not before Clarence is dead. I'll have to go and see him and kiss a little ass and make sure that the sanctimonious prick hates Clarence more than he does at the moment. If my plan works, Clarence doesn't have another day to live. Then the big cahuna upstairs is free to call King Edward to heaven, too - or I'll do it - and then I can rule! And to seal the deal, I'll marry Anne. So what if I killed her fucktard of a husband and his father. The best way to make up for it is to become what she's lost: a husband. Not because I love her, that's for-fucking-sure, Christ, but because I'll get something out of it. But Clarence is still alive and Edward is not only alive, he's king. Only when they're dead can I start enjoying myself. Let's go!

line 163

Richard shows affection to Tyrrel, acknowledging him as his companion. I wanted to show the audience that Richard and Tyrrel were in a relationship. I had Richard stand next to Tyrrel, touching his face.

Richard tells Tyrrel that he will marry Anne, not out of love but to secure the throne.

He then jumps onto Tyrrel's back, and they exit. This showed playfulness and trust between them.

## 5.2 Act 1, Scene 2 (outside in the street - early morning)

Lady Anne is on her way with Edward's body so that he can be buried<sup>61</sup>. She curses Richard for killing her husband and making her a widow at such a young age. Richard and Tyrrel hold up the procession. Anne accuses Richard of killing her husband and his father, King Henry VI, but Richard denies these accusations. Anne calls him a liar and tells him that Queen Margaret witnessed him kill Edward. Richard then tells her he would have killed the whole world for one hour with her. She does not want to believe him. He starts to cry, telling her that her sorrow makes her even more

<sup>61</sup> In the original script Anne buries King Henry's corpse but I decided to change it to Edward's corpse to make the burial more personal to Anne.

beautiful, which is why he is crying. Coming across as very sincere, he puts a gun in her hand and tells her to shoot him; he deserves nothing less after killing her husband and King Henry VI, but adds that her beauty compelled him to do it. When she hesitates, he tells her that she has to choose: kill him or marry him. Anne, fascinated by Richard's perverse honesty, cannot bring herself to kill him. Taking this hesitation as a positive sign, he declares his love for her and gives her his ring. Anne says she will take the ring but does not promise him anything in return. He asks her to wait for him at his compound. To gain her forgiveness, he asks her if he can take care of the burial. After Anne leaves, a guard asks Richard if they should take the body to the cemetery, but Richard answers that they should burn the body, as only kings and queens are buried <sup>62</sup>.

### **5.3 Act 1, Scene 3<sup>63</sup> (outside in street - late afternoon)**

King Edward enters with Hastings<sup>64</sup>. Edward tells Hastings to stop his animosity towards Queen Elizabeth and her brother, Rivers. Elizabeth and Rivers enter, and Edward tells them the same. Neither Hastings nor Rivers wants to reconcile. Hastings believes that Rivers should not be part of the council. Edward threatens to remove Hastings from the council if he does not change his mind. When asked, Rivers remarks that Richard hates him for the same reason and that it may be best to resign from the council. Kind Edward will not allow this and promises to speak to Richard. Richard enters, along with Tyrrel. Edward asks Richard to accompany him; he wants to talk to him<sup>65</sup>. Queen Elizabeth tries to convince Hastings and Rivers to reconcile. She fears her husband, King Edward, will die owing to his wound and that her son, young Edward, is too young to rule. Thus, in the case of a divided council and if King Edward passes away, the throne will go to Richard, who will rule as a proxy until Edward is old enough.

Richard enters, accusing them of complaining to the king that he (Richard) does not like any of them. Queen Elizabeth defends herself by saying the king noticed his hostility towards them. Richard accuses her of being instrumental in Clarence's arrest and Hastings's incarceration. She denies it, stating that she repeatedly pleaded Clarence's case with Edward.

Queen Margaret enters unseen while Richard and Elizabeth argue. She comments to herself how Richard is responsible for her suffering by killing her husband (King Henry VI) and son (Edward of Westminster) and condemning him for it. As Richard and Elizabeth's fight reaches a peak, Margaret

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<sup>62</sup> The premise here is that the bodies of the dead are burned and only people of status are buried.

<sup>63</sup> The characters of Dorset and Gray are not in the adaptation.

<sup>64</sup> I decided to introduce King Edward here - it is also a new scene, giving Hastings motivation for hating Rivers.

<sup>65</sup> I introduced this to motivate Richard's accusations towards Elizabeth and Rivers later in the scene.

steps out of hiding, and accuses Richard and Elizabeth of her downfall. She adds that Elizabeth is enjoying the high life she is supposed to have, that Richard owes her a husband and a son, and that the rest of them owe her allegiance. Margaret curses everyone for having a part in killing her husband and son. She concludes by cursing Richard and warns everyone that he will come to hate them all as they will come to hate him, and God will come to hate them.



**QUEEN MARGARET**

*(She moves forward so that everyone can see her.)*

Listen to me, you thieves. You're arguing over what doesn't belong to you - you stole it from me! *(to RICHARD)* Look at me when I'm talking to you!

**RICHARD**

Ugly, wrinkled old fucking witch, what are you doing here? I thought you were exiled?

**QUEEN MARGARET**

You, Richard, owe me a husband and a son. The rest of you owe me a kingdom. And all of you owe me allegiance. The pain that I feel actually belongs to you, and the high life you're enjoying belongs to me. You stole it from me.

[...]

*line 577*

*line 633*

She adds that Elizabeth is enjoying the high life she is supposed to have. As this adaptation also addresses socio-political issues, Margaret represents the old HNP<sup>66</sup>, with the orange and blue in her costume. Her outburst and curse characterise the white Afrikaner's animosity towards the government of the time. Within the South African context, the reverse casting is a subtle nuance for the informed and open-minded audience member. Due to the complexity of the South African reality, it was decided not to explore this aspect in further detail.

<sup>66</sup> The HNP, known as the Herstigte Nasionale Party (Reconstituted National Party), was founded in 1969 as a far-right breakaway faction of South Africa's old National Party (NP). The HNP follows ideologies such as Afrikaner nationalism, Apartheid, White Supremacy and Anti-communism. Unlike other sections that split from the National Party, this party is still operational but has little political clout.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

What? And leave you out? You deformed prematurely born, evil birth defect. If heaven has any plagues beyond what I can drum up, let it wait until your sins are piled up high and then hurl them down on you. May conscience constantly eat away at your soul! May you suspect your true friends of being traitors and take the worst traitors as your closest friends. You're an insult to your mother's womb; a hated disgrace to your father's sperm, you disgusting –

**RICHARD**

Margaret.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Let me finish my curse.

**RICHARD**

I've finished it for you, and it ends in 'Margaret'.

After she leaves, Catesby enters, informing them that the king has called a council meeting and orders them to join him. Once everyone leaves, Richard and Tyrrel are alone.

**RICHARD**

(turn to **TYRREL**) Tyrrel! My brother just gave me this pardon. It's for Clarence's release. Things are not going according to our plan. I think you know what to do.

**TYRREL**

(smiles) I just need to get into his cell.

line 815

In the original script, Richard sent two murderers. This is the first murder Tyrrel commits for Richard.

**RICHARD**

Here, use this warrant to get into his cell ... (*he hands over the warrant*) ... but be discreet. Kill him quickly, and whatever you do, don't let him plead for his life. Clarence is a good talker and you might feel sorry for him if you let him get started.

**TYRREL**

We're not going to stand around and chit-chat. (*Richard laughs*)

From the tone of their dialogue, it is clear they are working together; very few words are needed. They embrace or hold each other in these moments.

**5.4 Act 1, Scene 4 (inside prison - the same day, evening)**

Clarence wakes up from a nightmare, and when asked, he tells the other prisoners about his nightmare<sup>67</sup>. He dreamed that Richard had broken him out of prison, and they were on a boat. The boat hit a rock, and Richard seemed to stumble, but when Clarence tried to help him, Richard pushed him overboard. Clarence furthermore dreamed that he was dead and in hell. The ghost of King Henry VI greeted him, saying: 'What terrible punishment can this dark realm devise for the oath-breaker Clarence?' Then the ghost of King Henry VI's son Edward appeared, calling all demons to grab him and torment him. That was when he woke up. He comments that everything he did, he did for his brother Edward, but he is repaid by being thrown into jail. He tries to go back to sleep.

Tyrrel and a murderer, who turns out to be Tyrrel's cousin, arrive and hand over the warrant that Richard gave them.

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<sup>67</sup> I've decided to have Clarence talk to fellow inmates rather than Brakenbury.



**(left image)**

**BRAKENBURY**

So I'm ordered to give Clarence to you. I won't ask why. I'd rather not know. Here are the keys, and there he is. *(he hands them the keys)* I'll go to the king to let him know I've handed my prisoner over to you.

**TYRREL**

You may, sir. That's a good idea. Goodbye.

*BRAKENBURY turns to exit. TYRREL kills him.*

*TYRREL looks at CLARENCE sleeping, aims gun at him*

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

What are you doing? Are you going to kill him in his sleep?

*line 815*

Tyrrel kills Brakenbury to keep her from informing King Edward.

**(right image)**

**CLARENCE**

*(still kneeling now in front of 2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER)* Don't lie about my brother. He loves me.

**TYRREL**

*(behind CLARENCE who doesn't see him)* Richard loved you enough to send us to kill you.<sup>68</sup> *(he shoots him - execution style)*<sup>69</sup>

*silence*

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

*(gets up)* What the fuck cousin, I was just starting to enjoy myself. I thought this one was mine.

*TYRREL shoots him and exits*

*line 1073*

Tyrrel replies that Richard has sent them to kill, and shoots Clarence; he then shoots the murderer, his cousin.

Tyrrel is so devoted to Richard as a lover that he will go so far as to kill his cousin to leave no witness of the murder.

<sup>68</sup> It symbolises how the ANC forced Thabo Mbeki to resign as South Africa's president in 2008.

<sup>69</sup> In the original script Clarence is beaten to death and drowned in a barrel of wine; in the adaptation Clarence is killed execution style, symbolising the way many farm killings are done in South Africa.

## 5.5 Act 2, Scene 1<sup>70</sup> (outside in street - the same evening)

Edward, his whole family<sup>71</sup> and the rest of the council<sup>72</sup> are seated at a table, toasting the success of their peace negotiations. Edwards says that there has been too much quarrelling among all the factions. He insists that everyone apologises and makes peace. He informs them that he has sent a pardon to jail to release Clarence. Promising to forget their conflicts, both Buckingham and Hastings make peace with Queen Elizabeth and her brother Rivers.

Richard enters, apologising for being late. The king informs him that they have managed to re-unite the council. Slightly taken aback, Richard congratulates the king on his success and gives a speech in which he apologises for any previous hostility toward Buckingham, Hastings, Queen Elizabeth, and Rivers. He states he no longer has time for games since he is a husband<sup>73</sup>.

But when Elizabeth asks King Edward to forgive Clarence, Richard reacts as if Elizabeth is deliberately making fun of his brother's passing. He informs everyone that Clarence is dead and manipulates Edward into feeling guilty for condemning Clarence to death, telling him that the pardon did not make it in time. Edward blames himself for his brother's death and then angrily blames the others for not defending Clarence. Edward, overwhelmed with anger, leaves to investigate his brother's death.

Richard indicates<sup>74</sup> to Tyrrel to follow them and then points out to his mother and Buckingham that Rivers and Elizabeth looked quite guilty when he mentioned Clarence's death. He and Buckingham follow Edward and leave the Duchess<sup>75</sup>, his mother, behind.

While the Duchess is mourning the death of her son, Clarence, a gunshot is heard. Elizabeth storms in, telling her that a thief has attacked them and that Edward is murdered. Buckingham and Richard run in, stating that they chased after the attacker, but he got away. Rivers tells Elizabeth that young Edward should be brought back and crowned as king. Buckingham agrees, but states that only a few men should go, as their peace agreement is new and they might just continue the quarrelling. Tyrrel enters and nods to Richard. It is apparent that he was the attacker, ordered by Richard to kill the

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<sup>70</sup> A combination of scenes 1 & 2 of the original script; Clarence's children are cut from the adaptation.

<sup>71</sup> Including the Duchess, who doesn't appear in the original script.

<sup>72</sup> Even though the ruling system is monarchical, I changed the nobles to council members who rule with King Edward - resembling a president and his ministers.

<sup>73</sup> I included it to inform the audience that Richard is now married to Lady Anne.

<sup>74</sup> Signalling Tyrrel to follow and kill Edward as planned.

<sup>75</sup> called Dutches as a personal pronoun and not a title.

king<sup>76</sup>. Richard tells Rivers and Hastings that they should go and discuss who should go and fetch young Edward under the guidance of Elizabeth and the Duchess. Everyone leaves, and Buckingham suggests to Richard that they should be the ones to go and fetch Edward, excluding Rivers. Rivers enters and confronts Richard, saying that the attacker looked very much like his companion, Tyrrel. Richard kills Rivers<sup>77</sup> and orders Tyrrel to get rid of the body.



*(RIVERS returns.)*

**RIVERS**

Richard, I just remembered something. That attacker looked very familiar.

**RICHARD**

He did?

**RIVERS**

He looked very much like your companion Tyrrel.

*(TYRREL, who was hidden from sight, creeps up from behind RIVERS)*

**RICHARD**

I'll have to look into it ... but rest assured ... you are not fucking mistaken.

*While RICHARD is speaking, he moves closer to RIVERS and stabs him in the back with TYRREL close by*

*(to TYRREL)* Make sure his body is not found, and don't fuck up this time.

Richard stabbing Rivers suggests Richard's devotion to his lover, Tyrrel. He could have denied everything and accused Tyrrel of working on his own.

<sup>76</sup> I've decided to have Richard kill Edward and Rivers, as it demonstrates Richard's immorality and his corrupt nature, and shows that he will stop at nothing to get into power.

<sup>77</sup> I've decided to move Rivers's death here, seeing that the scene in Act 3 Scene 3 is very short and could delay the pace of the play.

## **5.6 Act 2, Scene 2<sup>78</sup> (outside in street - the next day, early morning)**

Three ordinary citizens in the compound share the news of King Edward's death. One is optimistic about the future, saying that Edward's son will rule while the others are worried. They insist that the king's son, young Prince Edward, is still too young to reign. They state that the two sides of his family - Elizabeth's and his uncle Richard - are locked in a power struggle. Furthermore, they see Richard as dangerous, cunning, and thirsty for power. They talk about the events that led to the civil<sup>79</sup> war and that they were under the impression that the end of the civil war meant a new beginning for the country<sup>80</sup>. But now that the king is dead, things will get worse again. Two of them decide to leave the compound.

## **5.7 Act 3, Scene 1<sup>81</sup> (outside in street - Elizabeth and party on the bridge - Richard and party in the street - evening of the same day)**

Elizabeth is looking for her brother. Stanley comes in and informs her that Richard has killed Rivers. Elizabeth and the Duchess realise that this news probably means the beginning of the end for Elizabeth's family. She is expecting her son to arrive the next day, but now fears for his life. The Archbishop informs her that he will be safe, as Richard needs him alive to rule as a proxy<sup>82</sup>; instead, *her* life is in danger. Richard would want her dead to have total control over young Edward. The Archbishop tells her that he will hide her from Richard and when the time is ripe, they will launch a mission to rescue young Edward<sup>83</sup>.

At this moment young Edward arrives, escorted by Richard and Buckingham. Young Edward wants to know what happened to his uncle Rivers and his mother, and why he was fetched a day early. Richard informs him that his uncle Rivers is a traitor and conspired to take the throne from him. When young Edward enquires about his mother, Buckingham tells him that she is in the church mourning his father's death. When he insists on seeing her, Richard tells him that she doesn't know he arrived a day earlier - he thought they could surprise her. He must first take his things to a room they have prepared for him in the guards' quarters in the jail. Richard insists that he should stay there

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<sup>78</sup> Scene 3 in the original script with more dialogue added.

<sup>79</sup> They refer to the Marikana Massacre and the striking workers in South Africa's mining, agricultural and transport sectors.

<sup>80</sup> It depicts the joy many South Africans experienced at the demise of apartheid, and now the disappointment in our current situation and government.

<sup>81</sup> This scene is a combination of Act 2, scene 4 and Act 3, scene 1 in the original script. The scenes are dramatised at the same time to build tension - Elizabeth is expecting her son to arrive the next day while in the meantime he is already there.

<sup>82</sup> The modern equivalent of the English Lord Protector.

<sup>83</sup> In the original script Elizabeth fears for her son's life and claims sanctuary in the church. In a modern context it is irrelevant, so I've changed it that *her* life is in danger, seeing that Richard would benefit from her death.

until his coronation to ensure that he would be safe. When young Edward leaves, Tyrrel, whom Richard ordered to ensure that young Edward doesn't leave, escorts him.

Richard and Buckingham speak to Catesby<sup>84</sup> about their plans to get Richard on the throne. Buckingham asks Catesby whether he thinks Hastings and Stanley can be relied on to help Richard get the throne. Catesby believes that Hastings loved King Edward so much that he would never support Richard in taking the crown from the rightful prince and that Stanley will follow Hastings. Buckingham and Richard order Catesby to go to Hastings and subtly find out if he will support Richard's plans. Richard adds that Catesby should tell Hastings that Rivers is dead; this news, he believes, should satisfy Hastings. After Catesby leaves, Buckingham asks Richard what they will do if Hastings refuses to support them. Richard answers that they will kill him. Excited about their plans, Richard promises Buckingham a claim on all of his brother's possessions once he is king.



*CATESBY exits.*

**BUCKINGHAM**

Now, what are we going to do if we find that Hastings won't go along with our plans?

Richard and Tyrrel are now open about their relationship, with Tyrrel always physically holding Richard. There were a few reasons for doing that: the obvious one being that they are lovers, but, more importantly, that Tyrrel becomes Richard's 'bodyguard', always protecting him. Having Tyrrel holding Richard in conversations shows his protectiveness over Richard and serves

<sup>84</sup> In the adaptation the character of Catesby is changed from a noble to an employer of Hastings who then changes sides to work for Richard.

**RICHARD**

Kill him, and when I'm king, you can claim all my brother's possessions.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Thank you, I will not let you down.

**RICHARD**

Come, there is a lot of planning that still needs to be done.

*They exit.*

as a warning that it would not be that easy to get at Richard.

**5.8 Act 3, Scene 2<sup>85</sup> (outside in street - the next day, early morning)**

Hastings is busy preparing for the coronation meeting. Catesby enters to determine Hastings's feelings about Richard's scheme to become king. However, when Catesby brings up the idea that Richard considers taking the crown instead of young Edward, Hastings declares that he would rather die than support Richard. Catesby informs him of Rivers' death. Hastings rejoices in Rivers' death, but declares that he will never support Richard. Stanley arrives and tells Hastings that he has a bad feeling about Richard and all the separate meetings lined up. Hastings dreamed that Richard cut off his head the previous night, and, in his eyes, that is a bad omen<sup>86</sup>. He fears for his and Hastings's safety, and urges him that they should leave. Hastings dismisses Stanley's fears.

Buckingham and the Archbishop arrive without Richard. Hastings orders Catesby to find Richard, then starts the meeting to discuss young Edward's coronation date. Hastings, full of confidence, states that he is sure he can speak for Richard regarding the matter. Just then, Richard arrives, all smiles, stating that there is no one he would rather have to speak on his behalf. He adjourns the meeting for coffee and takes Buckingham aside to tell him what Catesby has learned - that Hastings is loyal to the young Edward and refuses to go along with their plans.

Richard resumes the meeting and asks what punishment someone who bewitched him with black magic should get. Still confident, Hastings answers that they deserve to die. Richard then displays his arm - which, as everyone knows, has been deformed since his birth - and says that Queen


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<sup>85</sup> Major changes from the original script:

- no messenger comes to speak to Hastings, Stanley talks to Hastings himself, but only after Catesby spoke to him about Richard's plan;
- Act 3, scenes 2 & 4 are combined to increase the pace of the scene;
- Act 3, scene 3 of the original script has been cut, as Rivers is killed in Act 2, scene 1.

<sup>86</sup> I kept Stanley's dream but excluded the reference to the boar, as it is not applicable in a modern context.

Elizabeth, in cahoots with Queen Margaret<sup>87</sup>, cursed him, causing his arm to become frail. When Hastings hesitates before accepting this speculation as fact, Richard promptly accuses him of being a traitor and orders his execution<sup>88</sup>. Left alone with Tyrrel, a stunned Hastings slowly realises that Stanley was right all along; Richard is a manipulative, power-hungry traitor and that he is overconfident. When he starts to pray, Tyrrel breaks his neck.

	
<p><i>Everyone but <b>HASTINGS</b> and <b>TYRREL</b> exits.</i></p>	
<p><b>HASTINGS</b> Stanley warned me and I didn't listen. I bragged about how Rivers was killed and how Richard loves me. Oh Margaret, now I have to pay for your curse with my life! <i>(he starts praying)</i></p> <p><b>TYRREL</b> Come, come, it's pointless to pray now. <i>(he breaks his neck)</i></p>	<p>Apart from the fact that it is quick and very unexpected, it also shows Tyrrel's brutality, another warning to others.</p>

### 5.9 Act 3, Scene 3<sup>89</sup> (same as before - later in the day, midday)

Richard and Buckingham enter with the General<sup>90</sup>. Buckingham and Richard tell him about Hastings's betrayal and how he became a traitor; he even had an affair with Queen Elizabeth (which is untrue). Being very gullible, the General believes them and says that they did the right thing and

<sup>87</sup> In the original script Richard says it is Queen Elizabeth and Jane Shore, Edward's other mistress, who cursed him, but in order not to confuse the audience, I decided to make it Queen Margaret; this makes his accusation even more ridiculous; everyone knows that they hate each other and that Richard was born with a deformed arm.

<sup>88</sup> In the original script Richard refuses to eat lunch until Hastings is dead, but it doesn't work in a modern setting.

<sup>89</sup> Scene 5 in the original script.

<sup>90</sup> Lord Mayor in the original script is changed to General.

that it will be an excellent warning for potential traitors. He will go to the meeting hall to inform the public that Hastings was a traitor and therefore executed.

After the General leaves, Richard orders Buckingham to follow him to the meeting hall. Buckingham must make a speech in which he will inflame bad feelings against the dead king and his son. He must imply that the prince is illegitimate and that young Edward does not look like his father. The goal is to turn the people against the prince and demand that Richard be crowned king instead, at which time, Buckingham must bring the General and the people to the church where Richard will be waiting with two priests.

### **5.10 Act 3, Scene 4<sup>91</sup> (meeting hall - same day, midday)**

The three citizens<sup>92</sup> from the previous citizen scene meet up again. They are waiting for the meeting to start. When Citizen 1 asks Citizens 2 and 3 why they did not leave, they explain that the gates were closed and that no one was allowed to leave the compound. They then discuss the recent killing of Hastings. Citizen 3 mentions that she found an article of Hastings's indictment in the printing press<sup>93</sup> the previous night before the paper was printed, but she saw him that very morning, still alive. They are talking about how it is impossible to say what one thinks when the rest arrive for the meeting.

The General<sup>94</sup> addresses the people, stating that they found evidence that Hastings was a traitor and that he actually plotted to kill Richard and Buckingham. He was therefore executed the previous evening. The three citizens see through this blatant lie, but do not speak their minds. Buckingham delivers his speech about the illegitimacy of Edward's son and convinces the people to demand that Richard becomes king<sup>95</sup>.

At the church, Buckingham informs Richard what happened at the meeting and that the General and the people are on their way to ask him to become king. Richard must pretend not to want the throne until the people beg him. He must also carry a bible to show that he spends a great deal of time in

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<sup>91</sup> A combination of Act 3, scenes 6 & 7 of the original script; the scrivener's monologue was used as basis for the citizen's dialogue.

<sup>92</sup> In the new scene with the citizens they talk about the restrictions on free speech which was an issue in 2013 in South Africa - luckily the constitutional court denied the request from the government.

<sup>93</sup> The printing press is an old-school way of printing information, seeing that there is no electricity after the civil war.

<sup>94</sup> The scene where the General talks to the people is a flashback that has been dramatised - while Buckingham recounts the events at the meeting for Richard, the audience gets to see it instead of Buckingham's telling Richard what was said.

<sup>95</sup> It emphasises and illustrates the corruption in our South African government - how people are manipulated into believing anything, especially in a group. This is a regular occurrence.

prayer. The General and the people arrive, and Buckingham pleads (actually pretends to) with Richard to become the king; Richard finally accepts.

### **5.11 Act 4, Scene 1 (outside the prison - the next day, early morning)**

Elizabeth and the Duchess meet Lady Anne (who is now Richard's wife) outside the prison. Anne tells Elizabeth that she came to visit the young Edward, who is in prison, and Elizabeth says they are there for the same reason. The jailkeeper informs the women that Richard has forbidden anyone to see him. Stanley arrives with the news that Richard will be crowned king, and Anne must go to the coronation to be his queen. Elizabeth fears the worst for her family, especially her daughter's life. The Duchess urges her to send her daughter<sup>96</sup> to Richmond, Stanley's stepson, who is still out of the country; she will be safe there. She must also write a letter telling Richmond (Queen Margaret's nephew, which makes him a Lancaster) what is happening, and that he should come to claim the throne - she would rather see the country ruled by a Lancaster than by Richard. When Stanley tells Anne that they must leave for the coronation, she admits that she should have resisted marrying Richard; after all, she herself cursed him (cf. Act I, scene ii) for killing her first husband. Her curses have come true - she has no peace as his wife, and bad dreams continually haunt Richard. She also realises that he will, without a doubt, get rid of her soon. The Duchess tells her to go to Richard and that angels will protect her. She then instructs Elizabeth to go and write the letter and then join her at the church where they are in hiding.

### **5.12 Act 4, Scene 1.1<sup>97</sup> (the same day, midday)**

Richard and Lady Anne's crowning<sup>98</sup>.

### **5.13 Act 4, Scene 2 (outside - six months later, midday)**

Six months after Richard's coronation, he still feels insecure in his position as king. He tells Buckingham that he wants young Edward killed in prison. For the first time, Buckingham does not support Richard immediately, saying he needs time to consider his request. Richard murmurs to himself that Buckingham is too weak to continue to be his right hand. Tyrrel enters, informing

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<sup>96</sup> In the original script it is Dorset who must go and join Richmond.

<sup>97</sup> Richard's crowning is dramatised.

<sup>98</sup> Once Richard is crowned, he assumes a pose similar to former President Nelson Mandela's pose for his statue on Naval Hill.

Richard that Queen Margaret's nephew, Richmond,<sup>99</sup> is gathering an army of rebel forces. Many people left the country, joining Richmond in his efforts against Richard.



*TYRREL enters.*

**TYRREL**

Richard, I just got word that Richmond Lancaster, Queen Margaret's nephew, is gathering an army made up of rebel forces. A lot of our people are fleeing the country and joining him.

*CATESBY enters.*

**CATESBY**

Your majesty, I heard a news bulletin on the short wave radio. It claims you killed several people to ascend to the throne. They named Hastings and Rivers as a few of the people you killed.

**RICHARD**

Where did they hear that!

**CATESBY**

They claim their source is the Archbishop.

*STANLEY enters.*

**RICHARD**

Find him! Find the Archbishop. I want that fucking god-fearing Christian traitor dead. He should not fear God ... he should fear me! Find him!

Tyrrel is now much more active as a member of Richard's private guard. He is no longer in the shadows. Their relationship is also now out in the open.

<sup>99</sup> I have decided to make Richmond a Lancaster to keep the war between the two families - symbolising the two major political parties in South Africa, viz the ANC and the DA.

**STANLEY**

Your majesty, the Archbishop joined Richmond<sup>100</sup>.

**RICHARD**

*(losing control)* What?! Catesby, send out word ... close all the borders. No one leaves this country! And I want a total media blackout<sup>101</sup>. And make sure that news reporter is dead! Stanley, Richmond is your stepson. Find out what that fucking Lancaster is up to! I will destroy anything and anyone who threatens my throne! Is that clear!

*CATESBY and STANLEY exit.*

**RICHARD**

Tyrrel, spread a rumour that Anne, my wife, is very sick and likely to die. I will make sure she's kept out of view. *(beat)* I also want you to kill my brother's brat. *(beat)* And find my brother's daughter, so that I can marry her. Kill her mother if she refuses. It's maybe not the most foolproof way to secure my position, but I will have a rightful claim to the throne by marrying her. *(beat)* And find Stanley's son. We're going to need leverage against him, I don't trust him.

**TYRREL**

Consider it done.

*RICHARD kisses him and TYRREL exits.*

I decided to set up Lady Anne's death here with a rumour for the adaptation.

Richard and Tyrrel are now affectionate in front of everybody, even with Lady Anne sitting at the table. I did, however, not have them kiss. I wanted to keep the relationship subtle.

All of this happens while Lady Anne is also present at the table<sup>102</sup>.

Buckingham asks Richard to give him what he promised; Richard's brother's possessions. Richard rejects Buckingham's request and walks out on him. Buckingham is left alone with Anne. He realises that he is not Richard's right hand anymore and decides to flee before he meets the fate of Richard's other enemies, and he advises Anne to do the same<sup>103</sup>.

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<sup>100</sup> This represents Archbishop Desmond Tutu's public announcement earlier in 2013 that he will not support the ANC in the next election.

<sup>101</sup> This is a new addition, representing the government's attempt in 2011 to keep the media from reporting on corruption within the government.

<sup>102</sup> I picked up this idea from an RSC production done in Stratford in 1992. This shows Richards ruthless commitment to remain in power - he will indeed go to any lengths to keep the throne; and the factual tone he uses in front of her shows that, at this point, he doesn't have any trouble telling people he will kill them if they are going to be in his way.

<sup>103</sup> Anne doesn't reply to his advice and just stays there - showing her acceptance that she might die.

**5.14 Act 4, Scene 3<sup>104</sup> (one area inside prison, another area the same as before - evening of the same day)**

Tyrrel kills the young Edward, and Richard strangles Lady Anne. Tyrrel<sup>105</sup> joins him and informs him that the prince is dead. He also tells him that Buckingham and bishop Ely<sup>106</sup> have escaped from the compound and are on their way to join Richmond.



*Same day - evening*

*PRINCE EDWARD can be seen kneeling next to his bed in his prison cell, praying.*

*TYRREL enters behind him, aims the pistol at his head and shoots. He exits.  
All of this is in silhouette.*

*In another spot, we see LADY ANNE still sitting in the chair.*

*She injected herself with a drug.*

*RICHARD enters and sees her.*

*Feels for a pulse and finds one, he strangles her.*

*TYRREL enters.*

**TYRREL**

Richard.

**RICHARD**

Good or bad news?

**TYRREL**

Both, good news is that the brat is dead.

**RICHARD**

*(he laughs)* Thank you. *(he kisses him)* The bad news?

<sup>104</sup> The killing of Anne and young Edward is dramatised instead of simply being reported, as in the original script.

<sup>105</sup> Radcliffe is cut from the adaptation and instead Tyrrel informs Richard about Buckingham.

<sup>106</sup> The Archbishop's replacement after he left in secret to join Richmond.

**TYRREL**

Bishop Ely, the Archbishop's replacement, fled to Richmond, and Buckingham escaped from the compound yesterday and is marching south, backed by an army, to meet up with Richmond.

**RICHARD**

Ely joining Richmond troubles me more than Buckingham and his fucking army. Get the General to gather our troops. We will be ready for him. (*indicates LADY ANNE's body*) Take care of it.

*RICHARD passionately kisses TYRREL and exits, TYRREL picks up the body and exits.*

Richard kissing Tyrrel next to Anne's body shows Richard's absolute devotion to Tyrrel.

**5.15 Act 4, Scene 4 (outside in the street - the next day, early morning)**

Elizabeth and the Duchess are fleeing the compound<sup>107</sup>. Stanley meets them and informs them that the young Edward has been killed and that he was too late to rescue him<sup>108</sup>. Before **he** leaves, he also informs them that Richmond is almost there. Queen Margaret, who has been walking around, hears that and starts laughing. She tells the Duchess that her womb let loose a monster that preys on her own children. She is still bitter about the death of her husband, Henry VI, and her son, Edward, and she says that the death of their children is fair payment. Elizabeth asks Margaret to teach her how to curse. Margaret advises her to experience as much bitterness and pain as she herself has, and leaves.

Richard enters, and the Duchess condemns him for murdering his family. She tells him that she regrets giving birth to him and exits. Richard stops Elizabeth from leaving and mentions his intentions to marry her daughter, young Elizabeth, and audaciously asks her to help him pursue her. She is horrified and sarcastically suggests that Richard should send her daughter the bloody heart of her brother as a gift to win her love. Richard continues pressuring Elizabeth, insisting that by marrying her daughter, he can make amends to the remainder of her family for all he has done before. He argues that marriage is the kingdom's only way to avoid another civil war. Elizabeth seems to be persuaded by his words and tells him that she will speak to her daughter. As soon as Elizabeth leaves the stage, Richard calls her a foolish and weak-willed woman.

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<sup>107</sup> In the original script they just mourn the death of young Edward, but I've decided that the woman should try and flee the compound to get out of harm's way

<sup>108</sup> I've decided that Stanley was going to try and free young Edward but was too late, and that he should inform the Queen of her son's death.

Tyrrel and Catesby bring Richard reports about Richmond’s invasion, and, as bad news starts piling up, Richard for the first time panics. Tyrrel informs Richard that Richmond’s ships are at the southern coast waiting for Buckingham to help them ashore. People from all over the country have joined Richmond to fight against Richard. The only good news is that Buckingham has been captured and is being brought there. Richard orders Tyrrel to take care of Buckingham once he arrives. He then warns Stanley that he has his son, and if Stanley betrays him, his son will pay with his life. Richard then leads out his men to meet Richmond in battle. While Richard is gone, Buckingham is brought in, and Tyrrel kills him<sup>109</sup>.



*TYRREL enters, with CATESBY following.*

What’s the news?

**TYRREL**

Richard, a fleet of ships sails on the southern coast. Many of our former friends have gathered to meet the fleet. Word is that Richmond is the navy’s admiral, waiting for Buckingham to help them come ashore.

**RICHARD**

Catesby, go to Norfolk.

*CATESBY stands and waits.*

Tyrrel, go to Salisbury. When you get there - *(to CATESBY)*  
Fucking idiot, why are you still standing there?

Tyrrel places his hands on Richard’s shoulders, which shows a much more intimate relationship between the two.

<sup>109</sup> In the original script the killing of Buckingham takes place in Act 5, scene 1. I’ve decided to have the killing of Buckingham here to speed up the dramatic action’s pace.

## **5.16 Act 5, Scene 1<sup>110</sup> (outside somewhere - the same day, late afternoon/evening)**

The scene starts with both Richard's and Richmond's men pitching their tents while planning with their captains for the battle.

Richmond informs his men that he has received news that Richard is in the next city. Captain Blunt tells him that Stanley received his letter and is on his way to meet him.

Norfolk tells Richard that Richmond has around six or seven hundred men at the most, while Richards's army is three times that size. Richard sends a junior officer to Stanley's camp to tell him to bring his men to Richard's camp before sunrise. He then goes to sleep<sup>111</sup>.

In the meantime, Stanley arrives at Richmond's camp and tells him that he will try to assist him as far as possible but that they should be cautious, as Richard has Stanley's son and will kill him if he betrays Richard. He advises Richmond to attack before sunrise.

Richard wakes up from a nightmare and tells Tyrrel<sup>112</sup> about his doubts that their friends might not be loyal. Tyrrel dismisses it, telling Richard not to be afraid of shadows and superstition.

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<sup>110</sup> A combination of Act 5, scenes 2 - 6. I've decided to combine the scenes also to increase the pace of the dramatic action. All the actions in both camps happen at the same time on stage in order to create tension and to pick up the pace; only relevant dialogue to tell the story and push forward the dramatic action is used.

<sup>111</sup> The scene with the ghosts is moved to the end of the play; here it would have slowed down the pace.

<sup>112</sup> Tyrrel is the one to come to Richard after his nightmare and not Radcliffe as in the original script.



*sometime in the night*

**RICHARD** screams. **TYRREL** enters.

**TYRREL**

Richard ...

**RICHARD**

Oh Tyrrel, I had a terrible dream last night! What do you think, will our friends all be loyal?

**TYRREL**

No doubt, your majesty.

**RICHARD**

Oh Tyrrel, I'm afraid, I'm afraid -

**TYRREL**

No, don't be afraid of dreams. Go back to sleep.

*he goes back to sleep.*

Richard is lying in Tyrrel's arms. It is a tender moment where Richard, for the first time, shows a moment of weakness, something he can only afford in Tyrrel's presence. The scene also shows Tyrrel's love for Richard for the first time.

I've also decided to have Richard return to sleep, still in Tyrrel's arms.

Their men wake up Richard and Richmond and they head out to battle<sup>113</sup>.

<sup>113</sup> I've decided to use a piece of the original text before Richard goes off to battle:

*March on, join bravely, let us to it pell-mell*

*If not to heaven, then hand-in-hand to hell!*

**5.17 Act 5, Scene 2 (outside in the street - the next day, early morning)**

It is the battle. After some fighting, Richard appears on stage, calling for help: 'A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!' Tyrrel<sup>114</sup> insists that he should retreat for his own safety. Richard calls him a traitor and shoots him.



*The Battle. RICHARD rushes in.*

**RICHARD**

A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!

*TYRREL rushes in.*

**TYRREL**

Richard, we must retreat! *(he goes)*

**RICHARD**

Traitor! *(he shoots him)*

The first time Tyrrel shows any fear but, more importantly, fear of losing Richard.

I decided to have Richard kill Tyrrel here to fulfil Margaret's curse from the beginning of the play: 'may you suspect your true friends of being traitors'.

<sup>114</sup> In the original script it is Catesby.



During his final confrontation with Richmond, Richard sees the ghosts of the people he killed, condemning him to ‘despair and die’<sup>115</sup>. Richard, distracted by the visions, is killed by Richmond<sup>116</sup>.

## 6. Epilogue

Right from the first reading, *Richard III* clearly focuses on political commentary. Looking at the history of performances of the character, many actors had particular political figures in mind. Most definitely, *Richard III* is a political play when one considers when the play was written, the reason for writing the play and the events that took place in London during that time.

Even if Richard resembles a typical ‘Machiavellian villain’, or one considers a Freudian interpretation of the character, or, as stated in the introduction, his deformity being a possible reason for his villainy, I believe there is much more to the character of Richard.

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<sup>115</sup> I’ve decided to use the ghosts here to suggest that they ‘distract’ Richard during the battle; they can be interpreted as his conscience talking to him.

<sup>116</sup> After Richmond kills Richard, there is a blackout, and a news bulletin is heard on a shortwave radio, reporting that Richmond was victorious and that his first act as ruler would be to bring democracy to South Africa. I want the audience to decide for themselves whether this would have a good outcome - whether the people be better off in future.

What I found appealing was the thought of what motivated such an ambitious political figure if I consider his sexuality, and that is what I wanted to explore with this production. On the surface, the adaptation commented on political situations and events in South Africa, but underneath, it also explored Richard's sexuality and how that influenced his desires. Even if his deformity motivated his revenge on the world and others, adding his sexuality to the mix makes for a much more complex character. His sexuality could be interpreted as part of what he sees as his deformity, not that I would advocate it as his primary motivation. The desire for belonging and feeling useful, though, are possible feelings that could drive his 'evilness' and revenge.

Although I wanted to explore this queer aspect in the play, I was hesitant to make his sexuality and relationship with Tyrell too visible. Instead, I rather underplayed it. I realised after the production that I could have explored his sexuality more, such as in the parts where the script indicates they kiss. I further explored the queer identity of the title character of *Hamlet* in Chapter 4 (Article 3<sup>117</sup>). I placed Hamlet and Horatio in a same-sex relationship and left out all references to the political turmoil in Denmark.

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<sup>117</sup> Heydenrych, T. 2017. 'To tell our Story': Reflections on a Queer Adaptation of Hamlet in Twenty-first Century South Africa. *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* 30:43-55.  
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*Shakespeare's*

# HAMLET

DIRECTED BY THYS HEYDENRYCH & PETER TALJAARD

ADAPTED INTO A ONE ACT BY THYS HEYDENRYCH



## Chapter 4 (Article 3)

*'Then since the Heauens haue shap'd my  
Body so': Will the 'Queer' Richard Please  
Stand Up?*

## Chapter 4 (Article 3<sup>118</sup>): ‘To tell our Storie’: Reflections on a Queer Adaptation of *Hamlet* in Twenty-first Century South Africa.<sup>119</sup>

### 1. Prologue

What does it mean to ‘decolonise’? In his article ‘*Decolonisation, the new ideology*’ Bert Olivier<sup>120</sup> (2016a) explains that to ‘decolonise’ means to obtain ‘independence’ from colonial oppression and ‘exploitative power’ and, with that independence, to find, among other things, their ‘own voices’. Simply put, “... ‘decolonising’ themselves” means “... to become independent in their thinking, speaking and writing”. He adds that decolonising “is NOT to return to some mythical state that supposedly existed before the arrival of the colonising settlers” (2016b).

Bringing this concept to the current debates in education, Behari-Leak, Langutani, Luyanda, Masebala and Ness, authors of *Decolonising the curriculum: it’s in the detail, not just in the definition*, claim that “[A]n understanding of the process of ‘decolonisation’ lies more in its detail than its definition” (2017). In essence, it means to break away from the traditional (colonial) way of doing things, and to focus on the how to do - a kind of ‘doing it in your way’.

How then can that be applied to Shakespeare, and more specifically to the staging of *Hamlet* in Bloemfontein, South Africa, in 2014? From an actor-director’s point of view, it might mean not sticking to the original, ‘traditional’ concept of performing Shakespeare - by implication moving away from the traditional interpretation of his scripts. What new perspectives and interpretations could be arrived at in this adaptation? Would it not constitute a form of decolonisation if a space is created for marginalised identities to be foregrounded? Starting from the politics of the personal means taking Shakespeare from its original cultural context and, as a gay white male, giving it my voice. Or, in the reflective context of this article, as an actor-director approaching *Hamlet* from a queer perspective?

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<sup>118</sup> For the sake of the PhD thesis, it is important to note that theory development, the last part of CGT, is the performance of the queer adaptation. This article reflects on the performance, not the coding process of CGT as discussed in Chapter 2 (Article 1).

<sup>119</sup> This chapter has been published in the *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* journal. The article will be added as an addendum. For the PhD, I’ve included more visuals than the journal allowed.  
Heydenrych, T. 2017. ‘To tell our Story’: Reflections on a Queer Adaptation of *Hamlet* in Twenty-first Century South Africa. *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* 30:43-55.  
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<sup>120</sup> Bert Olivier is attached to the University of the Free State as Extraordinary Professor of Philosophy. He is also an adjunct professor in the School of Humanities at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Kubowitz (2012:201) reflects on a statement made by Beloff that “[b]eing heterosexual has several benefits ... One can enter into most cultural narratives, that is novels, films, fine art, on the basis of simple and satisfying identification”. According to Kubowitz (*ibid*), this means that being homosexual inadvertently hampers the ‘entrance to, and identification with’, most cultural narratives. As a gay man, I find that, while reading certain plays, I identify with the characters and situations but interpret the characters and situations from a queer perspective. Hamlet is one Shakespearean play that empowers my ‘queer interpretation’, and the passage that most resonate from this (personal) perspective is his ‘*To be, or not be*’ soliloquy.

But why does *Hamlet* feel so familiar and easy to relate to? Garber (2004:433, cited in Young 2014:13) claims that “the experience of Hamlet is almost always that of recognition”. Young (2014:13) adds that it can also be because we recognise the internal conflict between his duty as prince and his ‘inner yearnings’, his self-doubt and his emotional self-examination, and that maybe all this comes to characterise our contemporary time. According to Gouws (1996:32), *Hamlet* is very similar to Shakespeare’s sonnets: “[B]oth works seem capable of functioning like Rorschach inkblots, by making us reveal (increasingly) more about ourselves the more we try saying something about them.” As mentioned earlier, Hamlet’s ‘*To be, or not be*’ soliloquy resonates with me on a personal level, but what is the soliloquy really about? Pearce (2007:66) claims that in his ‘*To be, or not to be*’ soliloquy Hamlet “directly contemplates both suicide and the possibility of taking action”.

On *The Literature Network Forum* Ray Eston Smith (2011) posted an interesting comment regarding the ‘*To be, or not to be*’ soliloquy. Instead of Hamlet contemplating suicide, he could be agonising about whether or not to kill Claudius, and, more importantly, how to avoid damnation for killing him, knowing that it would be a suicidal attack. Another suggestion by Smith (2011) is that Hamlet might be questioning his motives for killing Claudius: Does he want to kill him to save the Danish people from a murderous tyrant or is it for his own ambitions? Or is Hamlet trying to solve his dilemma “whether ‘*to be or not to be*’ like the Ghost”, his father? Darnay (2011) adds that this soliloquy does not advance the plot, but rather acts as a reminder as to where Hamlet is: “[W]e need to take stock and realise the central conflict within him”. But as Smith (2011) maintains: “Hamlet is too often portrayed as an indecisive, suicidal wimp ... I see him rather as a valiant soldier of the spirit, fighting a desperate internal battle to defend the sovereignty of his soul”.

There is yet another way to look at the ‘*To be, or not to be*’ soliloquy: Hamlet goes to Wittenberg as a scholar (Hanson 2011:220). When Hamlet says to Horatio, ‘*in your philosophy*’, it indicates the subject distinguishing university from grammar school. Margreta de Grazia’s (1995, cited in Hanson 2011:220)

suggests that while Hamlet is questioning ‘*To be, or not to be*’ it might be that, as a scholar who studies philosophy, he is, in fact, reading from a book. After all, it is a prop he prominently uses elsewhere in the play. Hanson (2011:220) comments that if it is so, it might be “a treatise by Gorgias of Leontini”, the same book Faustus, another Wittenberg scholar, throws aside at the beginning of *Dr Faustus*, saying, “on kai me on [on being and not being] farewell”. This suggests that Hamlet is not focusing on his inner life and identity but rather involved in academic discourse.

Notable Shakespearean scholar Ben Crystal<sup>121</sup> makes an interesting observation. He says that, as a departure to the speech, instead of the familiar phrase, one could use ‘the notion of life and death, or being and not being’ (Crystal 2013:119). However, to me, Hamlet’s critical question had a very personal resonance: to be or not to be ‘gay’ - or rather whether or not to accept being gay. This question pointed to my internal struggle around self-acceptance, even into my 20s. It made me wonder, what if that was Hamlet’s struggle? Could it be interpreted that here Hamlet is struggling with his sexuality?

But why study homosexuality in *Hamlet* within the South African context? South Africa is one of 16 countries worldwide that permits same-sex marriages, but as Rebecca Davis (2013) states in her article: “South Africa brings together the best and the worst of realities for gays: deeply progressive legislation, and deeply regressive social attitudes”.

In 2013 several posters on the Rhodes campus and at a shopping centre outraged university staff, students and alumni. One of the posters read: “Homosexuality is a crime punished by imprisonment, hanging or beheading in Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria and others”. However, the Rhodes University Fairness Forum declared these posters as acceptable ‘on the basis of free speech’ (John 2013).

At the United Nations Free & Equal campaign in July 2013, UN human rights chief, Navi Pillay, pointed out the following: “South Africa has some of the worst cases of homophobic violence. People are literally paying for their love with their lives”. Archbishop Desmond Tutu declared his support for this launch by saying, “If God, as they say, is homophobic, I wouldn’t worship that God” (Davis 2013).

Leader of the African Christian Democratic Party, Rev. Meshoe, lashed out against this comment, saying that God is not homophobic and he does not hate anybody, but that homosexuality is a sin, and if people cannot “live up to the standard of the Word of God, they should not find fault with scripture” (Ndenze

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<sup>121</sup> Ben Crystal co-wrote with his father, David, *Shakespeare’s Words* (Penguin 2002) and *The Shakespeare Miscellany* (Penguin 2005). In 2013 Arden Shakespeare / Bloomsbury published his *Springboard Shakespeare* quartet series where he gives ‘the reader a clear route through thinking about, understanding and enjoying four of Shakespeare’s greatest works’. He gives talks and workshops on Shakespeare around the world. See <http://www.bencrystal.com/about/>

2013). Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, also attacked Tutu's statement, saying, "Tutu should just step down, because he supports gays, something that is evil. We say no to gays" (City Press editor 2013).

Although the South African constitution includes protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation, it is still socially an issue. In 2017 Clayson Monyela, spokesman for the Department of International Relations and Co-operation, acknowledged that "South Africa was still faced with the challenge of homophobia and violence against gays and lesbians" (SAinfo reporter 2014).

Hamlet's '*To be, or not to be*' soliloquy was the passage that incited my queer interpretation of the play. But how could I approach the rest of the play without forcing the queer issue? I started to look at the relationship between Horatio and Hamlet. Horatio is present in key moments of the play. Most of Horatio's interactions with Hamlet are when they are alone. I started to wonder how it would influence the interpretation of the whole play if Hamlet and Horatio were to be in a same-sex relationship. But, to do that, I first had to analyse Horatio's position in the play, and his interaction with Hamlet and the rest of the characters.

What follows is a summary of Horatio's appearances in the play. Act I opens with the changing of the guards. They have asked Horatio, Hamlet's friend from Wittenberg, to come and talk to the Ghost. During the scene, Horatio and the guards discuss current affairs. Horatio explains why Denmark appears to be preparing for a war and the historical background. In light of this, I started to ask: How does Horatio, who is not Danish and has only recently arrived at the castle, know so much about Denmark's historical background and political situation? One plausible answer is that Hamlet and Horatio are confidants or even lovers.

In the next scene, Horatio and Marcellus go to inform Hamlet of the Ghost. From Hamlet's reaction upon seeing Horatio, it is clear that he did not expect him to be in Elsinore. When Horatio greets him, Hamlet says '*I am glad to see you well: / Horatio, or I do forget my selfe*', to which Horatio replies, '*The same my Lord,*' (346 - 348). Hamlet asks why he is at Elsinore, and Horatio answers that he came for old King Hamlet's funeral. Whether this is true or not, Horatio had to travel for three weeks from Wittenberg to Elsinore<sup>122</sup> - a rather long journey just to attend the funeral of your friend's father. This gesture could signify a special relationship between Hamlet and Horatio. Horatio is also the only person

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<sup>122</sup> During Middle Ages travel by horse averaged 20 - 30 miles (±40 km per day). See [https://www.reddit.com/r/AskHistorians/comments/32n9ji/what\\_was\\_it\\_like\\_to\\_travel\\_during\\_the\\_middle\\_ages/](https://www.reddit.com/r/AskHistorians/comments/32n9ji/what_was_it_like_to_travel_during_the_middle_ages/) The estimated distance from Wittenberg to Elsinore is approximately 860 km walking (google maps).

in whom Hamlet confides about what the Ghost has told him. When Hamlet says ‘*Horatio, thou art e’en as just a man as e’er my conversation cop’d withal*’, it is clear that he trusts Horatio more than anybody else.

After Hamlet’s exile to England, Horatio is the person who advises Gertrude that she should speak to Ophelia before her famous ‘mad scene’; he becomes a sort of adviser to Gertrude. Later Horatio receives a letter from Hamlet, telling him that he is on his way back to Denmark. Why was Horatio still at the castle after Hamlet left? How did Hamlet know that Horatio was still there? Moments such as these formed the starting point for my queer adaptation, with Hamlet and Horatio being in a same-sex relationship. But could it be put on stage?

## 2. The ‘dependent’ Hamlet

How has *Hamlet* been interpreted over the centuries? In a letter to a friend in 1897, Sigmund Freud compared Oedipus to Hamlet and considered “falling in love with the mother and jealousy of the father ... as a universal event of early childhood”. The article ‘*Hamlet and Oedipus*’ by Ernest Jones significantly influenced Hamlet’s performances. According to Jones (1976, cited in Weller 1997:119), Hamlet’s ‘mystery’ is rooted in his Oedipus complex. Young (2014:13) claims that, since Freud, audiences see Hamlet as ‘caught in a vortex of tormented, inward-looking decisions and Oedipal self-doubt’. This representation, however, has been influenced by centuries of interpretation, supported by the obsession of post-Enlightenment Europe and the theories of Freud and post-Freudian theorists of subjectivity and sexuality.

The first film adaptation of *Hamlet* in 1900, where sexuality played a significant role, became a blueprint for future interpretations (Simmons 1997:111). The Freudian interpretation of Hamlet’s repressed Oedipal desire for his mother, Gertrude, was the basis for Laurence Olivier’s portrayal of Hamlet in his 1947 adaptation and established the idea that ‘Hamlet’s motivation was sexually based’ (Simmons 1997:112). The kisses Gertrude gives Hamlet in the film are too intense to be regarded as mere motherly affection (Simmons 1997:113). In Zeffirelli’s film in 1990, Hamlet (portrayed by Mel Gibson) enters his mother’s room, and during his confrontation with her, he throws her onto the bed, “mounts her and violently thrusts his hips into her groin” (Van Watson 1992:308). Gertrude then grabs Hamlet’s head and gives him a passionate kiss on the mouth, so passionate that if the “Ghost did not appear at this point, full-fledged intercourse would follow” (Simmons 1997:116).

The mainstream appeal of Olivier’s award-winning film gave Freud and Jones’s theory, about the source of Hamlet’s motivations, much more credibility. However, Zeffirelli’s film established Hamlet’s

Oedipal desires ‘as fact’. He also implied that Gertrude’s actions towards Hamlet accounted for this desire (Simmons 1997:116).

Recent productions moved away from the ‘Oedipal desire’ interpretation. In the Royal Shakespeare Company’s 2008 production, with David Tennant as Hamlet, the director, Gregory Dorian, focused on ‘constructing his inward-looking hero’ (Young 2014:21). He re-established the play’s idea of secrecy, corruption and betrayal (Griggs 2010:253). In 2009 Jude Law portrayed Hamlet, and director Michael Grandage moved away from Hamlet’s ‘psychological conundrums’, establishing a much more mature, heroic Hamlet (Lahr 2009). In 2010 the National Theatre production of *Hamlet*, with Rory Kinnear in the title role, focused on Denmark’s repressive political system, which is governed by surveillance and control - a clear comment on the abuse of power (Young 2014:22). In the 2015 production at the Barbican Theatre in London, the director placed a heavy focus on suicide throughout the play. In order to illustrate Hamlet’s ultimate desire to commit suicide, he had Benedict Cumberbatch, in the title role, appear on stage with a noose around his neck. After her mad scene, Ophelia leaves to go and commit suicide, while Gertrude drinks from the cup in the final scene in an apparent attempt to commit suicide (Miller 2016:463).

There have been several acclaimed productions and adaptations of *Hamlet* in South Africa. Most notably is Janet Suzman’s production in 2005, where Hamlet came across ‘as an Angry Young Man’ (Ashton 2005). The production, with John Kani as Claudius, Dorothy Ann Gould as Gertrude and Vaneshran Arumugam as Hamlet, was performed at several South African theatres and the Swan Theatre in London. The performance had a multicultural South African hue: a black Claudius, a white Gertrude and an Indian Hamlet (Blair 2006). At the 2007 Grahamstown National Arts Festival, the Shakespeare SA (the performance arm of the Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa) did a production of *Hamlet* set on board The Red Dragon, a ship moored just off the coast of Sierra Leone in 1607 (Thurman 2008:63). In 2017 Fred Abrahamse directed a similar production, set on board The Red Dragon, at the Pieter Toerien Montecasino Theatre with a cast of six men doubling several roles (Thurman 2017:iii).

### **3. My ‘decolonised’ Hamlet**

Lois Tyson (2006:341) offers several questions in her summarising lesbian, gay or queer approaches to literature. The following is relevant to my adaptation:

How might the works of heterosexual writers be reread to reveal an unspoken or unconscious lesbian, gay, or queer presence? That is, does the work have an unconscious lesbian, gay, or queer desire or conflict that it submerges (or that heterosexual readers have submerged)?

According to Barry (2002:143, Zimmerman 1985 cited in Barry), queer critics do the following:

Identify[ing] lesbian/gay episodes in mainstream work and discuss[ing] them as such (for example, the relationship between Jane and Helen in *Jane Eyre*), rather than reading same-sex pairings in non-specific ways, for instance, as symbolising two aspects of the same character.

I focused on Hamlet as a young man struggling with his father's death, his mother's hasty marriage, and his internal conflict about his sexuality and his feelings for Horatio. If we imagine this is the subtext, how would that affect the interpretation of the '*To be, or not to be*' soliloquy, mindful of the aspect of 'being or not being'? How would it play into Hamlet's rejection of Ophelia, her consequent madness, and the 'Mousetrap scene'? Perhaps Hamlet's sexuality was the 'disgrace' to the family and kingdom that motivated Claudius's immediate decision to exile Hamlet, in addition to the murder of Polonius? Could a possible sexual relationship be why Horatio is intent on sharing the poisoned wine in the final scene?

I closely read the script and identified *queer cues* that supported a possible love relationship between the two men. Horatio is present in key moments of the play, as discussed previously. Most of Horatio's interactions are with Hamlet. The court first sees Hamlet and Horatio together during the Mousetrap scene. It is only after Hamlet's exile that Horatio interacts with Gertrude and Claudius. It is not clear where Horatio originates from, but we know, or at least are told, that he is poor, and it is clear that he is not part of the court in Elsinore. He is well-versed in the political aspects of Denmark, as seen in his retelling of Old King Hamlet's victory with the soldiers, which indicates that he is not a foreigner. He is a scholar studying with Hamlet in Wittenberg, and they are friends. From this, I was able to generate a motivated and convincing queer adaptation; however, this also required that I cut all references to the political aspects of the play (with regards to young Fortinbras's revenge) and only focused on Hamlet's personal journey.

In 2014 I produced my queer adaptation of *Hamlet* with a professional cast at the University of the Free State to explore the above concept. I co-directed the play with Peter Taljaard, who also portrayed Claudius; I played Hamlet. In the next section, I will offer a close reading, in chronological order, of the adaptation, highlighting key moments in the play (with examples from the text) to establish Hamlet and Horatio's relationship. I will also refer to the interpretation choices of Peter, me, and the actors. The spelling in the quoted passages is the original spelling of the First Folio.

## 4. The Adaptation

### 4.1 Act 1, scene 1

We used this scene to establish the play in a South African context and to introduce Horatio and the Ghost. I cut Horatio's discussion on why Denmark appears to be preparing for a war in the opening scene with the changing of the guard. In order to establish the South African context, the guards wore SA Army uniforms.<sup>123</sup>

### 4.2 Act 1, scene 2

In scene 2, Horatio and Marcellus arrive to inform Hamlet of the Ghost. Hamlet is clearly surprised to see Horatio.



**Hamlet** *I am glad to see you well<sup>124</sup>:  
Horatio, ~~or I do forget my selfe.~~*

**Horatio** *The same my Lord,  
And your poore Seruant euer.*

**Hamlet** *Sir my good friend,  
Ile change that name with you:  
But what in faith make you from  
Wittemberge?*

**Horatio** *A truant disposition, good my Lord.*

**Hamlet** *I know you are no Truant:  
But what is your affaire in Elsenour?  
Wee'l teach you to drinke deepe, ere  
you depart.*

**Horatio** *My Lord, I came to see your Fathers  
Funerall.  
(346 - 364)*

In Act 1, scene 2, Claudius and Gertrude refuse that Hamlet returns to Wittenberg (294 - 299). Hamlet has not been back to Wittenberg since his father's death, which at this moment in the play, is a month ago. Hamlet and Horatio's first meeting occurs immediately after Hamlet's soliloquy: '*O, that this too, too solid flesh would melt, / Thaw, and resolute it selfe into a Dew*' (313 - 343). Shakespeare's placement of this meeting right after Hamlet's sombre soliloquy is ingenious. Hamlet talks about

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<sup>123</sup> We only made use of the army costumes for visual reference. The characters still talked about Denmark, Wittenberg, etc.

<sup>124</sup> For this article I used the First Folio (DjVu Editions E-books) as a source for the adaptation. Shakespeare, W. 2001 *The Tragedy of Hamlet*. e-book. available from DjVu Editions E-books, Global Language Resources, Inc. <<http://triggs.djvu.org/djvu-editions.com/SHAKESPEARE/HAMLET/Download.pdf>>

suicide in the speech, and Horatio's presence momentarily dispels Hamlet's grim mood. Peter and I decided that Hamlet felt utterly alone and isolated at this moment, especially now that he is not allowed to go back to Wittenberg.

In this queer adaptation, I deliberately cut Hamlet's line '*or I do forget my selfe*' to support the idea of a close relationship between Hamlet and Horatio. In the performance, Hamlet is relieved and happy to see Horatio. This scene was the first moment where we could introduce the concept of their being in a same-sex relationship.

To the question of why he is in Elsinore, Horatio claims that he felt like playing truant, to which Hamlet replies that he knows Horatio would never leave school without permission and again asks why he is there. In the performance, the second time Hamlet asks about Horatio's being there, he does so more lovingly and intimately, taking Horatio's hand and kissing it, forgetting that he is at the court and that Marcellus is also present. When Hamlet realises what just happened in front of Marcellus, he quickly changes his attitude and adds, '*Wee'l teach you to drinke deepe, ere you depart*' (363) - an apparent attempt to conceal what has just happened in front of Marcellus.

Horatio then admits that he was there for King Hamlet's funeral. In our discussions, Peter and I decided that, as Hamlet's lover, Horatio's motivation was to support Hamlet during this tough time. It is approximately a three-week journey from Wittenberg to Elsinore. We felt that this was a long journey for a young man to come to old King Hamlet's funeral unless there was another underlying reason. As mentioned earlier, we used this scene to establish the romantic relationship between Hamlet and Horatio. However, in addition to having to process his mother's hasty marriage, Hamlet

is confronted with Horatio and his internal conflict about his sexuality. Hamlet ends the scene with:

**Hamlet** (to Horatio) ... so fare ye well:  
*Vpon the Platforme twixt eleuen and twelue,  
Ile visit you.*

**Horatio** My [Our] duty to your Honour.

**Hamlet** Your loue, as mine to you: farewell.

(451 - 455)



In the performance, Hamlet takes Horatio's hands as he says, '*so fare ye well: / Vpon the Platforme twixt eleuen and twelue, / Ile visit you*'. He then kissed his hand before placing it on his heart on '*Your loue, as mine to you: farewell*'. In this way, carrying the concept from the words to the action.

### 4.3 Act 1, scene 4

In the original script Hamlet, Horatio and Marcellus together arrive at the watchtower. I am sure Shakespeare did not put a lot of thought into why they arrived together. The actors needed to enter and start the scene on the Elizabethan stage. For the adaptation, however, Peter and I wanted to show the audience that it is the first time that Horatio and Hamlet are together after their first meeting in scene 2. It would strengthen their 'coming out' in the 'Mousetrap scene' where the other court members see Hamlet and Horatio together for the first time. In order to establish that with the audience, we had Marcellus and Horatio wait for Hamlet at the watchtower.

[*Marcellus and Horatio waiting for Hamlet. Hamlet enters.*]

**Hamlet**        *The Ayre bites shrewdly: is it very cold?*

**Horatio**        *It is a nipping and an eager ayre.*

**Hamlet**        *What hower now?*

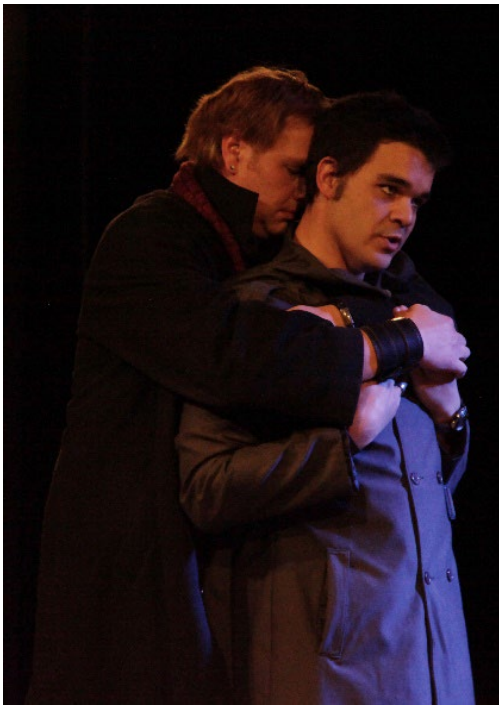
**Horatio**        *I thinke it lacks of twelue.*

(604 - 607)

In the scene, Horatio wore a red scarf, which he places around Hamlet's neck during their greeting. Props like pieces of clothing or accessories are frequently used in Shakespeare's plays to further the plot; to name but a few: Desdemona's handkerchief in *Othello*, the rings Portia and Nerissa give to Bassanio and Gratiano in *The Merchant of Venice*, the letter Malvolio reads in *Twelfth Night*. In



our pre-production discussions around Hamlet and Horatio's relationship, Peter and I realised that Hamlet would need something of Horatio's during his '*To be, or not to be*' soliloquy to visually show the audience that he is referring to their relationship. We felt that this was the moment when Horatio could give Hamlet something; it was important for the audience to see that the prop came from Horatio. Small items like rings, bracelets, and necklaces are too small and would have 'disappeared' on stage, and, seeing that Hamlet mentions that it is cold, we decided that a scarf would work best. It needed to be red, not only because it symbolises love, but also because of the colour filters we used in the lighting design, which made the scarf stand out.



Hamlet and Horatio stood in a loving embrace while waiting for the Ghost to appear. It is the first time they are alone (except for Marcellus, who is there) and away from the eyes of the court. They could be intimate in a stolen moment without fear that someone might see them. We needed to make it clear to the audience, without a doubt, that they are in a romantic relationship.

After the Ghost reveals to Hamlet what actually happened in the orchard, Horatio and Marcellus arrive. Hamlet refuses to tell them what the Ghost revealed to him. However, he takes both Horatio and Marcellus into his confidence and informs them that he intends ‘*To put an Anticke disposition on*’ (868), and makes them swear not to reveal anything. In the performance, I ended the scene with Hamlet, while holding Horatio in an embrace, saying to Marcellus, ‘*Neuer speake of this that you haue heard or seen*’ (new line). Hamlet and Horatio then exit hand in hand.

#### 4.4 Act 2

Nearly two months have passed since the events of Act 1. In Act 2, Scene 2, *Rosincrance*<sup>125</sup> and *Guildensterne*<sup>126</sup> arrive after Claudius has sent for them. It is interesting that Claudius did not ask Horatio’s assistance. Peter and I decided that it would reinforce the idea that nobody knows Horatio is there, adding strength to the ‘coming out’ of Hamlet and Horatio in the ‘Mousetrap scene’. After Hamlet encounters Rosincrance, Guildensterne, and the actors, Hamlet conceives the plan to catch ‘the conscience of the King’.

#### 4.5 Act 3, scene 1

In our concept, the ‘*To be, or not to be*’ soliloquy is a pinnacle moment for Hamlet concerning his relationship with Horatio. We used this speech as the moment where Hamlet had to decide whether or not to accept his sexuality and his relationship with Horatio, as discussed earlier. As already mentioned, Hamlet has never been seen with Horatio by anyone except for Marcellus, who swore that he would reveal nothing.

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<sup>125</sup> First Folio spelling

<sup>126</sup> First Folio spelling

Hamlet enters with the scarf Horatio gave him in Act 1, fiddling with it and smelling it while starting with *'To be, or not to be, that is the Question'*. During the speech, Hamlet refers to the scarf in key moments. *'Whether 'tis Nobler in the minde to suffer / The Slings and Arrowes of outragious Fortune, / Or to take Armes against a Sea of troubles, / And by opposing end them'* (1710 - 1714). Conceptually, *'The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune'* implied dealing with and accepting the possible negative reactions to his sexuality and relationship with Horatio, while we read *'or to take arms ... by opposing end them'* as denying his own identity and his feelings for Horatio. Bear in mind that he is a prince and that, as Laertes makes it clear in Act 1, scene 3, *'He may not, as unvalued persons do, / Carve for himself'* (482 - 483).



There is no denying that the question of death and suicide is present in this soliloquy; 'death' need not only mean physical dying, but could also imply the 'death' of identity and the self. Hamlet sees denying his sexuality as 'killing' a part of himself. In the lines *'For in that sleepe of death, what dreames may come, / When we haue shuffel'd off this mortall coile, / Must giue vs pawse. ... But that the dread of something after death, ... Puzels the will, ...'* (1720 - 1734), we interpreted the fear after 'death' not only as fear of the unknown but also fear of regret for denying who he is. In the performance, Hamlet puts the scarf back around his neck before seeing Ophelia - a gesture to indicate that he accepts his sexuality and, more importantly, his relationship with Horatio and the choice to be open about it.

In the 'nunnery scene' that follows, Hamlet famously rejects Ophelia. There are several interpretations as to why Hamlet treats Ophelia so harshly - the most accepted one being that he is aware of her betrayal, and that Claudius and Polonius are listening (Hirsh 2010:36). He gives her several opportunities to admit that she is lying to him and when she lies about the whereabouts of her father, Hamlet flies into a rage. Another theory regarding this scene, is that Hamlet is venting pent-up anger towards his mother; he feels that she has been unfaithful to his father and that her marriage to his uncle is incestuous. Hamlet's hatred towards his mother becomes evident during his confrontation with Ophelia. Ophelia becomes the substitute for Hamlet's mother, at whom he indirectly aims his rage.

For our performance, we approached it from a different angle. Act 1 clarifies that there is a sort of a ‘relationship’ between Ophelia and Hamlet. As support to our concept that Hamlet is a gay man, we decided that, for the sake of pretence, Hamlet uses Ophelia to safeguard his sexuality against any suspicion. There is no denying that they know each other very well, and one can assume that they grew up together and are very good friends. Seeing Ophelia after deciding to come out, is very hard for Hamlet, and we used the beginning of this scene to suggest that to the audience.

Hamlet assumes that she is reading a prayer book and, as he feels guilty about his deceit towards her and the decision he has just made, asks her, ‘*Nymph, in thy Orizons / Be all my sinnes remembred.*’ (1743 - 1744). She tells him that she wants to return the gifts he gave her. Hamlet’s first instinct is to deny that he ever gave her anything. He finds it difficult to lie to her like that and says, ‘*I did loue you once.*’ (1770). He then admits ‘*I loued you not*’ (1774). To Ophelia’s emotional ‘*I was the more deceiued*’ (1775), he responds that men are untrustworthy and that she would be better off in a nunnery.

The use of the word ‘nunnery’ can be interpreted in two ways; either as a euphemism for ‘brothel’ (as was the case in the Protestant Elizabethan world)<sup>127</sup> or literally as a nunnery. We used both interpretations. The first time Hamlet uses ‘nunnery’, he means a nunnery, a place where she cannot marry at all; a place where she cannot be under the influence of any man, or influence men in any way, safe from men, like him, who will use her. Here as actor, I performed Hamlet’s speeches in a soft, endearing and honest



tone, supporting the idea that he feels guilty about his deceit regarding his sexuality. However, after she denies her father’s whereabouts, Hamlet realises that she is also deceiving him, and he then insinuates that she should go to a brothel. My Hamlet became physically violent towards Ophelia, suggesting that ‘nunnery’ indicates another interpretation of the word as a brothel. He relapses into

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<sup>127</sup> ‘According to the Oxford English Dictionary, this text contains the first quotation in which “nunnery” is used as slang for “brothel” - the ironic opposite of a virginal community of nuns. In his book, *Christs Teares over Jerusalem* (1593), Thomas Nash or Nashe (1597 - 1601) refers to prostitutes who “give free priviledge” to gentlemen in “theyr Nunnery” (pp. 79r-v). ... Critics have debated whether this simply implies that she should enter a convent to escape corruption, or whether it also hints ambiguously that she should go to a brothel - because the world will inevitably corrupt her with its impure ways.’ - See more at: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/first-use-of-the-word-nunnery-to-mean-brothel-1593#sthash.36HK27pC.dpuf>

his *'Anticke disposition'* to make Ophelia, Claudius, and Polonius think that his madness is because of Ophelia.

#### 4.6 Act 3, scene 2

In the adaptation, I cut the beginning of this scene where Hamlet talks to the actors about their acting. We needed to build momentum to focus on Hamlet and Horatio's relationship; Hamlet's talk to the actors would have delayed the tempo.

Hamlet went through quite a journey during the *'To be, or not to be'* soliloquy: from a) questioning whether or not to accept, to b) accepting his sexuality, to c) rejecting Ophelia in the 'nunnery scene'. In the performance, we started the scene with Horatio waiting for Hamlet, again reinforcing that they



are not together when they are at the castle. Upon his arrival Hamlet greets him with *'Horatio, thou art eene as iust a man / As ere my Conuersation coop'd withall'* (1904–1905). This speech is the moment where Hamlet informs Horatio that he has chosen him as his partner: *'Since my deere Soule was Mistris of my choyse, / And could of men distinguish, her election / Hath seal'd thee for her selfe'* (1914 - 1916). He ends with *'Giue me that man, / That*

*is not Passions Slaue, and I will weare him / In my hearts Core. I, in my Heart of heart, / As I do thee'* (1922 - 1925), thus showing that he is committed to Horatio and their relationship. They embrace and hold each other for a while. As an actor, this speech was the moment Hamlet revealed his innermost being to Horatio. For the first time, Peter and I realised that Hamlet could be open in his affection towards Horatio and not afraid that people might find out they were in a relationship. The secrecy and lying to others and himself now belonged in the past. After their embrace, Hamlet informs him what the Ghost told him and asks for his help in observing Claudius.



The 'Mousetrap scene' is not only a scene where Claudius's guilt about the murder is revealed to Hamlet, but also the moment where Hamlet reveals his relationship to the court and his parents. As the court enters for the play, Hamlet and Horatio are holding hands.

Gertrude asks Hamlet to come and sit next to her, to which he replies, ‘*No good Mother, here’s Mettle more attractiue.*’ (1964), referring to Horatio.

#### 4.7 Act 3, scene 3

Claudius’s outburst, ‘*I like him not, nor stands it safe with vs, / To let his madnesse range*’ (2272 - 2273), not only now refers to Hamlet’s apparent madness but also to his sexuality, and forms part of Claudius’s motivation for sending him to England.

#### 4.8 Act 4, scene 5

It is unclear how much time has lapsed after Hamlet left for England in scene 3, but it is safe to assume that it is at least a few weeks, as Polonius has already been buried. Horatio is still at Elsinore and we decided that Gertrude accepts them as a couple and therefore allows him to counsel her.

During Ophelia’s mad scene she sings the following:



**Ophelia**      *By gis, and by S[aint]. Charity,  
Alacke, and fie for shame:  
Yong men wil doo’t, if they come too’t,  
By Cocke they are too blame.  
Quoth she before you tumbled me,  
You promis’d me to Wed:  
So would I ha done by yonder Sunne,  
And thou hadst not come to my bed.*  
(2796 - 2803)

In the performance, she placed her head on Horatio’s chest as she said, ‘*You promis’d me to Wed: / So would I ha done by yonder Sunne, / And thou hadst not come to my bed.*’ Our interpretation was that she is talking to Hamlet through Horatio. On the line ‘*I hope all will be well. We must bee patient*’, she touches his cheek as a way of accepting Horatio and Hamlet’s relationship. When she exits, Claudius instructs Horatio to follow.

#### 4.9 Act 4, scene 6

In the original script, Horatio receives a letter from Hamlet, telling him that he is on his way back to Denmark and that Horatio should meet him. In our pre-production discussions on why Horatio is still at Elsinore and how Hamlet knew he was still there, we decided that Horatio remained at the

castle and that he and Hamlet were in constant contact through text messaging. Instead of a letter, we had Hamlet send Horatio a text message where he recounts how pirates attacked the ship and that he ended up being the only prisoner.

During my research, before I started work on the adaptation, I came across a scene in Quarto 1<sup>128</sup>, not included in the First Folio, between Horatio and Gertrude which I included in this scene. Horatio informs Gertrude: *'Madame, your sonne is safe arriv'de in Denmarke, / This letter I euen now receiv'd of him, / Whereas he writes how he escap't the danger, / And subtle treason that the king had plotted'* (2985). Gertrude then confirms her suspicion about Claudius, and it is clear that Gertrude knows about Claudius's deceit and ill doings.

Gertrude asks Horatio, *'But know not you Horatio where he is?'* He replies, *'Yes Madame, and he hath appoynted me / To meete him on the east side of the Cittie / To morrow morning.'* Her reaction is, *'O faile not, good Horatio.'* Horatio informs her of what happened on the ship, and she greets him: *'Thankes be to heauen for blessing of the prince, / Horatio once againe I take my leaue, / With thowsand mothers blessings to my sonne.'* (3525.15), to which I added *'... and you'* in the adaptation. This scene was another moment we used to visually show that Gertrude accepts and respects Hamlet's relationship with Horatio.



#### 4.10 Act 5, scene 2



Hamlet and Horatio enter holding hands, and Hamlet recounts what happened on the ship. In the performance, Hamlet was very affectionate towards Horatio. After Osric informs Hamlet about the duel with Laertes, Horatio, for the first time, pleads with Hamlet not to accept the challenge. Throughout the play, Horatio emotionally supports Hamlet with unwavering loyalty in every decision and endeavour. In our discussions around

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<sup>128</sup> [http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/doc/Ham\\_Q1/page/53/](http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/doc/Ham_Q1/page/53/)

Hamlet and Horatio's relationship, Peter and I realised that, even though they were in Wittenberg and away from the Danish court, Hamlet and Horatio would still have been very secretive about their relationship (as previously mentioned in the discussion of the 'Mousetrap scene'). Hamlet's acceptance of their relationship and his decision to 'come out' was also of great importance to Horatio. They did not have to hide their relationship anymore, and Horatio could finally also be open about his feelings towards Hamlet. With Hamlet's exile to England, Horatio 'lost' him again, and now Hamlet is back. We decided that Horatio must have known that Hamlet would lose the duel, and he could not afford to lose him again.



To Horatio's plea not to engage in a duel, Hamlet replies, *'If it be now, 'tis not to come: if it be not to come, it will be now: if it be not now; yet it will come; the readinesse is all, since no man ha's ought of what he leaues. What is't to leaue be-times?'* (3669 - 3672). We discussed this moment at length: Hamlet could refuse, and he and Horatio could run away. It was difficult to justify why Hamlet would be ready to die so soon after reuniting with Horatio. In order to motivate Hamlet's decision to fight

in the duel, we decided that Hamlet knew there was no way out since Claudius had already attempted to get rid of him, and chances were that he might try again. Hamlet indeed was guilty of killing Polonius, and we thought that Hamlet would like to make amends with Laertes. Through my performance of this speech, we revealed to the audience Hamlet's difficulty in admitting that he knows he might lose this duel, but in some way that he is ready. This was a tough decision, for it meant that he might also lose Horatio. Hamlet was holding Horatio's hand while greeting Laertes as he entered. What worked for us was that this love-lost moment added to the tragedy of the tale.



In the performance, an important moment for Horatio is his eagerness to share the poisoned wine in the final scene - to die alongside Hamlet. The reference to his being an antic-Roman alludes to the practice in ancient Rome of committing suicide when defeated, as was the case with Cassius and Brutus in *Julius Caesar*. Another aspect we considered is the acceptance of same-sex relationships in ancient Rome, usually between a man from the upper class and either a slave or a man from the lower class, as was the case of Hamlet and Horatio. It was a moment in the performance where we

could show Horatio's love for Hamlet. Throughout the play, Hamlet actively displays his affection towards Horatio, but now it is Horatio's turn.

After Hamlet wrestles the cup from Horatio's hand, he tells him, '*If thou did'st euer hold me in thy heart, / Absent thee from felicitie awhile, / And in this harsh world draw thy breath in paine, To tell my Story.*' (3832 - 3835). I replaced 'my story' with 'our story' in the adaptation.



The play ends with Horatio's final words: '*Now cracke a Noble heart: / Goodnight sweet Prince, / And flights of Angels sing thee to thy rest*' (3848 - 3850). He then kisses him. The image of Hamlet dying in Horatio's arms, with Horatio intent on drinking the poison as well, is reminiscent of the tomb scene in *Romeo and Juliet*.

## 5. Epilogue

The original text lends itself to a queer interpretation of Hamlet and Horatio's relationship without forcing the issue. Nowhere in the adaptation did I have to make any major changes to the dialogue between Hamlet and Horatio to support their relationship. I did, however, omit the sexualised dialogue between Hamlet and Ophelia. Peter and I found that the subtle changes in the actors' interpretation of the lines and the physical interaction between the characters brought Hamlet and Horatio's relationship to the forefront.

A colleague once said, 'Horatio is only a plot device to move the action forward'. Reading *Hamlet* from a queer perspective answers the question as to why Horatio is in Elsinore but present at key moments in the play. Placing Hamlet and Horatio in a same-sex relationship, justifies Horatio's presence. Horatio is not only there for the Old King's funeral but also to support his lover during this time. The interpretation of the '*To be, or not to be*' soliloquy, the 'nunnery scene', 'Mousetrap performance', and ultimately his exile adds a new layer to the character of Hamlet and, by extension, Horatio. Is it not time to move away, or rather 'decolonise' from the old cliché that Hamlet is obsessed with death, suicide and his Oedipal desires for his mother, but rather focus on him as a young man coming of age, wanting to live and love?

I would like to end this paper with a slightly altered quote from *Romeo and Juliet*:

*A glooming peace this morning with it brings*

*The sun for sorrow will not show his head.*

*Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;*

*Some shall be pardoned, and some punished;*

*For never was a story of more woe*

*Than this of **Hamlet and his Horatio.***

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## Chapter 5: Denouement

The primary goal of this study, and of transposing *Hamlet* and *Richard III* using a queer interpretation, was to investigate how changing the sexuality of Richard and Hamlet would change their identity and desires. *Homosocial bonding* (Tyson 2006) and ‘queer interpretation’ (Kubowitz 2012) formed the basis of the enquiry of this study.

As Tyson (2006) explains, *homosocial bonding* is the portrayal of a strong emotional bond between characters of the same sex, while a *queer interpretation*, according to Kubowitz (2012), is the process of reading a text from a queer perspective. The study aimed to identify ‘unspoken or unconscious lesbian, gay, or queer presence’, or rather *queer cues*, utilising the coding process of constructivist-grounded theory. Through this coding process, the study analysed the relationship between Richard and Tyrell in Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, and the relationship between Hamlet and Horatio in *Hamlet*.

A preliminary analysis made it clear that there were subtle *queer cues* evident in *Richard III* and *Hamlet*. The results pointed to elements of *homosocial bonding* between the relevant characters, indicating Richard and Hamlet as gay men.

The initial findings for a queer interpretation of Shakespeare’s title characters in *Richard III* and *Hamlet* were initiated by several outside influences. Seana McKenna’s subtle feminine portrayal of Richard at the Stratford Festival in Stratford, Ontario, Canada, underscored his unmanliness. McKenna’s performance reminded Estill (2012) of a modern Galenic one-sex model where women were seen as incomplete men, or rather, a person can be identified as either a man or a ‘less-perfect’ man. A further influence was Sir Ian McKellen’s screen adaptation of *Richard III*, based on the stage production for the Royal National Theatre, where he also performed the character of Richard. In McKellen’s screen adaptation, there is a slight hint that Richard is attracted to the assassin, Tyrell.

In *Hamlet*, the initial findings for a queer interpretation were not inspired by Hamlet, as in the case of Richard, but rather by Horatio, Hamlet’s friend from school. Horatio’s presence at Elsinore, in my opinion, remains a mystery:

- a) Horatio claims to be there for old King Hamlet’s funeral but had to travel very far;
- b) the only character with whom Horatio interacts is Hamlet (until after his exile);
- c) Claudius and Gertrude summon Rosencrance and Guildenstern to try and find out why Hamlet is seemingly ‘mad’ while Horatio is already there;
- d) Horatio remains at Elsinore after Hamlet’s exile; and

- e) Hamlet sends a letter to Horatio informing him that he is on his way back to Denmark after escaping from the ship bound for England.

All of the above indicates a close relationship between Hamlet and Horatio.

The study found that the scripts did support a queer interpretation of *Richard III* and *Hamlet*. The Initial Coding process and the process of *queer reading* identified *queer cues* in the scripts. These included the initial findings mentioned above. In *Richard III*, Richard's use of 'thee' and 'you' imply intimacy between him and Tyrrel. Afterwards, Richard uses phrases such as 'I will loue<sup>129</sup> thee', 'Kinde<sup>130</sup> Tirrell', 'Gentle<sup>131</sup> Tirrell' and 'inheritor<sup>132</sup> of thy desire' to address Tyrrel – all clear indications of intimacy between the two characters. As mentioned above, Horatio's reason for being at Elsinore doesn't make sense. Horatio also uses phrases of endearment towards Hamlet, such as 'As needfull in our Loues'<sup>133</sup>, 'Heere sweet<sup>134</sup> Lord', 'at your Seruice' and 'Goodnight sweet Prince'<sup>135</sup>. When he tries to drink the poison to die with Hamlet, he claims, 'I am more an Antike Roman<sup>136</sup> than a Dane.' Hamlet reciprocates these phrases with his own 'Your loue<sup>137</sup>, as mine to you'. He also refers to Horatio as the man he 'wears' in his 'Heart of hearts' – a clear confession of love. As Tyson (2006:339) infers, subtle textual cues can create a 'homoerotic atmosphere' or give way to a queer interpretation; it is important to note that a single cue cannot be used as evidence for such an 'atmosphere'. The Initial Coding indicates that such an 'atmosphere' does exist in the plays. During the Focused Coding process, changes were made to other events or moments to support a queer interpretation. I've placed Richard and Tyrrel, Hamlet and Horatio in same-sex relationships.

In the memo-writing process, the final phase of the coding process, *Hamlet* and *Richard III* were transposed into queer adaptations. These adaptations became an 'interpretive document' containing my attempt to understand what I had learnt.

In *Richard III*, the character of Tyrrel appears from the beginning as Richard's partner, protector and male counterpart. Act 1, scene 1 sets the tone for the play. Richard's plan and, more importantly, his

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<sup>129</sup> *loue* [love] meaning 'be attractive to'

<sup>130</sup> *Kinde* [kind] meaning 'loving or affectionate or fond'

<sup>131</sup> *Gentle* meaning 'soft or tender or kind'

<sup>132</sup> *Inheritor* meaning 'owner or possessor or acquirer'

<sup>133</sup> *Love* (Old English form(s): loue, loues) meaning 'affectionate deed'

<sup>134</sup> *Sweet* (old form(s): sweete, sweet) meaning 'dear' or 'lover' or 'sweetheart'

<sup>135</sup> *Sweet* (old form(s): sweete, sweet) meaning 'dear' or 'lover' or 'sweetheart'

<sup>136</sup> Reference to same-sex relationships in ancient Rome, usually between a man from the upper class and either a slave or man from the lower class, as in the case of Hamlet and Horatio.

<sup>137</sup> *Love* (Old English form(s): loue, loues) meaning 'affectionate deed'

relationship with Tyrrel, are made clear to the audience. Richard sits between Tyrrel's legs while Tyrrel peels an apple. The image created is Richard protected/watched over by a protector, which in this case is his lover. They are at ease, and Tyrrel playing with the knife above Richard's head shows Richard's trust in Tyrrel. At some point, Tyrrel feeds Richard a piece of the apple. Tyrrel is always in the shadow, looking after Richard. All the characters know who he is and about his relationship with Richard. Tyrrel becomes Richard's male counterpart and executes every character Richard wants dead, save Lady Anne, whom Richard strangles. In the adaptation, Tyrrel demonstrates an unwavering loyalty toward Richard.

*In Hamlet*, Hamlet and Horatio's relationship is established at the beginning of the play when Horatio comes to inform Hamlet about the ghost's visit. During the scene where they wait for the ghost to appear, Hamlet stands with Horatio in his arms, further establishing their relationship. In the adaptation, Hamlet becomes a young man not only dealing with the fact that his father was killed by his uncle who married his mother but also his sexuality with Horatio's presence at Elsinore. Hamlet goes through a journey of self-acceptance. The most iconic scenes deepen thematically as well. Hamlet's 'To be, or not to be' soliloquy now includes his consideration to accept his sexuality. Ophelia's rejection in the 'nunnery scene' indicates Hamlet's acceptance of his sexuality. The 'mousetrap scene' is the scene where Hamlet not only 'outs' Claudius but also his 'coming out' scene. Hamlet's sexuality is now the reason for his exile and Claudius's desperation to have him killed in England. Hamlet and Horatio's relationship also explains Horatio's presence at Elsinore, why he is at the castle after Hamlet's exile, and why he wants to die with Hamlet.

However, the study found that the queer interpretation of these plays did not 'present' itself in the scripts when they were read. A new question emerged: 'How to present the *queer cues* in the new queer adaptations of *Hamlet* and *Richard III*?'

The last step in the CGT model includes 'theory development' and 'final report' called the 'public text'. The study culminated in performances of *Hamlet* and *Richard III*, where it was found that the transposition to the stage was necessary to bring to life the 'queer interpretations' of the title characters. The study needed the actors' performances to investigate how the characters' sexuality influenced their identities and desires. The actor's interpretation and delivery of the lines, their gestures and actions brought the queer interpretation of the scripts to the forefront. The actors' performances became the 'theory development' in this study.

I was hesitant to indulge in an explicit exploration of Richard's sexuality and relationship with Tyrrel. Instead, I rather underplayed it. I was unsure how Bloemfontein would react to a queer interpretation of

*Hamlet*. I also worked with students; some were uncomfortable with the intimacy required. After the production's run, it became clear that I could have explored his sexuality more, especially in the actors' actions, specifically the parts where the script indicated the characters kissing. For *Hamlet*, I decided to explore Hamlet's queer identity from the start. I placed Hamlet and Horatio in a same-sex relationship and left out all references to the political turmoil in Denmark. The focus was solely on Hamlet and his journey. Having acted in the production as well, I experienced how Hamlet's sexuality and relationship with Horatio influenced my performance of the character. His sexuality influenced the motivation for some of his decisions and actions. In conversations with the other actors, it also became clear how Hamlet's sexuality influenced their interpretation and actions of their characters.

The study explored the adaptation process of Shakespeare's plays using a literary theory as a basis; the Constructivist-Grounded Theory in this case. While adapting the specified Shakespeare plays using a selected literary theory, the research tried to establish a foundation on which to base future adaptations of Shakespeare's plays. Academics, theatre practitioners, dramatists, and relevant others can benefit hugely by utilising a literary theory to adapt a Shakespeare play. However, during the study, it was found that using a literary theory was not enough. Adaptation, transposition, translation, etc., are still creative processes. Artists can never ignore that, but a theoretical basis can assist the process, especially for young up-and-coming practitioners. Chapters 3 and 4 indicate the importance of the artistic component.

Other Shakespeare plays can also be explored. Re-imagining, for example, Macbeth's identity and desire if he were in a gay relationship, exploring the fact that he does not have a bloodline, and the negative stigma of being gay, would further influence his actions.

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# Addenda



*Shakespeare's*

# **RICHARD III**

*in modern English*

*Adapted from the Shakespeare by*

*Thys Heydenrych*

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## **Characters**

Richard III

King Edward IV - Richard's brother

Queen Elizabeth - Edward VI's wife

George Clarence - Richard's brother

Lady Anne - married to Henry VI's son Edward

Queen Margaret - Henry VI's wife

Duchess - Richard, Edward & Clarence's mother

Rivers - Q Elizabeth's brother

Prince Edward - Q Elizabeth's son

Buckingham

Tyrrel – Richard's companion and assassin

Catesby

Stanley

Hastings

Richmond

Brakenbury

Archbishop

General

Citizen 1

Citizen 2

Citizen 3

2<sup>nd</sup> murderer

Norfolk

Oxford

Blunt

soldiers, guards, citizens, priests

## Setting

*Set in 'post-apocalyptic' SA. After the Marikana massacre, 'kill the boer, kill the farmer' became a mantra, and farm killings escalated. ESKOM could not provide electricity anymore, strikes in transport and service delivery reached a climax, and the whole economy of South Africa crashed. Civil war broke out - people rose up against the government.*

*The year is 2035. During the Civil War, the Free State was occupied by 2 families, the Lancaster's, and York's. Richard Duke of York, married to the Duchess of York, was killed by Queen Margaret, a Lancaster. She also killed his son Rutland (brother of King Edward IV, Richard and Clarence).*

*Richard III, Edward IV and Clarence killed Queen Margaret's husband (Henry VI) and her son Edward (married to Lady Anne).*

*Clarence was supposed to fight on the side of King Henry VI, but abandoned him to fight for his brother Edward, helping him to become King Edward IV.*

*Currently, there is peace in the Free State and between the families.*

## **Act 1**

### **Act 1, Scene 1**

*crowd is gathered and **RICHARD** addresses them.*

***TYRREL** stands behind him.*

**KING EDWARD, QUEEN ELIZABETH, DUCHESS, BUCKINGHAM, STANLEY, RIVERS**

*present.*

Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;

*crowd cheers*

*and all the clouds that were hanging over our family  
have sunk back into the sea.*

*On our heads we carry victorious wreaths,  
our battered weapons are hung up as memorials,  
great chaos has been changed to pleasant greetings,  
grim marches to delightful music.*

The terrible war is over and now there is peace!!

*crowd freezes*

*follow-spot on **RICHARD** and **TYRREL***

*(speaks to **AUDIENCE**)* Instead of fighting with the Lancaster bastards, they spend all night fucking anything with a pulse. ... I hate fucking woman! They hate fucking me. I'm not made to be a seducer. I am *Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time Into this breathing world scarce half made up*; even the dogs bark when I limp by. *(pause)*

*crowd disperse*

*And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover  
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,  
I am determined to prove a villain  
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.*

*general lights on stage*

*(to **TYRREL**)* You can see it, can't you? I've already set the wheels in motion. Started the whole shebang, oh it's got everything ... lies, drunken prophecies, and stories about dreams. And all of this will turn my brothers Clarence and Edward against each other. If King Ed is as gullible as we think he is, then sweet, sweet Clarence, fucking over achieving George Clarence York, my wonderful brother, will be locked away in prison, for a long long time because someone told someone - let's not go into details - about a prophecy that "C" will murder Edward's children.

***CLARENCE** enters, surrounded by guards, with **BRAKENBURY**.*

Clarence, what's going on?

**CLARENCE**

Our brother is so concerned about my personal safety that he has ordered them to take me to jail.

**RICHARD**

He's arresting you? Why?

**CLARENCE**

Because my name is Clarence.

**RICHARD**

Why's that your fault! He should throw the bitch who gave you the name in prison. Clarence, what's really going on?

**CLARENCE**

I'll tell you as soon as I know, Richie, because at this point I have no idea. All I've been able to find out is that our brother the king has been listening to prophecies and dreams. A fortune-teller told him that someone whose name begins with a "C" will kill his children and take the throne away from him. He thinks this "C" is me. So, because of this and other fucked up reasons, our brother is convinced that it is a good idea to lock me up.

**RICHARD**

Well, this is what happens when a woman controls a man. Our brother isn't the one sending you to jail. It's that bitch wife of his, Elizabeth. Remember how she made him send Hastings to jail? Hastings has just been released. With that bitch around, we're not safe, Clarence, we're not safe.

**CLARENCE**

Fuck, I think the only people who *are* safe, is Elizabeth's own family. Well ... them and the late-night messengers our virtuous brother uses to fetch his whores.

**BRAKENBURY**

Forgive me, but the king gave me strict orders that no one should speak privately to Mr Clarence.

**RICHARD**

All right, all right ... shit. We're not saying anything treasonous, man. All we said was that the king is wise and good, and his queen is getting old, pretty, and not at all jealous.

**BRAKENBURY**

I understand, but please stop talking to Mr Clarence.

**CLARENCE**

We know you have a job to do, Brakenbury, and we'll do what you say.

**RICHARD**

We have to serve the queen, and we must obey her. Bye, Clarence. I will go to Edward and see what I can do. The way he is treating you is a fucking disgrace and it pisses me off.

**CLARENCE**

I'm not happy about it either.

**RICHARD**

Well, you won't be in prison for long. I will either get you out - lying if I have to - or I will go to prison in your place. Just be patient.

**CLARENCE**

I have no choice. Bye Richy.

*CLARENCE, BRAKENBURY, and the guards exit.*

**RICHARD**

*(to TYRREL)* Dumb fucking idiot. I love him so much that I'll see to it that his soul floats up to heaven very soon ... that is, if heaven will accept anything from me.

*HASTINGS enters.*

**HASTINGS**

Good afternoon, sir!

**RICHARD**

And to you too. So you're finally released. How was prison?

**HASTINGS**

It was as it was. But I will get my revenge, what goes around comes around.

**RICHARD**

No doubt, no doubt. And so will Clarence, I'm sure. Remember, your enemies are his enemies, and they are in control ... for the moment. And his enemies are my enemies, which makes your enemies also my enemies ... remember that. But tell me, what's the word on the grapevine? (*no answer*) Come you must have picked up some juicy bits of gossip from the guards.

**HASTINGS**

I heard them talk about the king. They said that Edward is getting sick and weak and wound in his leg is giving him trouble ... the fungal infection doesn't want to go away ... his doctors think that he is going to succumb to the wound.

**RICHARD**

Really? That is news. So, the war-wound is finally giving him trouble? Very sad.

**HASTINGS**

Indeed. Well if you will excuse me, I have to go.

**RICHARD**

By all means, no use wasting your new found freedom on us.

*HASTINGS exits.*

**RICHARD**

(*to TYRREL*) I honestly hope Edward fucking dies, because if he doesn't, I'll have to kill him myself, but not before Clarence is dead. I'll have to go and see him and kiss a little ass and make sure that the sanctimonious prick hates Clarence more than he does at the moment. If my plan works, Clarence doesn't have another day to live. Then the big kahuna upstairs is free to call King Edward to heaven, too - or I'll do it - and then I can rule! And to seal the deal, I'll marry Anne. So what if I killed her fucktard of a husband and his father. The best way to make up for it is to become what she's lost: a husband. Not because I love her, that's for-fucking-sure, Christ, but because I'll get something out of it. But Clarence is still alive and Edward is not only alive, he's king. Only when they're dead can I start enjoying myself. Let's go!

*They exeunt.*

## Act 1, Scene 2

*The next day - morning*

*The corpse of EDWARD (LADY ANNE's husband) is carried in on a stretcher by 4 armed guards followed by LADY ANNE. The body is prepared in a cloth in family colours.*

*The guards stumble and EDWARD'S arm falls out.*

**ANNE**

Put him down, put him down. *(they put down the bier)* Is this any way to treat the last of the Lancasters. He deserves more than this. He should have been a king, by right he should have been a king, Henry VI was his father. *(she puts the arm back)* My sweet, sweet husband, you and you father killed by that misshapen little dog of a man. Curse you Richard! I want you to suffer the most terrible and vile end ever imagined. If you ever have a child, I hope he is a deformed freak. *(to one of the guards)* Come on, let's go.

*They pick up the stretcher.*

*RICHARD enters pointing his guns at them.*

**RICHARD**

Put it down.

**ANNE**

You ...

**RICHARD**

Idiots, put down the fucking corpse, or I'll make corpses of you. *(points his gun at 2 of them)*

**GUARD 3**

Sir, stand back and let the body pass. *(they all raise their guns at him)*

**RICHARD**

Fucking idiots! I said, put - the - fucking - corpse - down!

*TYRREL entered behind them, pointing his guns at them. They put down the stretcher.*

**ANNE**

*(to the guards)* What, are you all afraid of him? Well, I can't blame you; no one can stand to look at the devil. *(to RICHARD)* Leave us alone, you may have my husband's body; you can't have his soul. So get out.

**RICHARD**

Christ, relax, don't be so angry.

**ANNE**

Just get out of here! Leave us alone! You have made my life a living hell. Do you like looking at your handy work, butcher?

*She points to the corpse.*

**RICHARD**

Sweet, sweet Anne, it seems you don't know the rules of charity. When faced with something bad, you're supposed to turn it into something good.

**ANNE**

You don't know the laws of God or of man. Even animals have some pity in them.

**RICHARD**

Come on Anne, give me a chance to prove that I'm innocent of all the things you accuse me off. Let me explain.

**ANNE**

The only "explanation" I'll accept from you is for you to shoot yourself.

**RICHARD**

Well if I do that, the world would think that I admit my guilt.

**ANNE**

At least you'll be dead, and if you killed yourself, it would also show that you felt some guilt for killing my husband and his father.

**RICHARD**

Hang on, back the fuck up. What if it wasn't me who killed them?

**ANNE**

Then they wouldn't be dead, but here's my husband's corpse.

**RICHARD**

I didn't kill your husband, he killed himself.

**ANNE**

Liar! Queen Margaret saw you put a bullet in his head. And you would have killed her as well if my brothers hadn't stopped you.

**RICHARD**

The bitch provoked me. Accused me of crimes I didn't commit.

**ANNE**

No, no, no ... your own sick twisted bloodlust provoked you; a lust for blood that causes you never to think about anything but killing. You killed his father, didn't you? You killed King Henry!

**RICHARD**

Yes, *that* I did.

**ANNE**

You belong in hell.

**RICHARD**

Isn't the person who caused their deaths, as much to blame as the person who actually killed them?

**ANNE**

You're both those people - responsible for it and you killed them both.

**RICHARD**

Your beauty is responsible for what I did. It haunted me in my sleep. I would have killed the whole world just to be able to spend one hour with you.

**ANNE**

That's not true, I don't believe you.

**RICHARD**

Seeing your face makes my day.

**ANNE**

If that's true, I'll take revenge on you by cutting by face to shreds!

**RICHARD**

It's strange that you want to take revenge on the person who loves you. I couldn't stand to see you destroy your beauty.

**ANNE**

What's wrong with taking revenge on the person who killed my husband?

**RICHARD**

The man, who killed your husband, only did it to help you get a better husband.

**ANNE**

There is no better one on earth.

**RICHARD**

Wrong. There is a man who loves you better than your husband could.

**ANNE**

Where is this man?

**RICHARD**

Here.

*ANNE spits at him.*

What the fuck?

**ANNE**

If only I could spit poison.

**RICHARD**

Poison never came from such a sweet place.

**ANNE**

Just leave me alone!

**RICHARD**

*(starts crying)* Shit! Seeing you like this makes me cry. Fuck, sorry. I'm a hard man ... I never cry. I didn't even when they told me about my father's death. Your broken heart makes you the most beautiful woman on earth right now, and *that* is why I'm crying. *(beat)* You're right ... you should take your revenge. You should kill me right now... *(he puts the gun in her hands, and points the gun at himself)* ... because I *did* kill King Henry. *(pause - she hesitates)* Go ahead. I also shot your husband, but it was your beauty that made me do it.

*ANNE drops the gun.*

Pick it up ... *(she doesn't move - he picks up the gun)* ... you have to choose ... kill me or take me.

**ANNE**

Get up, liar! I wish you *were* dead. You will die, mark my words, but I'm not going to be the one to kill you.

**RICHARD**

*(rising)* Then tell me to kill myself, and I will. *(points the gun at his head)*

**ANNE**

I have already.

**RICHARD**

You were angry when you said it. Say it again.

**ANNE**

I wish I knew what was going on in your head. I want to trust you, but I'm scared that you might be lying.

**RICHARD**

There has never been an honest man.

**ANNE**

Well, then, put your gun away.

**RICHARD**

I love you. *(beat)* Do you believe me?

**ANNE**

I'll tell you later.

**RICHARD**

Will you wear my ring?

**ANNE**

I'll take your ring, but don't assume I'm giving you anything in return. *(He places the ring on her finger.)*

**RICHARD**

Can I ask you for one favour?

**ANNE**

Depends.

**RICHARD**

It'll make me the happiest man alive.

**ANNE**

What's that?

**RICHARD**

Please let me take care of the burial. It's the least that I can do. Go to my quarters at the Observatory. I'll meet you there.

**ANNE**

I'm glad to see you feel sorry for what you've done.

**RICHARD**

Goodbye. *(he tries to kiss her - awkward moment)*

*ANNE exits.*

**RICHARD**

*(to the guards)* Pick up the body.

**GUARDS**

To the cemetery?

**RICHARD**

No, you fucking retard! Burn the thing! We only bury kings and queens.

*They exit.*

**Act 1, Scene 3**

*Same day - later in the day*

***KING EDWARD and HASTINGS enter***

**KING EDWARD**

Hastings it is time you stop being angry with Rivers & Elizabeth. They had nothing to do with your incarceration. It's your own fault ...

***QUEEN ELIZABETH and RIVERS enter***

... Elizabeth, Rivers, I was just telling Hastings that it is time to end this feud between you. If something should happen to me, young Edward will become king and it will be your responsibility to guide him.

*they don't react*

What? Don't either one of you want to say something? People, a divided council cannot rule this kingdom.

**HASTING**

Your majesty, with all due respect, he doesn't deserve to be on the council. He's only there because he is the queen's brother ...

**KING EDWARD**

Enough! I'm not going to say this again! He is my wife's brother and therefore part of my family. That gives him the right to be on the council. It is remarks like this that got you incarcerated in the first place.

**RIVERS**

Your majesty, if it will help I'll resign from the council.

**KING EDWARD**

No! It will not help! This animosity will end!

**RIVERS**

Your majesty, I'm willing to let it go, if he is willing to apologize.

**HASTING**

I refuse.

**KING EDWARD**

(to *HASTINGS*) Well in that case, I will have to remove you from the council. It's your choice. Rivers and what about this hatred between you and Richard? Are you willing to make peace with him?

**RIVERS**

Your majesty, it's not me; Richard hates me and my sister and he is of the same opinion as Hastings.

**KING EDWARD**

I know, but if I can get him to apologize to you, would you accept it?

**RIVERS**

Yes your majesty. But I don't think that is going to happen. Maybe it will be for the best that I resign from the council.

**KING EDWARD**

No, you're needed. You are a level-headed person and the council will benefit from it. I'll speak to Richard; I know how to handle him.

*RICHARD and TYRREL enters*

Speak of the devil, Richard we were just talking about you.

**RICHARD**

Only good things I hope.

**KING EDWARD**

We'll see, walk with me. I want to talk you about our brother and another delicate matter. Hastings ... think about what I said ... it is up to you.

*they exeunt*

**HASTINGS**

He cannot just remove me from the council. I served on it since the beginning.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

He just did. Listen you two; no one knows this, but the fungal infection in his leg is starting to affect his heart. He thinks he will be fine, but I can see it taking its toll. I really do not think he is going to make it. Our medical supplies are low and the anti-fungal medicine is not having any effect. Hastings please, you have to get past this hatred for Rivers and for me.

## **HASTINGS**

Your majesty, it's not that I hate you; I just don't think your brother deserves to be on the council.

## **RIVERS**

Hastings, I don't believe you. You are going to lose everything ... and for what? What do you have against me? Is it because my sister and I fought on King Henry's side in the beginning of the civil war? What? Or do you feel threatened by me?

## **HASTINGS**

Please, do not make me laugh!!

## **RIVERS**

Then what!

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Enough!! Edward is very sick and if he dies, young Edward will be too young to become king. And if the council is divided, Richard will rule as proxy and you know he doesn't love any of us.

## **RIVERS**

What? Richard gets proxy? Is that even possible?

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Yes, with Clarence in jail, that's what will happen if my husband dies.

***RICHARD and TYRREL enters***

## **RICHARD**

Which one of you told the king that I don't like him? He is a sick man, who shouldn't be bothered with lies and rumours. Why are you people trying to make me your enemy? Just because I'm straight forward and don't kiss your ass up and down every time I see you, it doesn't mean that I don't like you. Can't I just live in peace without being fucked around by a bunch of lowlifes?

**RIVERS**

Who are you referring to?

**RICHARD**

You! What did I ever do to you? Or you? Or you? Or any of you? Can't the king get a minute's rest without you bothering him with your fucking bullshit?

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Richard, you're wrong. Edward noticed your hatred for me and my brother all by himself. No one had to point it out to him.

**RICHARD**

And what about my brother Clarence. He is in prison because of you.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

I never did anything to turn Edward against Clarence. In fact, I've always liked him and I've pleaded his case with Edward.

**RICHARD**

Oh, and I'll bet you'll also deny that you were responsible for Hastings' recent prison stint.

**RIVERS**

She can deny that, Richard, because -

**RICHARD**

She can, Rivers? Everybody knows she fucking *can*. And she can do a lot more than that. She can help you to get a shit load of promotions, and then deny she helped you, saying you got them on your own merits.

*Old QUEEN MARGARET enters without being seen.*

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Richard, I have lived with your hatred for me for far too long. I would rather be someone's maid than a queen if it meant I could escape your constant harassment.

I swear, I will tell the king how you're mocking me. It's your fault that I've had very little joy being queen.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

*(speaking so no one else can hear)* God, give her even less joy, I beg you!

**RICHARD**

*(to QUEEN ELIZABETH)* What! You're threatening me? Go ahead, and don't spare a single fucking detail. Everything I've said to you I will say in front of him. If it means I'll be sent to jail like Clarence, so be it. I'm not keeping quiet anymore. Before you were queen - in fact, even before your husband was king - I was responsible for Edward's affairs. And now everyone seems to have forgotten what I did to get Edward on the throne.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

*(speaking so no one else can hear)* You devil! I remember it all too well. You killed my husband, Henry and my poor son, Edward.

**RICHARD**

*(to QUEEN ELIZABETH)* And in the war? Whose side were you and your brother on? Do you think that everyone's forgotten? The two of you were fighting for the Lancaster's. I will be a fucking fool if I forget who you were before my dear sweet brother married you. Remember your roots, woman, because every man should know who or what he is. At least I know who I am.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

*(speaking so no one else can hear)* A murderer.

**RICHARD**

*(to ELIZABETH)* For fuck sakes, Clarence abandoned his father-in-law, a Lancaster, so he could fight on Edward's side. He helped Edward win his crown. And how is he rewarded? He's thrown in jail by his own brother! I am too naïve for this world that you've created.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

*(speaking so no one else can hear)* Hurry to hell then, and leave the world alone, you demon! Hell is where your kingdom is.

**RIVERS**

Richard, the past is the past. During the war we followed the lawful king, and now you're trying to make it look as if we are your enemies because of that. For heaven's sake, if you were the king, we would've followed you.

**RICHARD**

If I was king? I'd rather be a farmer. The thought of being king doesn't appeal to me in the least.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

*(She moves forward so that everyone can see her.)*

Listen to me, you thieves. You're arguing over what doesn't belong to you - you stole it from me! *(to*

**RICHARD)** Look at me when I'm talking to you!

**RICHARD**

Ugly, wrinkled old fucking witch, what are you doing here? I thought you were exiled?

**QUEEN MARGARET**

You, Richard, owe me a husband and a son. The rest of you owe me a kingdom. And all of you owe me allegiance. The pain that I feel actually belongs to you, and the high life you're enjoying belongs to me. You stole it from me.

**RICHARD**

You got what you deserved. You paraded my father around with a paper crown on his head for everyone to see before you killed him like a dog. He was so ashamed by what you were doing that he actually cried. And what did you do? You handed him a handkerchief soaked in my brother Rutland's blood. My father cursed you and God heard him. God, not us, is punishing you for what you did.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

God is just. He rewards the innocent.

**HASTINGS**

Oh, killing that child was the dirtiest, most merciless deed there ever was!

**RIVERS**

Tyrants themselves cried when they heard about it.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

You were all fighting before I arrived, ready to kill each other, but now that I'm here, you turn your hatred toward me?

(to **RICHARD**) So, your father's terrible curse had so much weight with God that God not only repaid him with my husband and my son's deaths, but also with the loss of their kingdom and my exile as well? All because of what happened to that brat Rutland? If curses can pierce the clouds and enter heaven that easily, then open up, thick clouds, and listen to *my* curses!

(to **QUEEN ELIZABETH**) Let your husband die from overindulging in his appetites, as my husband was murdered to make your husband king. May your son die young and violently, as payback for the death of my son. May you live long enough to mourn your child's death and watch another woman enjoy the throne, as I now watch you.

(To **RIVERS** and **HASTINGS**) Rivers and Hastings, you all stood by as my son was killed. For his sake, I pray to God that both of you suffer a violent and painful death.

**RICHARD**

Enough.

*BUCKINGHAM enters unseen*

**QUEEN MARGARET**

What? And leave you out? You deformed prematurely born, evil birth defect. If heaven has any plagues beyond what I can drum up, let it wait until your sins are piled up high and then hurl them down on you. May conscience constantly eat away at your soul! May you suspect your true friends of being traitors and take the worst traitors as your closest friends. You're an insult to your mother's womb; a hated disgrace to your father's sperm, you disgusting -

**RICHARD**

Margaret.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Let me finish my curse.

**RICHARD**

I've finished it for you, and it ends in "Margaret."

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

He's turned your curse against you, Margaret.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Poor imitation of a queen, why do you side yourself with this deformed spider when he's got you trapped in his deadly web? The day will come when you'll wish I could help you cast spells against this poisonous toad.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Enough, enough.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

O the noble Buckingham, I'll kiss your hand to show my friendship and support for you. I wish only good things upon you and your family! Your clothes aren't spattered with my family's blood, and you aren't affected by my curse.

**BUCKINGHAM**

No one here is affected by your curses, because curses are just words with no power.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

I think they rise up to heaven and arouse God from his gentle sleep. (*so that only **BUCKINGHAM** hears*) Oh watch out for that dog, Richard! Have nothing to do with him. Beware of him.

**RICHARD**

What is that French whore saying?

**BUCKINGHAM**

Nothing that interests me, sir.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

What, you ignore my kind advice and try to please the devil I'm warning you about? Oh, the day he betrays you, just remember this day. Then you'll say poor Margaret was a prophet. Richard will come to hate everyone here, as you will come to hate him - and as God will come to hate you all.

*She exits.*

**BUCKINGHAM**

She scares me.

**RIVERS**

I don't understand why she's not locked up.

*CATESBY enters.*

**CATESBY**

Your majesty, the king asks for you and the other council members to come to him. He has ordered a meeting with the whole council.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Catesby, we'll be there soon. Gentlemen, will you come with me?

*Everyone but RICHARD exits.*

**RICHARD**

*(turn to TYRREL)* Tyrrel! My brother just gave me this pardon. It's for Clarence's release. Things are not going according to our plan. I think you know what to do.

**TYRREL**

*(smiles)* I just need to get into his cell.

**RICHARD**

Here, use this warrant to get into his cell ... *(he hands over the warrant)* ... but be discreet. Kill him quickly, and whatever you do don't let him plead for his life. Clarence is a good talker and you might feel sorry for him if you let him get started.

**TYRREL**

We're not going to stand around and chit-chat. *(Richard laughs)*

*They all exit.*

**Act 1, Scene 4**

*The same day - late evening*

*The jail. CLARENCE asleep on a bench or bed. There are other prisoners around.*

*CLARENCE suddenly wakes up.*

**PRISONER 1**

Are you alright, Mr Clarence?

**CLARENCE**

Yes, I'm fine. I just had a nightmare.

**PRISONER 2**

What was it about?

**CLARENCE**

I dreamt that I had escaped from jail. My brother Richard had arranged a boat to take us down the river to safety. The river was in flood and we struck a rock, Richard seemed to stumble, and as I tried to grab hold of him to keep him from falling, he knocked me overboard into the rushing river. The sound of the crashing water was terrible, and so were the sights.

**PRISONER 3**

So you had time to look around as you were dying? *(he laughs)*

**PRISONER 4**

Didn't you wake up when you fell into the water?

**CLARENCE**

No, my dream continued after my death. In fact, that's when the real nightmare started. I was in hell. At first I was greeted by my father-in-law, King Henry. He shouted, "What terrible punishment can this dark realm devise for the oath-breaker Clarence?" And then he vanished. Then another ghost, all covered in blood, walked by, shouting "Clarence, the villain that murdered me in the name of his usurper brother, has arrived. Grab him, avenging spirits, and torment him". Then an army of demons surrounded me and screamed so loudly in my ears that I woke up.

**PRISONER 3**

That's fucked up.

**CLARENCE**

It looks like everything I've done is finally catching up with me. But I did those things for King Edward ... look how he repays me. I need to try and get some more sleep.

*CLARENCE walks around for a while - maybe smoking - then falls asleep.*

*BRAKENBURY enters. Sees CLARENCE asleep.*

**BRAKENBURY**

Sorrow interrupts all hours and seasons. Look at him. A princeling... Eats like me, sleeps like me, shits like me. The only difference is his title. The genetic lottery. The irony is that I'm out here and he's in there.

*TYRREL and 2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER enter.*

**BRAKENBURY**

What do you want? How did you get in here?

**TYRREL**

I want to speak to Clarence, and I came here on my own two legs.

**BRAKENBURY**

That's it? Nothing to add?

**TYRREL**

Well, it's better to say little, rather than running the risk of being tedious. *(hands him the warrant)*

***BRAKENBURY** reads the paper*

**BRAKENBURY**

So I'm ordered to give Clarence to you. I won't ask why. I'd rather not know. Here are the keys, and there he is. *(he hands them the keys)* I'll go to the king to let him know I've handed my prisoner over to you.

**TYRREL**

You may, sir. That's a good idea. Goodbye.

***BRAKENBURY** turns to exit. **TYRREL** kills him.*

***TYRREL** looks at **CLARENCE** sleeping, aims gun at him*

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

What are you doing? Are you going to kill him in his sleep?

**TYRREL**

Yes

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

No. When he wakes up, he'll say we killed him like cowards.

**TYRREL**

When he wakes up!? He won't wake up till Judgment Day.

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

Okay, so that's when he'll say we killed him like cowards. *(beat)* That word "judgment" makes me feel a bit guilty.

**TYRREL**

Are you afraid?

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

Not of killing him, but for being damned for killing him.

**TYRREL**

I thought you were resolved to do this.

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

I am resolved - but rather to let him live.

**TYRREL**

Fine (*points his gun at him*)

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

No cousin, please just wait a minute. I'm hoping my "holy mood" will go away. Just give me a moment.

**TYRREL**

And?

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

Actually, I'm still feeling some pangs of conscience. (*he indicates that he wants to be paid*)

**TYRREL**

You'll be rewarded when his dead.

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

Ah, let's kill him then!

**TYRREL**

Where's your conscience now?

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

Oh, in Richard's wallet.

**TYRREL**

When he opens his wallet to give us our pay, will your conscience come out again?

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

It won't matter. Let it come out. No one will listen to it. Shall we get to work? (*CLARENCE stirs*)

Wait a moment. He's waking up.

**TYRREL**

So get out of my way. (*aims gun at CLARENCE*)

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

No, first let's talk to him please.

**CLARENCE**

Shit, who are you?

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

A man, like you.

**CLARENCE**

But not a member of the royal family, like me.

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

And you're not loyal, like us. I speak for the king, but I look like myself.

**CLARENCE**

Why are you here?

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

(*taunt*) Think, to, to, to - (*beat*)

**CLARENCE**

To murder me?

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

Yes.

**CLARENCE**

But what did I do to you?

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

You didn't do anything to us, but you offended the king.

**CLARENCE**

If you're getting paid for this, then go to my brother Richard. He'll pay you more for saving my life than Edward will ever pay for killing me. Go to him from me.

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

We will.

**CLARENCE**

Richard will be angry when he hears about this.

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

I don't think so! Richard hates you.

**CLARENCE**

*(still kneeling now in front of 2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER)* Don't lie about my brother. He loves me.

**TYRREL**

*(behind CLARENCE - he doesn't see him)* Richard loved you enough to send us to kill you. *(he shoots him - execution style)*

*silence*

**2<sup>nd</sup> MURDERER**

*(get up)* What the fuck cousin, I was just starting to enjoy myself. I thought this one was mine.

**TYRREL** *shoots him and exits*

## **Act 2**

### **Act 2, Scene 1**

*The same evening*

**KING EDWARD IV, QUEEN ELIZABETH, RIVERS, DUCHESS  
HASTINGS, BUCKINGHAM, STANLEY, ARCHBISHOP**

*sits around a table with drinks*

**KING EDWARD IV**

So, we are all agreed ... Rivers stays on the council.

**ALL**

*We agree (several different voices of agreements)*

**KING EDWARD IV**

Good. This council is the only thing that's holding this country together. If something should ever happen to me, I trust this council will look after my son and guide him until he is old enough to rule. You must all keep up this united front. Hastings, as a senior member of this council, would you like to say something? (*indicates to RIVERS*)

**HASTINGS**

Rivers, I would like to apologize to you for my behaviour. I was unreasonable, please forgive me.

**RIVERS**

Thank you, I will not let the council down.

**KING EDWARD**

Shake his hand man!

*(they shake hands)*

**KING EDWARD IV**

*(to QUEEN ELIZABETH)* Elizabeth, make peace with Hastings... and don't just do it for my sake, do it because you love me. Do it because you love this country.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Hastings, my husband is right. It doesn't do the country any good if we are at each other's throats all the time.

*they embrace or shake hands.*

**KING EDWARD**

Buckingham, anything you would like to add.

**BUCKINGHAM**

I agree with Queen Elizabeth. *(to QUEEN ELIZABETH)* And if I ever do anything to harm your majesty or if I am ever disloyal to you or any of your friends, may God punish me.

*they shake hands or embrace - RICHARD and TYRREL enter without being seen*

**KING EDWARD**

Good, now I can rest easier knowing all my friends have made peace with each other. Let's drink a toast ... *(toasts)* ... to peace.

**ALL**

*(toasts)* To peace!

**KING EDWARD**

One more thing, this afternoon I sent a letter of pardon to the jail for Clarence's release. *(toasts)* To Clarence

**ALL**

To Clarence

**RICHARD**

Sorry for being late. It's so nice to see everyone together like this ... and so festive.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Now, Richard, we've managed to negotiate peace between all the opposing factions in the council.

**RICHARD**

Well done, brother. And I would just like to add, if there's anyone in this group who thinks I'm their enemy because I did something to offend you - either accidentally or when I was angry - I want to sincerely apologise. I don't want to be your enemy. I hate it! *(to QUEEN ELIZABETH)* Dearest Elizabeth, I don't want to fight with you anymore. I'm a husband now; I don't have time for childish games. Please think of me as your brother and your servant. And you Buckingham, and you Rivers - in fact all of you - if you've ever had a grudge against me because of vicious lies and rumours, please believe me when I say, that we all have to work together peacefully for the greater good of the kingdom. I thank God for teaching me humility.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Well said, Richie. (***RICHARD** inwardly winces at the diminutive*)

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Edward, one more thing, please send someone to fetch your brother Clarence and bring him here.

**RICHARD**

Why, are you mocking me? Why are you mocking the memory of my brother?

**KING EDWARD IV**

What do you mean?

**RICHARD**

Doesn't everybody know that Clarence is dead? It is not right to mock his corpse.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Doesn't everybody know that he is dead?! Who says he is? (*beat - to **RICHARD***) Is he dead? But I reversed the sentence.

**RICHARD**

Well, he was killed by a fellow inmate this afternoon. By the time the messenger arrived with the pardon, he was already dead. I thought you all knew and that's why you were toasting him ... in honour of his memory.

**KING EDWARD IV**

(*shocked*) I condemned our brother to death. He didn't kill anyone yet. He did not deserve to die. (*during the following speech he gets worked up and very angry*) I was angry, I didn't think. And in my anger I forgot everything he has done for me. (*to the other council members*) And you ... where were you? Did any one of you raise a voice in his defence? Did anyone of you try to remind me what a descent good man my brother was? All of you are where you are today because of what he did. God will punish all of us. God will destroy me and my family because of this. I need to go and inquire about this. Hastings, Rivers, come with me.

***KING EDWARD IV** exit with **HASTINGS** and **RIVERS**. **QUEEN ELIZABETH** follows.*

***RICHARD** indicates to **TYRREL** to follow and he exit.*

**RICHARD**

*(to DUCHESS, BUCKINGHAM & STANLEY)* This is what happens when you make rash decisions. Did you notice how guilty the Queen and her brother looked when they heard that Clarence was dead? They encouraged the King to do it! Yes, God will take revenge. Come Buckingham, Edward needs our support!

*they exit*

*DUCHESS remains behind alone at the table with STANLEY*

**DUCHESS**

Oh Clarence, my poor, poor boy. Edward what have you done. *(hears the gunshot)*. What's happening?

*QUEEN ELIZABETH enters with her hair undone, blood on her hands.*

*RIVERS, HASTINGS follow.*

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

He's gone, he's gone, he's gone!

**DUCHESS**

What's going on? What happened?

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

We were attacked by a thief ... Edward has been murdered. Your son, my husband, is dead! *(she weeps)*

**DUCHESS**

When my husband died, my sons were my only reason for living. They looked just like him, now they're both dead. And my only comfort is Richard, who is nothing like his father and only causes me shame.

**RIVERS**

*(to QUEEN ELIZABETH)* Elizabeth, get a hold of yourself, we are in terrible danger. Think, we need to protect your son. We need to fetch the prince and have him crowned right away.

*RICHARD and BUCKINGHAM enter.*

**RICHARD**

We saw what happened and chased the attacker, but he got away. Rest assured I will not rest until I find him.

*(TYRREL enters and gives a nod to RICHARD who nods back)*

**BUCKINGHAM**

Now that the King is dead, we have to stand together. We cannot afford to break into factions again; it will be of no use to anyone. The prince needs to be crowned. We need to send a couple of men to fetch him and make sure he gets here safely.

**RIVERS**

Why only a couple of men?

**BUCKINGHAM**

Because if we all go, our newly negotiated peace might not last, and we wouldn't want the prince's new authority to be undermined by squabbling factions.

**RICHARD**

The king negotiated this peace between all of us, and I intend to keep up with my end of the bargain.

**RIVERS**

And so do I. I think we all do, and as said, this peace agreement is so new we shouldn't put it to the test, which could happen if we all go. So, I agree with Buckingham - only a few men should go to fetch the prince.

**HASTINGS**

I think so too.

**RICHARD**

Agreed. Rivers ... I think you and Buckingham should go. Elizabeth, what do you think?

**ELIZABETH**

I have no problem with that.

**RICHARD**

Good. I think we should go and rest. We have a funeral to plan and prepare for young Edward's coronation. Good night all, we suffered a great loss tonight, but God will be with us all.

*Everyone except **BUCKINGHAM** and **RICHARD** exits*

**BUCKINGHAM**

For God's sake, Richard, we need to make sure that we are the only ones going and that Rivers is excluded.

**RICHARD**

You're right, we must separate him from his uncle Rivers. Let's go.

*(RIVERS returns)*

**RIVERS**

Richard, I just remembered something. That attacker somehow looked very familiar.

**RICHARD**

He did?

**RIVERS**

He looked very much like your companion Tyrrel.

*(TYRREL, who was hidden from sight creeps up behind RIVERS)*

**RICHARD**

I'll have to look into it ... but rest assured ... you are not fucking mistaken.

*while RICHARD is speaking TYRREL comes up behind RIVERS and stabs him in the back (to TYRREL)* Make sure his body is not found, and don't fuck up this time.

*They exit.*

**Act 2, Scene 2**

*The next day - morning*

*FIRST CITIZEN is standing around a fire.*

*SECOND CITIZEN enters.*

**FIRST CITIZEN**

Good morning. Why are you in such a hurry? Where are you going?

**SECOND CITIZEN**

I really don't know, and I don't really care, but I need to get out of here. Did you hear the news that's going around?

**FIRST CITIZEN**

That the king is dead?

**SECOND CITIZEN**

Yes, and that's why I'm leaving.

**FIRST CITIZEN**

But why?

*A THIRD CITIZEN enters.*

**THIRD CITIZEN**

Morning.

**FIRST CITIZEN**

Morning.

**SECOND CITIZEN**

Hi.

**THIRD CITIZEN**

So, is it true about the king?

**SECOND CITIZEN**

Yes, it is.

**THIRD CITIZEN**

Fuck, it's going to be 2012 all over again.

**FIRST CITIZEN**

No, no, his son will be king.

**SECOND CITIZEN**

And you think a child can rule over this country?

**FIRST CITIZEN**

Don't be stupid, the child won't rule. It's been announced that his uncle Richard will have proxy. He will rule in his place till the he is old enough to rule himself. Everything is fine, we must just trust in God.

**THIRD CITIZEN**

We were in the same position when Henry the Sixth was crowned when he was just nine months old.

**SECOND CITIZEN**

The same position? Are you out of your fucking mind? Henry's uncles were good men and they protected him.

**FIRST CITIZEN**

Well, our prince has uncles too, both on his father and mother's side.

**THIRD CITIZEN**

Yes, but it would have been better if all his uncles were either on his father's side or on his mother's side. This rivalry between the two families is dangerous and Richard is the most dangerous of them all.

**FIRST CITIZEN**

Come, come, you're both worrying about the worst-case scenario. I'm sure everything will be fine.

**SECOND CITIZEN**

It won't be fine! Remember what caused the civil war. Don't you remember all the strikes in the mines and then all the farm workers AND then all the transport workers? It brought this whole country's economy to its knees.

**FIRST CITIZEN**

Yes, but everything recovered after that.

**THIRD CITIZEN**

Yes, but then the police went and massacred all those mineworkers! That's where it all started.

**FIRST CITIZEN**

Just trust in God ...

**SECOND CITIZEN**

It's got nothing to do with religion. We were ruled by a corrupt government where it was everyone for himself. And the civil war gave us a chance to start over again. Fuck, that's why we fought, that's why I fought. But now the king is dead ...

**FIRST CITIZEN**

We've been through the worst, it can only get better. Everything will be fine.

**SECOND CITIZEN**

“When clouds are seen, wise men put on their cloaks” Plain and simple. When leaves fall from the trees, winter has arrived, when the sun sets, it’s night! So I’m telling you everything will not be fine.

**THIRD CITIZEN**

Yes, I think he’s right. There will be more people who will be worried.

**FIRST CITIZEN**

It’s always like this in times of change.

**SECOND CITIZEN**

Well I don’t need to wait for things to change; I need to go right now.

**THIRD CITIZEN**

Where are you going?

**SECOND CITIZEN**

Off this hill, I’m not staying here any longer. Things are gonna get seriously fucked up around here, mark my words.

**THIRD CITIZEN**

Wait, I’ll go with you.

*They all exit*

**Act 3**

**Act 3, Scene 1**

*Same day - evening*

<p><i>The ARCHBISHOP, QUEEN ELIZABETH and the DUCHESS in ELIZABETH bedroom isolated downstage</i></p> <p><b>QUEEN ELIZABETH</b> Where is my brother? Where the hell is he? Edward will be here tomorrow and I don’t have the strength to do this without Rivers.</p>	<p><b>RICHARD, TYRREL, BUCKINGHAM, YOUNG EDWARD, CASTESBY enters</b> <i>isolated upstage</i></p> <p><b>BUCKINGHAM</b> Welcome, young Edward.</p>
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**DUCHESS**

Rivers will do what must be done. He'll make sure that young Edward is here tomorrow.

**ARCHBISHOP**

God will protect your son. He will grow up to be a great King. Trust in our Heavenly Father.

*STANLEY rushes in*

**STANLEY**

I'm sorry for barging in like this. I have terrible news.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

What is it?

**STANLEY**

Rivers is dead. Murdered.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Oh my God! Who was it?

**STANLEY**

Richard and his lapdog. One of the maids saw them, last night. Right after we left.

**RICHARD**

Welcome, dear nephew.

**YOUNG EDWARD**

*(looks around)* Where is my uncle Rivers?

**RICHARD**

My dear child, you have a lot to learn about the way the world works.

**YOUNG EDWARD**

Why did you fetch me a day early, I thought I was being fetched tomorrow by uncle Rivers?

**RICHARD**

Why you see, that is the thing. The people that you care about sometimes only care about themselves and that was the case with your uncle Rivers. He tried to trick you ... cheat you out of a crown. Luckily we found out about this treason before it was too late.

**YOUNG EDWARD**

Uncle Rivers is not a traitor.

**RICHARD**

My dear young Edward, he was, but you are just too young to realize it.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

So it's happening. The downfall of my family.  
Richard will kill all of us!

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

*(beat)* My son! What will happen to my son?  
We have to save him! He will be dead before  
they place the crown on his head!

**DUCHESS**

No, your son should be safe for now.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

*Should* be safe? Should? My son is going to die!  
Richard will kill him!

**ARCHBISHOP**

No your majesty, Richard's power is linked to  
your son's crown. If he is to rule as proxy,  
Edward is of no use to him dead. It's you that is  
in danger. Richard will want you dead. That way  
he has total control over Edward.

**ARCHBISHOP**

You have to come with me now, I can hide you.  
And once we get the word to all those loyal to  
you, we'll mount a mission to rescue Edward.  
But we have to leave now.

**YOUNG EDWARD**

Where is my mother?

**BUCKINGHAM**

She is in the church mourning your father's  
death.

**RICHARD**

She doesn't know that you are here yet, I thought  
we could surprise her.

**YOUNG EDWARD**

Are we going to meet her there?

**RICHARD**

Yes, but first, I think we should take your things  
to your room. I prepared a room for you in the  
guard's quarters underneath the jail.

**RICHARD**

We need to keep you safe. I think you should  
stay there until your coronation. We don't want  
what happened to your father to happen to you.

<p><b>STANLEY</b> The Archbishop is right. We need to get you to safety. Without you, Edward has no chance to survive.</p> <p><b>QUEEN ELIZABETH</b> Very well.</p> <p><b>ARCHBISHOP</b> Come...</p>	<p><b>YOUNG EDWARD</b> I don't want to stay in the prison compound. My uncle Clarence was murdered there.</p> <p><b>RICHARD</b> You're not afraid of your dead uncle are you?</p> <p><b>YOUNG EDWARD</b> No I'm not afraid of my dead uncle.</p> <p><b>RICHARD</b> Nor living ones, I hope.</p> <p><b>YOUNG EDWARD</b> Well, I hope not. <i>(to TYRREL)</i> Let's go. I can't wait to see my mother.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>RICHARD takes TYRELL to one side.</i></p> <p><b>RICHARD</b> Tyrrel, make sure he doesn't get away.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>YOUNG EDWARD and TYRELL exit</i></p>
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*they exit*

*RICHARD, BUCKINGHAM, and CATESBY stay behind.*

**RICHARD**

He's a dangerously clever boy - bold and quick-witted. He's just like his mother. "So wise, so young, they say, do never live long".

**BUCKINGHAM**

Well, enough about him. Catesby, what do you think, will Hastings join us in our plan to make Richard king?

**CATESBY**

Hastings loved the prince's father so much that we won't be able to persuade him to do anything against the prince.

**RICHARD**

What about Stanley? Won't he join us?

**CATESBY**

He'll do whatever Hastings does.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Fine, Catesby, talk to Hastings. Find out what he would think the idea of Richard on the throne. And for God's sakes be subtle, the last thing we need is for him to suspect what we are doing, and accuse us of treason in public. Invite him to the meeting tomorrow to help plan the coronation. We need to know what he's thinking before the meeting starts, so report back as soon as you can.

**RICHARD**

And Catesby, make sure to give Hastings my regards. Tell him his old enemy Rivers is dead. And that he should celebrate this good news.

**BUCKINGHAM**

There is going to be a lot of meetings tomorrow and we're going to count on you.

**CATESBY**

My pleasure.

*CATESBY exits.*

**BUCKINGHAM**

Now, what are we going to do if we find that Hastings won't go along with our plans?

**RICHARD**

Kill him, and when I'm king, you can claim all my brother's possessions.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Thank you, I will not let you down.

**RICHARD**

Come, there is a lot of planning that still needs to be done.

*They exit.*

**Act 3, scene 2**

*The next day*

*A table is set for the meeting. HASTINGS stands at the fire. CATESBY enters and goes to Hastings.*

**CATESBY**

Good morning, sir.

**HASTINGS**

Good morning, Catesby. You're up early. What's news?

**CATESBY**

Everything is moving very quickly and some people believe it won't stop moving until Mr Richard wears the crown.

**HASTINGS**

What? *(beat)* I'd rather shoot myself before I see Richard wear the crown. *(beat)* But do you think that's what Richard's planning?

**CATESBY**

Yes I do, and I heard that he is going to ask you to help him. They say that's why he had Mr Rivers killed; to get into your good books, sir.

**HASTINGS**

Well, I'm not sorry to hear about Rivers, but the idea that I'd give my support to Richard and keep King Edward's true heir from the crown - never. God knows I'd die before I'd do that.

**CATESBY**

That's very honourable sir.

**HASTINGS**

You mark my words. A year from now, when things have calmed down, those treasonous bastards that got King Edward to hate me, will start dying and I will live to see it.

**CATESBY**

But Mr Richard and Mr Buckingham have a high opinion of you

**HASTINGS**

I know they do, and I certainly deserve it.

*STANLEY enters.*

**HASTINGS**

Good morning Stanley.

**STANLEY**

Hastings I don't like the fact that we are being excluded from some of the meetings today - I really don't.

**HASTINGS**

Relax , there's nothing to be worried about.

**STANLEY**

You don't understand, I dreamed last night that Richard cut off my head.

**HASTINGS**

And what's that supposed to mean?

**STANLEY**

It's a premonition, a sign, an omen, call it what you want, but its meaning is clear. We are in terrible danger; we have to get out of the country as soon as possible.

**HASTINGS**

Stanley, you're a bloody fool. Dreams are just that ... dreams. They are not real. Get a grip.

**STANLEY**

And what about all these meetings today? It's not right that we are only invited to one of them. We are just as much part of this council as Richard. I have a very bad feeling about this. *(beat)* Why are you just sitting there, come on, we need to get our stuff and go. Now, before the meeting starts.

**HASTINGS**

Relax, nothing is going to happen, we're safe. Catesby will be at the other meetings. Nothing is going to happen today that we won't know about. *(beat)* Look, Richard likes us and we haven't given him a reason not to like us, and if we leave now without saying a word, then he'll know that something is wrong ... or even worse he'll think we've committed treason. And then he will hunt us down to the

ends of the earth. There will be no place to hide that will shelter us from Richard's wrath. If we stay here we are perfectly safe.

**STANLEY**

Well Rivers was also under the impression that he was safe. He was the queen's brother for fuck sakes.

*ARCHBISHOP and BUCKINGHAM enters with others and take their seats at a table.*

**HASTINGS**

The others have arrived, the meeting's about to start. (*everyone takes their seats, sees that RICHARD is not with them*) Where is Richard? Catesby, will you please go and call him.

*CATESBY exits*

Morning gentleman. The reason we're meeting is to determine a date for the coronation.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Is everything ready?

**STANLEY**

It is, we just need to choose a date.

**ARCHBISHOP**

I think tomorrow would be a good day.

**BUCKINGHAM**

What does Richard think about this? Who is closest to him?

**ARCHBISHOP**

I think you would know what he's thinking.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Hastings, aren't you and Richard very close?

**HASTINGS**

I know that he respects my opinion, but I haven't had a chance to speak to him about the coronation.

But I think you can pick a date, and I will do my best to speak for Richard.

*RICHARD, TYREEL & CATESBY enters*

**RICHARD**

Gentleman, good morning. I slept in. But I hope my absence hasn't stopped you from making any important decisions.

**BUCKINGHAM**

No you're right on time. Hastings was just about to speak for you - I mean, give your opinion on the coronation.

**RICHARD**

And I can't think of a better man to speak for me than Mr Hastings; he knows me very well. But let's have some coffee first.

*STANLEY and HASTINGS move to the fire where coffee is brewing.*

*RICHARD and BUCKINGHAM move to the other side.*

<p><b>RICHARD</b> Buckingham, a word. <i>(drawing him aside)</i></p> <p><b>RICHARD</b> Catesby had a chance to talk to Hastings. He is not going to support us.</p> <p><b>RICHARD</b> He had the fucking nerve to say he'd rather kill himself before seeing that little snot-nosed brat son lose the crown</p>	<p><b>STANLEY</b> In my opinion, tomorrow is too soon for the coronation.</p> <p><b>HASTINGS</b> Richard is looking cheerful today.</p> <p><b>STANLEY</b> And what does that mean?</p> <p><b>HASTINGS</b> That he's not angry with anyone here. Look, if he was angry at anyone, he would've shown it. Richard doesn't hide his feelings.</p> <p><b>HASTINGS</b> You see, we're safe.</p> <p><b>STANLEY</b> I hope you're right.</p>
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<b>RICHARD</b>	
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So be it.

*RICHARD and BUCKINGHAM return to the table.*

**RICHARD**

Everybody, tell me what you think? What punishment does a person deserve who tries to kill me with witchcraft and who has already plagued my body with black magic?

**HASTINGS**

They deserve to die.

**RICHARD**

Then see the evidence of their evil with your own eyes. *(he shows his arm)* Look how I've been bewitched! This is the work of Edward's wife, Elizabeth, who is in league with Queen Margaret. They've used witchcraft to harm me.

**HASTINGS**

If they have done this ...

**RICHARD**

If? You protect that whore? You're talking to me of "if's"? *(beat)* Traitor, you will pay for this. Tyrrel, take care of it. The rest of you, if you are with me, follow me.

*Everyone but HASTINGS and TYRREL exits.*

**HASTINGS**

Stanley warned me and I didn't listen. I bragged about how Rivers was killed and how Richard loves me. Oh Margaret, now I have to pay for your curse with my life! *(he starts praying)*

**TYRREL**

Come, come, it's pointless to pray now. *(he shoots him)*

**Act 3, scene 3**

*Same day - later*

*The GENERAL sitting at a table with RICHARD and BUCKINGHAM.*

**RICHARD**

General, I trusted that man. He was one of my closest friends, and I trusted him with all my secrets. I would never have thought that he was a traitor if it wasn't for the obvious evidence of his guilt. To think that Hastings had a love affair with Queen Elizabeth, I would never have suspected him.

**BUCKINGHAM**

If we hadn't caught him, this traitor would have murdered Richard and me in today's meeting?

**GENERAL**

Would he have done it?

**RICHARD**

What! (*beat*) Do you think we're savages, instead of Christians? Do you think we would have disobeyed the law and proceeded to kill him if our own lives hadn't been at risk?

**GENERAL**

Well then the man deserved his death. And it also served as a nice warning to other traitors.

**BUCKINGHAM**

We did decide that he shouldn't die until you were able to witness his execution. Unfortunately Tyrrel was a little over zealous in their hurry to protect us. If you could've heard the traitor speak for himself. He actually described exactly how he was planning to kill us. I really wish you could've witnessed it, so that you could make an accurate report and tell the people exactly what happened. I'm afraid they might misinterpret what we did.

**GENERAL**

I trust your word and I'll make sure the people know that he was fairly executed.

**RICHARD**

That is exactly why we wanted you here, to avoid public disapproval.

**GENERAL**

I will inform the public of your honourable intentions.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Thank you

*The GENERAL exits*

**RICHARD**

Buckingham, follow him. He's going to the meeting hall. When you are there, imply that Edward's son is illegitimate. Remember to mention all of his sexual adventures, how he used to fuck all of their servants and daughters and wives. And imply that when my mother was pregnant with Edward, my father was away at war. The timing wasn't right and it showed obviously in his face that he was nothing like my father, but just hint at it because my mother is still alive.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Don't worry. I can be very persuasive.

**RICHARD**

If the crowd is on our side, bring them to the church. I'll make sure I'm there with all the priests.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Very well.

*BUCKINGHAM exits.*

**RICHARD**

Tyrrel fetch Father Shaw and Father Conner. Tell them to meet me at the church in less than an hour.

*TYRELL and RICHARD exits.*

**Act 3, scene 4**

*the meeting hall - same day*

*FIRST CITIZEN stands around a fire waiting for meeting*

*SECOND and THIRD CITIZEN enter*

**FIRST CITIZEN**

I thought you left.

**SECOND CITIZEN**

We couldn't. The gates were closed.

**THIRD CITIZEN**

No one is allowed to leave the compound.

**FIRST CITIZEN**

Probably because of all the murders lately. I heard a rumour that Hastings was also killed.

**SECOND CITIZEN**

Where did you hear that?

**FIRST CITIZEN**

I also heard he had an affair with Queen Elizabeth and that's the reason why he was killed.

**SECOND CITIZEN**

Bullshit, I heard he was killed because he plotted to kill Richard and Buckingham.

**THIRD CITIZEN**

That is total crap. I found this indictment of Mr Hastings' execution last night in the printing press. It is going to be distributed at the meeting now. *(take out the pamphlet)*

**FIRST CITIZEN**

Let me see.

**THIRD CITIZEN**

The thing is ... if it was printed last night ... how come I saw Mr Hasting alive this morning?

*Silence, they pass the pamphlet between them*

**FIRST CITIZEN**

What a backward world we live in!

**THIRD CITIZEN**

Do they really think that we are so stupid that we won't see through this blatant corruption? Somebody needs to say something.

**FIRST CITIZEN**

You idiot, you know what will happen if we speak out about this.

**SECOND CITIZEN**

It's a bad world, and we'll all come to a bad end when we can only think about these things, and don't say them.

*they stand for a while and people start arriving*

**THIRD CITIZEN**

The meeting is about to start.

**SECOND CITIZEN**

Let's see what bullshit they are going to feed us.

**FIRST CITIZEN**

I hope we get food parcels.

*people assembled in front of meeting hall pamphlets about **HASTINGS'** crimes are distributed  
**GENERAL** at top of stairs with **BUCKINGHAM** with **RICHARD** enters at the side of the stage  
(when **RICHARD** and **BUCKINGHAM** speaks the stage is in blue and **RICHARD** in spot  
during these moments the crowd freeze)*

**RICHARD**

How did it go?

**BUCKINGHAM**

The General made a speech about Hastings ...

**GENERAL**

My friends I have terrible, terrible news. Last night we discovered a plot of corruption and treason in the highest circles of our government. If it was not for the swift action of Mr Richard's guards we would be a country in mourning today. It was uncovered that Mr Hastings was part of a conspiracy to kill our beloved Richard, brother of our dear departed king. Mr Hastings was given a swift, but fair trial, and was found guilty and executed by the palace guard. I promise each and every one of you that I will not rest until I have uncovered the full extent of this conspiracy. And I will root out treason where it lives. Any questions?

**CITIZEN**

Was Mr Hasting executed last night?

**GENERAL**

Yes.

*crowd reacts*

**SECOND CITIZEN**

*(to THIRD CITIZEN)* I thought you said he was still alive this morning.

**THIRD CITIZEN**

He was. I saw him with my own eyes.

**FIRST CITIZEN**

I can't believe they didn't give us food.

**GENERAL**

It also came to light, that our queen, Elizabeth, had an affair with Mr Hastings, and that Mr Hastings organized the attack on our king that resulted in his death. Luckily we still have a rightful heir to the throne.

**CITIZEN**

Will the queen be tried for treason?

**GENERAL**

I cannot comment on that at the moment. It's an on-going investigation.

**RICHARD**

Did the people react?

**BUCKINGHAM**

No, they didn't.

**RICHARD**

Did you mention that Edward's son is a bastard?

**BUCKINGHAM**

I did.

**BUCKINGHAM**

General, so it is your opinion that the prince is the rightful heir to the throne?

## GENERAL

That's correct.

## BUCKINGHAM

I was under the impression that the prince was born before the king's wedding?

*there is commotion in the crowd*

I mean, we were not at their wedding; we were in the middle of a civil war. We all know the king had a huge sexual appetite.

*reactions by crowd: "the child is a bastard" ; "we don't want to be ruled by a bastard";*

*"the child is Hastings'" ; "the king raped my daughter" etc*

I also find it funny that King Edward didn't look anything like his father ... the only resemblance I see of Edward's father is in Richard.

*more reactions by crowd: "that means Richard is the only true heir to the throne" ;*

*"Richard should be king" ; "Edward and his son are both bastards, God help us" ; "he was a tyrant"*

## CITIZEN

*(shouting)* God save Richard, the one true king!

## ALL

*(begins to chant)* Richard! Richard!

## RICHARD

And now?

## BUCKINGHAM

The General and the people are coming here to ask you to become king. Pretend you're afraid, and don't say yes until they're begging you. Make sure you've got a bible in your hand and that you've got two priests with you.

## RICHARD

I'm going.

*scene change to church scene - RICHARD exits into the church*

## BUCKINGHAM

General, I'm waiting for Richard to show up. I don't think he wants to be disturbed. (*CATESBY enters from church*) Catesby, what was Mr Richard's answer to my request?

**CATESBY**

Mr Richard asks that you please visit him tomorrow. He's inside in prayer, with two priests.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Go and tell him that the General and some citizens are here to talk to him about matters of great importance.

**CATESBY**

I'll tell him right away, sir.

*He exits into church*

**BUCKINGHAM**

You see, Richard is nothing like Edward! He is not on his knees in front of some whore, but instead he's on his knees in prayer. We would be lucky to have this virtuous man as our king. But I'm afraid we'll never get him to agree.

**GENERAL**

Let's pray that he doesn't say no to us!

**BUCKINGHAM**

I'm afraid he will. (*CATESBY returns*) Catesby?

**CATESBY**

Mr Richard, wonders why you have gathered all these citizens to speak with him, since he had no idea they were coming. He's afraid you mean him harm.

**BUCKINGHAM**

We're here because we respect him.

*CATESBY exits.*

When devoutly religious men are praying, it's hard to draw them out of it.

*RICHARD enters at the top of the stairs, between two priests.*

**BUCKINGHAM**

Most gracious Richard, pardon us for interrupting your righteous, Christian prayer. Please hear us out and consider our request.

**RICHARD**

I'm sorry that I've kept you waiting, but I've just been so intent on serving God.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Richard, you should know that the people are angry that you are giving the thrown, the power and greatness that destiny and your noble birth have handed you - to the wrong person. They don't want an illegitimate bastard child as their king, when they have you who should be the rightful king.

**RICHARD**

I don't know whether I should just keep quiet and leave, or accuse you all of treason and have you thrown in jail. So I'll say this: thank you for your respect and love, but I'm not going to be your king. I don't deserve to be your king. Even if I was the one true heir to the throne, I would rather be a simple citizen than have such a great responsibility shoved onto me and be smothered by it. Thank God there is no real need for me to be your king. Edward left us a true heir, who will do just fine and will make us all happy as king, I'm sure.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Your conscience does you credit sir, but your objections are trivial, given the circumstances. You say that the prince is your brother's son, and we all agree, but that son was the result of whoring. He was born before your brother's wedding, which makes him a bastard! If you don't care about this country, at least use your own pure lineage to rescue us from the current corruption of the royal bloodline.

**GENERAL**

Yes, my good lord, your public begs you.

*the people agree*

**BUCKINGHAM**

Please don't refuse the love and respect we offer you.

**CATESBY**

Sir, accept their request!

*the people react*

**RICHARD**

*(silences the crowd)* I am unfit to rule and to be king. Please, don't take it the wrong way, but I cannot and will not give in to your demands.

**BUCKINGHAM**

If *you* won't become king, we'll just get someone else, to the disgrace and ruin of your family, we will get someone else. We will not have your brother's son as king. If you do not accept our offer, it will be the end of your family's reign on the throne. Fuck this I'm not going to beg anymore! *crowd reacts*

**RICHARD**

Oh, please don't swear, my dear Buckingham. *(beat)* I am not made of stone. I understand what must be done even though it's against my conscience. *(addresses crowd)* You wise, serious people force me to take responsibility for these dark changing times, whether I want to or not. I will have to be brave and endure it. I *will* be your king, but I warn you, nothing good can come from this. God knows, and you may have noticed, I'm not too eager to take on this job.

**GENERAL**

God bless you sir. We understand you're just doing it for us.

**BUCKINGHAM**

The king is dead, long live the king!

**ALL**

Long live the king! *(several times)*

*RICHARD is led by the PRIESTS into the church.*

*RICHARD notices the crowd is gone, starts laughing, takes of the robes, it at the priests and exits.*

**Act 4**

**Act 4, scene 1**

*The prison - next day - morning.*

*QUEEN ELIZABETH, DUCHESS enter on one side*

*LADY ANNE enters on the other side*

**DUCHESS**

*(goes over to her)* My dear, how nice to see you!

**ANNE**

It's lovely to see you too. *(to ELIZABETH)* You must be so excited about the arrival of your son.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

I am, but I heard from the Archbishop that he arrived last night. Richard is keeping him here in the prison ... apparently for his own safety.

**DUCHESS**

But what are you doing here?

**ANNE**

I just needed to get away for Richard's quarters ... and I heard that young Edward was kept in the prison so I came to visit him.

*JAIL-KEEPER enters at the top of the stairs.*

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

(to *JAIL-KEEPER*) Where is my son? I want to see him.

**JAIL-KEEPER**

Your majesty, your son is fine, but I'm sorry - you cannot see him. The king has strictly forbidden it.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

The king? What king?

**JAIL-KEEPER**

I meant to say Mr Richard.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Richard will never be king!!

**JAIL-KEEPER**

I apologize, your majesty but ...

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

I am the prince's mother and no one can keep me from seeing him ...

**DUCHESS**

... and I am his grandmother, I insist on seeing him.

**ANNE**

(*calmly*) I am legally his aunt. Take us to see him. I'll take the blame and clear you from any responsibility.

**JAIL-KEEPER**

(to *LADY ANNE*) Lady Anne, I can't do it. Please forgive me but I have my orders.

*He exits - STANLEY enters*

**STANLEY**

*(greet*s **QUEEN ELIZABETH** and **DUCHESS**) Your majesties. *(to ANNE)* Lady Anne, you must come with me to the church. You are going to be crowned as Richard's queen.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Oh, this can't be true!!

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Stanley, how can this be?

**STANLEY**

Your majesty, the General and the people begged Richard to be king. There are accusations that you had an affair with Hastings and that your son is illegitimate.

**DUCHESS**

That's outrageous!

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

My family is not safe anymore. He already has my son locked up. All I have left now is my daughter. What am I going to do?

**DUCHESS**

Stanley, is your stepson Richmond still out of the country?

**STANLEY**

Yes.

**DUCHESS**

Elizabeth, send your daughter to Richmond. She'll be safe there. Write to him and tell him what is going on here. He is Queen Margaret's nephew which makes him a Lancaster. He should come here and claim the throne. I would rather see this country ruled by a Lancaster than Richard.

**STANLEY**

Your majesty is right, she'll be safe there. A lot of people left the country and have joined Richmond already.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Mother, you're right ... rather a Lancaster than Richard, even if it means my son loses the crown ... just as long as my children are safe. I'll write to him and tell him what's going on. Stanley, will you make sure he gets it and that my daughter arrives safely.

**STANLEY**

Yes your majesty. But we have to hurry.

**DUCHESS**

My womb is cursed! It's a deathbed since I gave birth to Richard.

**STANLEY**

*(to ANNE)* Come, Lady Anne. We must go.

**ANNE**

I don't want to go, but I presume I have no choice. I wish that God will make the crown red-hot steel, to burn my brains away!

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

No, no, no don't say that, don't wish yourself any harm. Be strong. I don't envy your position but at least you're safe now.

**ANNE**

Safe? Richard came to me at my husband's funeral. He barely washed the blood off his hands after killing my husband and my father-in-law. When I looked at Richard's face I wanted to curse him for making me a widow so young. I wished that when he got married, sorrow would haunt his bed ... that his wife - if any woman was crazy enough to marry him - was miserable because he's alive. And then what? Before I even had time to curse him, he stole my heart with his sweet, slick words. I became the victim of my own curse. Since I married him, I haven't been able to sleep. Every night I wake up to the sounds of the nightmares that he is dreaming up in his head. It doesn't matter though. He hates me because of who my father was. He will, no doubt, get rid of me soon.

**DUCHESS**

Enough talking. *(to ANNE)* You go to Richard. Angels will protect you. *(to ELIZABETH)* Go write the letter to Richmond ... quickly ... and prepare your daughter to leave. After Stanley escorted Anne to the church he will meet you at your quarters. Then come to the safety of the church, we'll hide there

until we rescued young Edward and it is safe to leave. *(to STANLEY)* Stanley, be safe ... and look after my granddaughter. Now all of you go!

*They exit, she is alone*

*(looks at the building)* Please, you ancient building, take pity on my grandson locked inside your walls. Treat him well. *(looks around her)* I know I must look silly saying goodbye to a building, but forgive this foolish old woman. I have experienced eighty or more years of sorrow; for each hour of joy I've experienced, I've suffered a full week of misery. I look forward to go to my grave, where I can experience peace and rest at last ... but not until Richard is gone.

*She exits*

#### **Act 4, scene 1.1**

*the church - same day*

*RICHARD enters with LADY ANNE and stand on top of the stairs.*

*the crowd assembles in front of the church*

*a PRIEST puts a crown on RICHARD's head.*

**ALL**

Long live the king, long live the king!

*lights washes the stage with white light from behind*

*(emulating the hand of God touching RICHARD)*

*blackout*

**possible interval**

#### **Act 4, scene 2**

*the city - months later*

*RICHARD, BUCKINGHAM are sitting at a table. LADY ANNE is with them*

**RICHARD**

Buckingham, thanks to your advice and assistance, I am now king. But for how long?

**BUCKINGHAM**

Forever, your majesty. You've been ruling for six months now.

**RICHARD**

Buckingham, young Edward is still alive ... *(waits for BUCKINGHAM to realize what he is saying)*

**BUCKINGHAM**

Keep talking, your majesty?

**RICHARD**

And I say I want to be king.

**BUCKINGHAM**

But you are king, your majesty.

**RICHARD**

But young Edward is still alive.

**BUCKINGHAM**

True.

**RICHARD**

And that's the problem, that young Edward is still alive ... *(he loses it)* Buckingham, you're not usually so fucking stupid. I'll be clear; I want that brat dead ... now! And I want you to do it!

**BUCKINGHAM**

*(shocked)* Your majesty ... thank you for trusting me ... with such an important job ... but give me a moment ... to think about it ... your majesty.

*He exits.*

**RICHARD**

Buckingham grows much too cautious. I can no longer trust Buckingham. He was relentless in assisting me and now he needs time? Well, so be it.

***TYRREL enters***

**TYRREL**

Richard, I just got word that Richmond Lancaster, Queen Margaret's nephew, is gathering an army made up of rebel forces. A lot of our people are fleeing the country and joining him.

***CATESBY enters***

**CATESBY**

Your majesty, I heard a news bulletin on the short wave radio. It claims you killed several people to ascend to the throne. They named Hastings and Rivers as a few of the people you killed.

**RICHARD**

Where did they hear that!

**CATESBY**

They claim their source is the Archbishop.

*STANLEY enters.*

**RICHARD**

Find him! Find the Archbishop. I want that fucking god-fearing Christian traitor dead. He should not fear God ... he should fear me! Find him!

**STANLEY**

Your majesty, the Archbishop joined Richmond.

**RICHARD**

*(losing control)* What?! Catesby, send out word ... close all the borders. No one leaves this country! And I want a total media blackout. And make sure that news reporter is dead! Stanley, Richmond is your stepson. Find out what that fucking Lancaster is up to! I will destroy anything and anyone who threatens my throne! Is that clear!

*CATESBY and STANLEY exit*

**RICHARD**

Tyrrel, spread a rumour that Anne, my wife, is very sick and likely to die. I will make sure she's kept out of view. *(beat)* I also want you to kill my brother's brat. *(beat)* And find my brother's daughter, so that I can marry her. Kill her mother if she refuses. It's maybe not the most fool proof way to secure my position, but by marrying her I will have a rightful claim to the throne. *(beat)* And find Stanley's son. We're going to need leverage against him, I don't trust him.

**TYRREL**

Consider it done.

*RICHARD kisses him and TYRREL exits*

*BUCKINGHAM returns*

**BUCKINGHAM**

Your majesty, I considered your request ...

**RICHARD**

It doesn't matter anymore. You may go.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Your majesty?

**RICHARD**

Yes?

**BUCKINGHAM**

May I remind you about what you promised me?

**RICHARD**

I am not in the giving mood today.

***RICHARD** exits*

**BUCKINGHAM**

*(to LADY ANNE)* Is this really happening? Is this how he rewards my dedicated service? Did I work to make him king for this? I'm not safe anymore. I'd better flee before the same thing happens to me that happened to Hastings and Rivers. I advise you to do the same.

*He exits. LADY ANNE stays sitting*

*blackout*

**Act 4, scene 3**

*Same day - evening*

*PRINCE EDWARD can be seen kneeling next to his bed in his prison cell praying.*

*TYRREL enters behind him, aims the pistol at his head and shoots. He exits*

*All of this in silhouette.*

*In another spot we see LADY ANNE still sitting in the chair.*

*She injected herself with a drug. RICHARD enters and sees her.*

*Feels for a pulse and finds one, he strangles her.*

*TYRREL enters*

**TYRREL**

Richard.

**RICHARD**

Good or bad news?

**TYRREL**

Both, Good news is that the brat is dead.

**RICHARD**

*(he laughs)* Thank you. *(he kisses him)* The bad news?

**TYRREL**

Bishop Ely, the Archbishop's replacement fled to Richmond, and Buckingham escaped the compound yesterday and is marching south, backed by an army, to meet up with Richmond.

**RICHARD**

Ely joining Richmond troubles me more than Buckingham and his fucking army. Get the General to gather our troops. We will be ready for him. *(indicates LADY ANNE's body)* Take care of it.

*RICHARD exits, TYRREL picks up the body and exits.*

**Act 4, scene 4**

*The next day - early morning*

*QUEEN MARGARET enters walking around mumbling to herself*

*At the same time QUEEN ELIZABETH and DUCHESS enters, ready to travel*

*STANLEY enters*

**STANLEY**

Your majesty!

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Stanley, could you break my son out of prison?

**STANLEY**

Elizabeth ... your son is dead.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

*(clasping her chest)* Ah, my son! *(she starts to cry)* God, why would you abandon an innocent child and throw him to the wolves? Were you sleeping when he was killed?

**DUCHESS**

*(sitting down)* It's a shame to the world and God, when someone like me, who should have died long ago, still lives, and those who should be alive is dead.

**STANLEY**

Elizabeth, Richmond is almost here. We have to get you out of the country to safety, but I must go before Richard or one of his men finds me here. I'll meet up with you later. I'll take your bags so long.

*He exits*

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

*(sitting down beside her)* My whole family ... slaughtered. What's going to happen to me?

**QUEEN MARGARET**

*(she laughs)* I guess now we're even. I had an Edward till Richard killed him. I had a Henry till Richard killed him. *(to ELIZABETH)* You had two Edwards till Richard killed them. *(she starts giggling - to DUCHESS)* You had a Clarence and an Edward, and Richard killed them.

**DUCHESS**

And you killed my husband Richard and my son Rutland.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

*(she laughs again)* Your womb let loose a hellhound that hunts us all. That dog, who had teeth before he even had eyes, is the world's worst tyrant. Oh righteous God, how can I thank you enough that this cur preys on his mother's children.

**DUCHESS**

Why do you enjoy our grief so much?

**QUEEN MARGARET**

I am hungry for revenge, and now I plan to gorge myself on it. Your son Edward, who stabbed my son Edward, is dead. To even the balance, your grandson Edward is also dead. Your Clarence, who stabbed my Edward, is dead. And the spectators who stood by, Hastings, as well as Rivers, have been sent early to their graves. Richard, a fiendish spy for hell itself, still lives. Soon, very soon, he will meet his ghastly and well deserved end. I pray that God ends his life before I die, so I can say, "The dog is dead!"

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Margaret, you said that the time would come when I would want your help in cursing Richard.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

You once stole my position; now you get to have the grief that goes with it. Farewell, queen of tragic misfortune. Your sorrow makes me smile.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

You are so good at curses, stay and teach me how to curse my enemies!

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Don't sleep at night, and don't eat during the day. Compare what you've lost with what you suffer now. Remember your child as being sweeter than he actually was, and think of the man who killed him as worse than he is. Making your loss greater makes the person who caused it worse. Think like this all day and night, and you'll learn how to curse.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

But I do not have the words.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Your misery will make them come.

*RICHARD enters as QUEEN MARGARET exits.*

**RICHARD**

And what do we have here?

**DUCHESS**

A mother who might have kept you from all the murders you've committed by strangling you in her cursed womb.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Tell me, you lowlife, where is my son?

**DUCHESS**

Where is your brother Clarence?

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Where are Hastings and my brother Rivers?

**DUCHESS**

Are you my son?

**RICHARD**

Mother, I'm very much like you. I can't tolerate a tone of disapproval. So excuse me, I'm in a hurry.

**DUCHESS**

Are you that impatient? God knows I suffered in agony and pain waiting for you to be born.

**RICHARD**

And wasn't my arrival a comfort to you?

**DUCHESS**

God no, you arrived on earth to make it my hell. Mark my words; you will die as you should. You are violent, and I pray to God that your death will be violent. Your life was shameful, and let your death be, too. You are no son of mine!

*She exits, **ELIZABETH** follows.*

**RICHARD**

Elizabeth ... I need to speak to you.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

*(she stops)* I don't have another son for you to murder.

**RICHARD**

You have a daughter called Elizabeth.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

And must she die because of that?

**RICHARD**

Her life is safe.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

As safe as her brother was?

**RICHARD**

You make it sound as if I killed my nephew.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

I'm sure whoever killed my son, was ordered by you to do it.

**RICHARD**

Elizabeth, when I succeed in this war, you and your family will have the greatest position possible.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Tell me what position, what dignity, what honour you can award to any child of mine?

**RICHARD**

You don't understand me, I love your daughter and I intend to make her my queen.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

What, you?

**RICHARD**

That's right.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

How can you woo her?

**RICHARD**

That's what I want you to tell me, you know her best.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Then, send the man, who killed her brother, to her with a bleeding heart; scratch on it 'Edward'. She might cry, so send her a handkerchief soaked in her brother's blood - as Margaret did to your father, with Rutland's blood - ; and tell her to wipe her tears away with it. If this doesn't make her love you, send a letter telling her that you killed her uncle Clarence, her uncle Rivers, and for her sake her aunt Anne.

**RICHARD**

Come, come, you're making fun of me. This is not the way to win your daughter.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

There isn't any other way, unless you became someone else.

**RICHARD**

What is done is done. Men sometimes do the wrong thing, which they may later regret, when they had time to think about it. If I killed your son, I will give your daughter a son. A grandmother is loved just as much as a mother. And you will be the mother to a king again. All the miseries you suffered will not only be repaired, but also improved. Give her the benefit of your experience, and prepare her to hear me woo her. Convince her that she wants to be queen.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

What must I tell her? That her father's brother wants to marry her? Or should I say her uncle? Or the one who killed both her brother and her uncle?

**RICHARD**

Tell her that the King, who can order her to do it, asks her. Say that she will be a high and mighty Queen...

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

To wish she never had the title, like her mother.

**RICHARD**

Say I will love her for ever.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

But for how long will 'forever' last? As long as hell and Richard still likes her?

**RICHARD**

Your reasoning is too shallow and too quick.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Oh no, my reasons are deep and as permanent as death, as my poor son.

**RICHARD**

Don't harp on that point, Elizabeth - it is in the past. I swear -

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

By nothing; this is no promise. If you want me to believe something you'll swear to, then swear by something you haven't insulted...

**RICHARD**

Then, by myself -

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

You have abused yourself.

**RICHARD**

Now, by the world -

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

It is full of your murders.

**RICHARD**

Why then, by God -

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

You wronged God most of all.

**RICHARD**

Then, by time to come ...

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Don't swear by the future, you have already abused it by your behaviour in the past.

**RICHARD**

My happiness, and yours, depends on her; without her, death, desolation, ruin and decay will come to you and me, to her, the country, and many Christian souls. This is the only way to avoid it; nothing else will do. Elizabeth, you have to support me. Tell her what I will be, not what I have been.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Shall I let the devil tempt me like this?

**RICHARD**

Yes, if the devil tempts you to do good.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

But you killed my son.

**RICHARD**

But in your daughter's womb I will lay him to rest. In that rich nest he shall grow again, to comfort you.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

I'll go to her, and see what she thinks. I will let you know very soon.

**RICHARD**

Give her a kiss from me. *(he kisses her)* Goodbye, mother.

*QUEEN ELIZABETH exits.*

Forgiving fool, and superficial, unpredictable woman!

*TYRREL enters, with CATESBY following.*

What's the news?

**TYRREL**

Richard, a fleet of ships sails on the southern coast. Many of our former friends have gathered to meet the fleet. Word is that Richmond is the navy's admiral, waiting for Buckingham to help them come ashore.

**RICHARD**

Catesby, go to Norfolk.

*CATESBY stands and waits*

Tyrrel, go to Salisbury. When you get there - *(to CATESBY)* Fucking idiot, why are you still standing there?

**CATESBY**

You didn't tell me what you want me to tell him, your majesty.

**RICHARD**

Tell him to gather the greatest army he can and meet me right away at Salisbury!

**CATESBY**

Yes.

*He exits. STANLEY enters.*

**RICHARD**

Stanley, what news do you have?

**STANLEY**

Neither good nor bad.

**RICHARD**

Well, how nice, a fucking riddle! Neither good nor bad. Why do you beat around the bush when you could get straight to the point? Once again, what's the fucking news?

**STANLEY**

Richmond arrived in the south.

**RICHARD**

Did you find out what he is doing here?

**STANLEY**

I don't know. I can only guess.

**RICHARD**

Well, then guess!

**STANLEY**

I guess he's coming to claim the throne. He is a Lancaster after all.

**RICHARD**

Is the throne empty? Is the king dead? So, tell me, why is he here?

**STANLEY**

Unless it's for that, I can't guess...

**RICHARD**

Unless he's here to lead your army!

**STANLEY**

No, your majesty ...

**RICHARD**

Where is your army, then? Aren't they at this very moment in the south helping him to come ashore?

**STANLEY**

No, your majesty, they are in the west.

**RICHARD**

What are they doing in the west when they should be in the south serving their king?

**STANLEY**

They haven't been commanded to go south. If your Majesty would like, I'll gather my army and go south.

**RICHARD**

I see, so you could join Richmond. Do you think I'm an idiot?

**STANLEY**

No your majesty.

**RICHARD**

Go and gather your men. But keep in mind before you betray me, I have your son. If you betray me your son will pay with his life.

**STANLEY**

Yes your majesty.

*He exits. CATESBY enters.*

**CATESBY**

Buckingham ...

**RICHARD**

*(hits him)* bring me better news.

**CATESBY**

... has been captured and is being brought here.

**RICHARD**

Good. You may go

*CATESBY exits*

Tyrrel, take care of our friend when he arrives, then meet me at the General's tent, we have another fucking Lancaster to defeat.

*RICHARD exits, TYRREL remains. BUCKINGHAM enters with guards*

**BUCKINGHAM**

*(pleading)* I want to speak to Richard.

**TYRREL**

You can't, so calm down.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Did I make him king for this? May God forgive me.

**TYRREL**

No, may Richard forgive you.

*TYRREL shoots him and exit.*

**Act 5**

**Act 5, scene 1**

*The next day- evening*

*RICHARD, with NORFOLK, CATESBY, and  
TYRREL enter*

**RICHARD**

Put up my tent! I'll sleep here tonight.

*RICHMOND, OXFORD, BLUNT enter*

**RICHMOND**

Pitch my tent here! I'll sleep here tonight. Men, we have managed to march all the way to the centre of the country without any opposition. And we got some good news from my stepfather Stanley: Richard is about a day's march from us.

**RICHARD**

Does anyone know how many men Richmond has?

**NORFOLK**

Six or seven hundred, at the most.

**RICHARD**

Our army is three times the size.

**RICHARD**

Gentlemen, it's time to talk battle strategy.

**RICHARD**

What time is it?

**CATESBY**

It's nine o'clock.

**RICHARD**

Catesby, send a junior officer to Stanley's camp to tell him to bring his men here before sunrise ... if he wants to see his son George alive.

*CATESBY exits.*

**RICHARD**

Thank you all, good night. Tyrrel, make sure my guard is on duty.

**OXFORD**

I have no doubt that his friends will come over to our side.

**BLUNT**

He has no friends except those who are too afraid to stand up to him and when the heat is on, even they will desert him.

**RICHMOND**

All the better for us.

**RICHMOND**

I need to draw up a plan for the battle, we need to appoint each leader to his particular command, and carefully divide up our small army.

**RICHMOND**

Captain Blunt, did you find Stanley's camp?

**BLUNT**

Yes, his own regiment is encamped about a kilometre south of the king's army.

**RICHMOND**

Did you get the note to him?

**BLUNT**

Yes, sir, he is on his way.

**TYRREL**

Yes.

*they all leave. RICHARD sleeps.*

*sometime in the night*

*RICHARD screams TYRREL enters.*

**TYRREL**

Richard ...

**RICHMOND**

Good night, Captain Blunt.

*BLUNT exits*

Oxford, let's discuss tomorrow's action plan in my tent.

*(they work)*

*STANLEY enters RICHMOND's tent.*

**STANLEY**

Richmond!

**RICHMOND**

Dad, thank you for coming. What can you tell me?

**STANLEY**

I will help you, but I can't be too obvious about being on your side without risking George's life. Richard's keeping him hostage.

**RICHMOND**

The bastard.

**STANLEY**

Attack at dawn. But, I have to go now. Good luck!

**RICHMOND**

You too. I'll see you soon.

*they embrace. STANLEY he exits*

*RICHMOND sleeps*

**RICHARD**

Oh Tyrrel, I had a terrible dream last night!  
What do you think - will our friends all be loyal?

**TYRREL**

No doubt, your majesty.

**RICHARD**

Oh Tyrrel, I'm afraid, I'm afraid -

**TYRREL**

No, don't be afraid of dreams. Go back to sleep.  
*he goes back to sleep*

***NORFOLK, CATESBY enters.***

**NORFOLK**

Get ready. Richmond is attacking us.

**RICHARD**

*(waking up)* What? Where's Stanley and his  
army?

**NORFOLK**

My lord, Stanley refuses to come.

*next morning*

***OXFORD & BLUNT enter***

**OXFORD & BLUNT**

Good morning, Richmond.

**RICHMOND**

Good morning. What's the time?

**BLUNT**

It's almost four.

**RICHMOND**

Get the men ready.

*They all exit.*

<p><b>RICHARD</b> Kill his son George!</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>explosion is heard</i></p> <p><b>NORFOLK</b> They're here.</p> <p><b>RICHARD</b> Victory will be ours. <i>March on, join bravely, let us to it pell-mell If not to heaven, then hand-in-hand to hell!</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>They all exit.</i></p>	
---	--

**Act 5, scene 2**

*The Battle. RICHARD rushes in*

**RICHARD**

A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!

*TYRREL rushes in*

**TYRREL**

Richard we must retreat! *(he goes)*

**RICHARD**

Traitor! *(he shoots him)*

*RICHMOND enters; they fight.*

*During the fight the ghosts appear one at a time, every time a ghost appears the action slows down, only RICHARD is in normal time, and recognizes the ghosts.*

*Fighting*

*The GHOST OF CLARENCE enters.*

**GHOST OF CLARENCE**

Richard ... It's me, Clarence, whom you betrayed! In battle, think of me; despair, and die!

*Fighting*

*The GHOST of RIVERS enters.*

**GHOST OF RIVERS**

*(to RICHARD)* Richard ... let me sit heavily on your conscience; despair, and die!

*Fighting*

*The **GHOST** of young **EDWARD** enters.*

**GHOST OF YOUNG EDWARD**

*(to **RICHARD**)* Uncle Richard ... your nephew's soul commands you to despair and die!

*Fighting*

*The **GHOST OF HASTINGS** enters.*

**GHOST OF HASTINGS**

*(to **RICHARD**)* Richard ... you violent, guilty man; despair, and die!

*Fighting*

*The **GHOST OF BUCKINGHAM** enters.*

**GHOST OF BUCKINGHAM**

*(to **RICHARD**)* Richard ... I was the first to help you to the crown and the last who suffered your tyranny; despair and die.

*Fighting*

*The **GHOST OF ANNE** enters.*

**GHOST OF ANNE**

*(to **RICHARD**)* Richard ... think of me; despair, and die!

***RICHMOND** shoots **RICHARD***

*As the shot is fired, everything comes to a standstill. The ghosts whisper "**RICHARD**". **RICHARD** sees them again. He is lit in only a spot. Stage washed in white light, while music swells.*

**BLACKOUT**

# THE TRAGEDIE OF HAMLET,

Prince of Denmarke. by  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Based on the Folio Text of 1623

DjVu Editions E-books

Adapted into One Act by Thys Heydenrych

# Adapted into One Act by Thys Heydenrych

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## Scene list with Characters

### Act 1

#### **scene 1**

*Barnardo*  
*Francisco*  
*Horatio*  
*Marcellus*  
*(Ghost)*

#### **scene 3**

*Laertes*  
*Ophelia*  
*Polonius*

#### **scene 4**

*Hamlet*  
*Horatio*  
*Marcellus*  
*Ghost*

#### **scene 2**

*Claudius King of Denmarke,*  
*Gertrude the Queene,*  
*Hamlet,*  
*Polonius,*  
*Laertes,*  
*Ophelia,*  
*(Lords Attendant)*  
*Horatio*  
*Barnardo*  
*Marcellus*

#### **scene 5**

*Ghost*  
*Hamlet*  
*Horatio*  
*Marcellus*

### Act 2

#### **scene 1**

*Polonius*  
*(Reynoldo)*  
*Ophelia*

#### **scene 2**

*Claudius*  
*Gertrude*  
*Rosincrance*  
*Guiltensterne*  
*Polonius*  
*Hamlet*

### Act 3

#### **scene 1**

*Claudius*  
*Gertrude*  
*Polonius*  
*Ophelia*  
*Rosincrance*  
*Guiltensterne*  
*Hamlet*

#### **scene 2**

*Hamlet*  
*Horatio*  
*Rosincrance*  
*Guiltensterne*  
*Polonius*

#### **scene 3**

*Claudius*  
*Hamlet*  
*Rosincrance*  
*Guiltensterne*  
*Polonius*

#### **scene 4**

*Hamlet*  
*Gertrude*  
*Polonius*  
*Ghost*

### Act 4

#### **scene 1**

*Claudius*  
*Gertrude*  
*Rosencrance*  
*Guiltensterne*

#### **scene 2**

*Hamlet*  
*Rosencrance*  
*Guiltensterne*

#### **scene 3**

*Hamlet*  
*Rosencrance*  
*Guiltensterne*  
*Claudius*

#### **scene 5**

*Gertrude*  
*Horatio*  
*Ophelia*  
*Claudius*  
*Laertes*

#### **scene 6**

*Horatio*  
*Servant*

#### **scene 7**

*Claudius*  
*Laertes*  
*Messenger*  
*Gertrude*

### Act 5

#### **scene 2**

*Hamlet*  
*Horatio*  
*Osricke*

*Claudius*

*Laertes*

*Gertrude*

*Lords, with other Attendants*

## **The Tragedie of Hamlet**

*Act I*

*Scene 1*

[*Enter Barnardo and Francisco two Centinels.*]

*Barnardo* . Who's there?

*Francisco* . Nay answer me: Stand & vnfold your selfe.

*Barnardo* . Long liue the King.

*Francisco* . *Barnardo?*

*Barnardo* . He.

*Francisco* . You come most carefully vpon your houre.

*Barnardo* . 'Tis now strook twelue, get thee to bed *Francisco*.

*Francisco* . For this releefe much thanks: 'Tis bitter cold,  
And I am sicke at heart.

*Barnardo* . Haue you had quiet Guard?

*Francisco* . Not a Mouse stirring.

*Barnardo* . Well, goodnight. If you do meet *Horatio* and *Marcellus*,  
the Riuals of my Watch, bid them make hast.

[*Enter Horatio and Marcellus.*]

*Francisco* . ~~I thinke I heare them.~~ Stand: who's there?

*Horatio* . Friends to this ground.

*Marcellus* . And Leige- men to the Dane.

*Francisco* . Giue you good night.

*Marcellus* . O farwel honest Soldier, ~~who hath relieu'd you?~~

[*Exit Francisco .*]

*Marcellus* . Holla *Barnardo*.

*Barnardo* . Say, what is *Horatio* there?

*Marcellus* . What, ha's this thing appear'd againe to night.

**Barnardo** . I haue seene nothing.

**Marcellus.** *Horatio* saies, 'tis but our Fantasie,  
And will not let beleefe take hold of him  
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seene of vs,  
Therefore I haue intreated him along  
With vs, to watch the minutes of this Night,  
That if againe this Apparition come,  
He may approue our eyes, and speake to it.

**Horatio** . Tush, tush, 'twill not appeare.

**Marcellus.** Peace, breake thee of: [Enter the Ghost.]  
Looke where it comes againe.

**Barnardo.** In the same figure, like the King that's dead.

**Marcellus.** Thou art a Scholler; speake to it *Horatio*.

**Horatio** . What art thou that vsurp'st this time of night,  
Together with that Faire and Warlike forme  
In which the Maiesty of buried Denmarke  
Did sometimes march: By Heauen I charge thee speake.

**Marcellus.** It is offended.

**Barnardo.** See, it stalkes away.

**Horatio** . Stay: speake; speake: I Charge thee, speake. [Exit the Ghost.]

**Marcellus.** 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

**Barnardo.** How now *Horatio*? You tremble & look pale:  
Is not this something more then Fantasie?

**Marcellus.** Is it not like the King?

**Horatio** . As thou art to thy selfe, 'Tis strange.

**Marcellus.** Thus twice before, and iust at this dead houre,  
With Martiall stalke, hath he gone by our Watch.

**Horatio** . In what particular thought to work, I know not:  
But in the grosse and scope of my Opinion,  
This boades some strange eruption to our State.

[Enter Ghost againe.]

But soft, behold: Loe, where it comes againe:  
Ile crosse it, though it blast me. Stay Illusion:  
If thou hast any sound, or vse of Voyce,  
Speake to me. Stay, and speake. Stop it *Marcellus*.

**Marcellus**. 'Tis gone.

[Exit Ghost.]

**Horatio** . Let vs impart what we haue seene to night  
Vnto yong *Hamlet*. For vpon my life,  
This Spirit dumbe to vs, will speake to him:  
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,  
As needfull in our Loues, fitting our Duty?

**Marcellus**. Let do't I pray, and I this morning know  
Where we shall finde him most conueniently.

[Exeunt]

## Scene 2

[Enter Claudius King of Denmarke, Gertrude the Queene,]

[Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes, and his Sister O-phelia,]

[Lords Attendant.]

**King.** Though yet of *Hamlet* our deere Brothers death  
The memory be greene: and that it vs befitted  
To beare our hearts in greefe, and our whole Kingdome  
To be contracted in one brow of woe:  
Yet so farre hath Discretion fought with Nature,  
That we with wisest sorrow thinke on him,  
Together with remembrance of our selues.  
Therefore our sometimes Sister, now our Queene,  
Th' imperiall Ioyntresse of this warlike State,  
Haue we, as 'twere, with a defeated ioy,  
With one Auspicious, and one Dropping eye,  
With mirth in Funerall, and with Dirge in Marriage,  
In equall Scale weighing Delight and Dole  
Taken to Wife; nor haue we heerein barr'd  
Your better Wisedomes, which haue freely gone  
With this affaire along, for all our Thankes.  
And now *Laertes*, what's the newes with you?  
You told vs of some suite. What is't *Laertes*?  
What would'st thou haue *Laertes*?

**Laertes.** Dread my Lord,  
Your leaue and fauour to returne to France,

**King.** Haue you your Fathers leaue?  
What sayes *Polonius*?

**Polonius.** He hath my Lord:  
I do beseech you giue him leaue to go.

**King.** Take thy faire houre *Laertes*, time be thine,

And thy best graces spend it at thy will:

But now my Cosin *Hamlet*, and my Sonne?

*Hamlet.* A little more then kin, and lesse then kinde.

*King.* How is it that the Clouds still hang on you?

*Hamlet.* Not so my Lord, I am too much i'th' Sun.

*Queen.* Good *Hamlet* cast thy nightly colour off,  
And let thine eye looke like a Friend on Denmarke.

Do not for euer with thy veyled lids  
Seeke for thy Noble Father in the dust;  
Thou know'st 'tis common, all that liues must dye,  
Passing through Nature, to Eternity.

*Hamlet.* I Madam, it is common.

*Queen.* If it be;  
Why seemes it so particular with thee.

*Hamlet.* Seemes Madam? Nay, it is: I know not Seemes:

*King.* 'Tis sweet and commendable  
In your Nature *Hamlet*,  
To giue these mourning duties to your Father:  
But you must know, your Father lost a Father,  
That Father lost, lost his, and the Suruiuer bound  
In filiall Obligation, for some terme  
To do obsequious Sorrow. But to perseuer  
In obstinate Condolement, is a course  
Of impious stubbornnesse. 'Tis vnmanly greefe,  
It shewes a will most incorrect to Heauen,  
~~This must be so.~~ We pray you throw to earth  
This vnpreuayling woe, and thinke of vs

As of a Father; For let the world take note,  
You are the most immediate to our Throne,  
And with no lesse Nobility of Loue,  
Then that which deerest Father beares his Sonne,  
Do I impart towards you. For your intent  
In going backe to Schoole in Wittenberg,  
It is most retrograde to our desire:  
And we beseech you, bend you to remaine  
Heere in the cheere and comfort of our eye,  
Our cheefest Courtier Cosin, and our Sonne.

**Gertrude .** Let not thy Mother lose her Prayers *Hamlet*:  
I prythee stay with vs, go not to Wittenberg.

**Hamlet.** I shall in all my best  
Obey you Madam.

**King.** Why 'tis a louing, and a faire Reply,  
Be as our selfe in Denmarke. Madam come,

[*Exeunt all*]

[*Manet Hamlet.*]

**Hamlet.** Oh that this too too solid Flesh, would melt,  
Thaw, and resolue it selfe into a Dew:  
Or that the Euerlasting had not fixt  
His Cannon 'gainst Selfe- slaughter. O God, O God!  
How weary, stale, flat, and vnprofitable  
Seemes to me all the vses of this world?  
Fie on't? Oh fie, fie, 'tis an vnweeded Garden  
That growes to Seed: Things rank, and grosse in Nature  
Possesse it meerey. That it should come to this:

But two months dead: Nay, not so much; not two,  
So excellent a King, that was to this  
*Hiperion* to a Satyre: so louing to my Mother,  
That he might not beteene the windes of heauen  
Visit her face too roughly. Heauen and Earth  
Must I remember: why she would hang on him,  
As if encrease of Appetite had growne  
By what is fed on; and yet within a month?  
Let me not thinke on't: Frailty, thy name is woman.  
A little Month, or ere those shooes were old,  
With which she followed my poore Fathers body  
Like *Niobe*, all teares. Why she, euen she.  
(O Heauen! A beast that wants discourse of Reason  
Would haue mourn'd longer) married with mine Vnkle,  
My Fathers Brother: but no more like my Father,  
Then I to *Hercules*. Within a Moneth?  
Ere yet the salt of most vnrighteous Teares  
Had left the flushing of her gauled eyes,  
She married. O most wicked speed, to post  
With such dexterity to Incestuous sheets:  
It is not, nor it cannot come to good.  
But breake my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

[Enter *Horatio*, *Barnardo*, and *Marcellus*.]

***Horatio*** . Haile to your Lordship.

***Hamlet***. I am glad to see you well:

*Horatio*, or I do forget my selfe.

***Horatio*** . The same my Lord,

And your poore Seruant euer.

**Hamlet.** Sir my good friend,

Ile change that name with you:

But what in faith make you from *Wittemberge*?

**Horatio .** A truant disposition, good my Lord.

**Hamlet.** I know you are no Truant:

But what is your affaire in *Elsenour*?

Wee'l teach you to drinke deepe, ere you depart.

**Horatio .** My Lord, I came to see your Fathers Funerall.

**Hamlet.** I pray thee doe not mock me (fellow Student)

I thinke it was to see my Mothers Wedding.

**Horatio .** Indeed my Lord, it followed hard vpon.

**Hamlet.** Thrift thrift *Horatio*: the Funerall Bakt- meats

Did coldly furnish forth the Marriage Tables;

My father, me thinkes I see my father.

**Horatio .** Oh where my Lord?

**Hamlet.** In my minds eye (*Horatio*)

**Horatio .** I saw him once; he was a goodly King.

**Hamlet.** He was a man, take him for all in all:

I shall not look vpon his like againe.

**Horatio .** My Lord, I thinke I saw him yesternight.

**Hamlet.** Saw? Who?

**Horatio .** My Lord, the King your Father.

**Hamlet.** The King my Father?

**Horatio .** Season your admiration for a while

With an attent eare; till I may deliuer

Vpon the witsse of these Gentlemen,

This maruell to you.

*Hamlet.* For Heauens loue let me heare.

*Horatio .* Two nights together, had these Gentlemen  
(*Marcellus* and *Barnardo*) on their Watch  
In the dead wast and middle of the night  
Beene thus encountred. A figure like your Father,  
Arm'd at all points exactly,  
And I with them the third Night kept the Watch,  
Whereas they had deliuer'd both in time,  
Forme of the thing; each word made true and good,  
The Apparition comes. I knew your Father:  
These hands are not more like.

*Hamlet.* But where was this?

*Marcellus.* My Lord vpon the platforme where we watcht.

*Hamlet.* Did you not speake to it?

*Horatio .* My Lord, I did;  
But answere made it none:

*Hamlet.* Tis very strange.

*Horatio .* As I doe liue my honourd Lord 'tis true;  
And we did thinke it writ downe in our duty  
To let you know of it.

*Hamlet.* Indeed, indeed Sirs; but this troubles me.  
Hold you the watch to Night?

*Barnardo.* We doe my Lord.

*Hamlet.* Ile watch to Night; perchance 'twill wake a-gaine.

*Horatio .* I warrant you it will.

*Hamlet.* If it assume my noble Fathers person,

Ile speake to it, though Hell it selfe should gape

And bid me hold my peace. so fare ye well:

Vpon the Platforme twixt eleuen and twelue,

Ile visit you.

No words of what you've seen here

Your loue, as mine to you: farewell.

[*Exit.*]

**Mar. & Bar.** Our duty to your Honour.

[*Exeunt.*]

### **Scene 3**

[*Enter Laertes and Ophelia.*]

**Laertes.** My necessaries are imbark't; Farewell:

And Sister, as the Winds giue Benefit,

And Conuoy is assistant; doe not sleepe,

But let me heare from you.

**Ophelia.** Doe you doubt that?

**Laertes.** For *Hamlet*, and the trifling of his fauours,

Hold it a fashion and a toy in Bloude;

A Violet in the youth of Primy Nature;

Froward, not permanent; sweet not lasting

The suppliance of a minute? No more.

*Ophelia.* No more but so.

*Laertes.* Thinke it no more:

Perhaps he loues you now,  
And now no soyle nor cautell doth besmerch  
The vertue of his feare: but you must feare  
His greatnesse weigh'd, his will is not his owne;  
For hee himselfe is subiect to his Birth:  
Hee may not, as vnuallued persons doe,  
Carue for himselfe; for, on his choyce depends  
The sanctity and health of the whole State.  
Then weight what losse your Honour may sustaine,  
If with too credent eare you list his Songs;  
Or lose your Heart; or your chast Treasure open  
To his vnmastr'd importunity.  
Feare it *Ophelia*, feare it my deare Sister,  
And keepe within the reare of your Affection;  
Out of the shot and danger of Desire.

*Ophelia.* I shall th' effect of this good Lesson keepe,  
As watchmen to my heart: but good my Brother  
Doe not as some vngracious Pastors doe,  
Shew me the steepe and thorny way to Heauen;  
Whilst like a puft and recklesse Libertine  
Himselfe, the Primrose path of dalliance treads,  
And reaks not his owne reade.

*Laertes.* Oh, feare me not.

[*Enter Polonius.*]

I stay too long; but here my Father comes:

*Polonius.* Yet heere *Laertes*? Aboord, aboard for shame,

And these few Precepts in thy memory,  
See thou Character. Giue thy thoughts no tongue,  
Nor any vnproportion'd thoughts his Act:  
Be thou familiar; but by no meanes vulgar:  
Giue euery man thine eare; but few thy voyce:  
Take each mans censure; but reserue thy iudgement:  
This aboute all; to thine owne selfe be true:  
And it must follow, as the Night the Day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.  
Farewell: my Blessing season this in thee.

**Laertes.** Most humbly doe I take my leaue, my Lord.

**Polonius.** The time inuites you, goe, your seruants tend.

**Laertes.** Farewell *Ophelia*, and remember well  
What I haue said to you.

**Ophelia.** Tis in my memory lockt,  
And you your selfe shall keepe the key of it.

**Laertes.** Farewell.

[*Exit Laertes.*]

**Polonius.** What ist *Ophelia* he hath said to you?

**Ophelia.** So please you, something touching the L[ord]. *Hamlet.*

**Polonius.** Marry, well bethought:  
Tis told me he hath very oft of late  
Giuen priuate time to you; and you your selfe  
Haue of your audience beene most free and bounteous.  
What is betweene you, giue me vp the truth?

**Ophelia.** He hath my Lord of late, made many tenders  
Of his affection to me.

**Polonius.** Affection, puh. You speake like a greene Girle,  
Vnsifted in such perillous Circumstance.  
Doe you beleeeue his tenders, as you call them?

**Ophelia.** I do not know, my Lord, what I should thinke.

**Ophelia.** My Lord, he hath importun'd me with loue,  
In honourable fashion.

**Ophelia.** And hath giuen countenance to his speech,  
My Lord, with all the vowes of Heauen.

**Polonius.** For Lord *Hamlet*,  
Beleeue so much in him, that he is young,  
And with a larger tether may he walke,  
Then may be giuen you. In few, *Ophelia*,  
Doe not beleeeue his vowes; for they are Broakers,  
Not of the eye, which their Inuestments show:  
But meere implorators of vnholy Sutes,  
Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,  
The better to beguile. This is for all:  
I would not, in plaine tearmes, from this time forth,  
Haue you so slander any moment leisure,  
As to giue words or talke with the Lord *Hamlet*:  
Looke too't, I charge you; come your wayes.

**Ophelia.** I shall obey my Lord.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Scene 4*

[*Enter Hamlet, Horatio, Marcellus.*]

*Hamlet.* The Ayre bites shrewdly: is it very cold?

*Horatio .* It is a nipping and an eager ayre.

*Hamlet.* What hower now?

*Horatio .* I thinke it lacks of twelue.

*Marcellus.* No, it is strooke.

*Horatio .* Indeed I heard it not: then it drawes neere the season,  
Wherein the Spirit held his wont to walke.

[*Enter Ghost.*]

*Horatio .* Looke my Lord, it comes.

*Hamlet.* Angels and Ministers of Grace defend us:  
Be thou Spirit of health, or Goblin damn'd,  
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape  
That I will speak to thee. Ill call thee Hamlet,  
King, Father, Royall Dane: Oh, oh, answer me,  
Let me not burst in Ignorance; but tell

Why thy Canoniz'd bones Hearsed in death,  
Haue burst their cerments, why the Sepulcher  
Wherein we saw thee quietly enurn'd,  
Hath op'd his ponderous and Marble iawes,  
To cast thee vp againe? What may this meane?  
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we doe?

[*Ghost beckens Hamlet.*]

**Horatio .** It beckons you to goe away with it,

**Marcellus.** But doe not goe with it.

**Horatio .** No, by no meanes.

**Hamlet.** It will not speake: then will I follow it.

**Horatio .** Doe not my Lord.

**Hamlet.** Why, what should be the feare?

I doe not set my life at a pins fee;  
And for my Soule, what can it doe to that?  
Being a thing immortall as it selfe:  
It waues me forth againe; Ile follow it.

**Horatio .** What if it tempt you toward the Floud my Lord?  
And there assumes some other horrible forme,  
Which might depriue your Soueraignty of Reason,  
And draw you into madnesse thinke of it?

**Hamlet.** It wafts me still: goe on, Ile follow thee.

**Marcellus.** You shall not goe my Lord.

**Hamlet.** Hold off your hand.

**Horatio .** Be rul'd, you shall not goe.

**Hamlet.** My fate cries out,  
I say away, goe on, Ile follow thee.

[*Exeunt Ghost & Hamlet.*]

*Horatio* . He waxes desperate with imagination.

*Marcellus*. Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

*Horatio* . Haue after, to what issue will this come?

*Marcellus*. Something is rotten in the State of Denmarke.

*Horatio* . Heauen will direct it.

*Marcellus*. Nay, let's follow him.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Scene 5*

[*Enter Ghost and Hamlet.*]

*Hamlet*. Where wilt thou lead me? speak; Ile go no fur-ther.

*Ghost*. Marke me.

*Hamlet*. I will.

*Ghost*. My hower is almost come,

When I to sulphurous and tormenting Flames

Must render vp my selfe.

*Ghost*. Pitty me not, but lend thy serious hearing

To what I shall vnfold.

*Hamlet*. Speake, I am bound to heare.

*Ghost*. So art thou to reuenge, when thou shalt heare.

If thou didst euer thy deare Father loue.

*Hamlet*. Oh Heauen!

*Ghost*. Reuenge his foule and most vnnaturall Murther.

*Hamlet*. Murther?

*Ghost*. Murther most foule, as in the best it is;

But this most foule, strange, and vnnaturall.

*Hamlet*. Hast, hast me to know it,

That with wings as swift  
As meditation, or the thoughts of Loue,  
May sweepe to my Reuenge.

*Ghost.* I finde thee apt,  
It's giuen out, that sleeping in mine Orchard,  
A Serpent stung me: so the whole eare of Denmarke,  
Is by a forged processe of my death  
Rankly abus'd: But know thou Noble youth,  
The Serpent that did sting thy Fathers life,  
Now weares his Crowne.

*Hamlet.* O my Propheticke soule: mine Vncle?

*Ghost.* I that incestuous, that adulterate Beast  
With witchcraft of his wits, hath Traitorous guifts.  
Oh wicked Wit, and Gifts, that haue the power  
So to seduce? Won to this shamefull Lust  
The will of my most seeming vertuous Queene:  
But soft, me thinkes I sent the Mornings Ayre;  
Briefe let me be: Sleeping within mine Orchard,  
My custome alwayes in the afternoone;  
Vpon my secure hower thy Vncle stole  
With iuyce of cursed Hebenon in a Violl,  
And in the Porches of mine eares did poure  
The leaperous Distilment; whose effect  
Holds such an enmity with bloud of Man,  
That swift as Quick- siluer, it courses through  
The naturall Gates and Allies of the body;  
And with a sodaine vigour it doth posset

And curd, like Aygre droppings into Milke,  
The thin and wholsome blood: so did it mine;  
Thus was I, sleeping, by a Brothers hand,  
Of Life, of Crowne, and Queene at once dispatcht;  
Cut off euen in the Blossomes of my Sinne,  
Vnhouzzled, disappointed, vnnaneld,  
No reckoning made, but sent to my account  
With all my imperfections on my head;  
Oh horrible Oh horrible, most horrible:  
If thou hast nature in thee beare it not;  
Let not the Royall Bed of Denmarke be  
A Couch for Luxury and damned Incest.  
But howsoeuer thou pursuest this Act,  
Taint not thy mind; nor let thy Soule contriue  
Against thy Mother ought; leaue her to heauen,  
And to those Thornes that in her bosome lodge,  
To pricke and sting her. Fare thee well at once;  
Aduē, adue, *Hamlet*: remember me. [Exit.]

***Hamlet.***

Remember thee?

I, thou poore Ghost, while memory holds a seate  
In this distracted Globe: Remember thee?  
Yea, from the Table of my Memory,  
Ile wipe away all triuiall fond Records,  
And thy Commandment all alone shall liue  
Within the Booke and Volume of my Braine,  
Vnmixt with baser matter; yes yes, by Heauen:  
Oh most pernicious woman!

Oh Villaine, Villaine, smiling damned Villaine!  
My Tables, my Tables; meet it is I set it downe,  
That one may smile, and smile and be a Villaine;  
At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmarke;  
So Vnckle there you are: now to my word;  
It is; Aduē, Aduē, Remember me: I haue sworn't.

*Horatio . & Marcellus. within.* My Lord, my Lord. [Enter *Horatio and Marcellus.*]

*Marcellus.* Lord *Hamlet.*

*Horatio .*—Hillo, ho, ho, my Lord.

*Hamlet.*—Hillo, ho, ho, boy; come bird, come.

*Marcellus.* How ist my Noble Lord?

*Horatio .* What newes, my Lord?

*Hamlet.* Oh wonderfull!

*Horatio .* Good my Lord tell it.

*Hamlet.* No you'l reueale it.

*Horatio .* Not I, my Lord, by Heauen.

*Marcellus.* Nor I, my Lord.

*Hamlet.* How say you then, you'l be secret?

*Both.* I, by Heau'n, my Lord.

*Hamlet.* There's nere a villaine dwelling in all Denmarke  
But hee's an arrant knaue.

*Horatio .* There needs no Ghost my Lord, come from the  
Graue, to tell vs this.

*Hamlet.* Why right, you are i'th' right;

It is an honest Ghost, that let me tell you:

For your desire to know what is betweene vs,

O'remaster't as you may. And now good friends,

As you are Friends, Schollers and Soldiers,

Giue me one poore request.

*Horatio* . What is't my Lord? we will.

*Hamlet*. Neuer make known what you haue seen to night.

*Both*. My Lord, we will not.

*Hamlet*. Nay, but swear't.

*Horatio* . Infaith my Lord, not I.

*Marcellus*. Nor I my Lord: in faith.

*Ghost*. Sweare. [*Ghost cries vnder the Stage.*]

*Hamlet*. Ah ha boy, sayest thou so. Art thou there true-penny?

Come one you here this fellow in the selleredge

Consent to sweare.

*Horatio* . Propose the Oath my Lord.

*Hamlet*. Neuer to speake of this that you haue seene.

Sweare by my sword.

*Ghost*. Sweare.

*Hamlet*. Vpon my sword.

*Horatio*. We haue sworne my Lord already.

*Hamlet*. Indeed, vpon my sword, Indeed.

*Hamlet*. Neuer to speake of this that you haue heard:

Sweare by my Sword.

*Ghost*. Sweare.

*Horatio* . Oh day and night: but this is wondrous strange.

*Hamlet*. And therefore as a stranger giue it welcome.

There are more things in Heauen and Earth, *Horatio*,

Then are dream't of in our Philosophy. But come,

Here as before, neuer so helpe you mercy,

How strange or odde so ere I beare my selfe;  
(As I perchance heereafter shall thinke meet  
To put an Anticke disposition on:)  
That you at such time seeing me, neuer shall  
With Armes encombred thus, or thus, head shake;  
Or by pronouncing of some doubtfull Phrase;  
As well, we know, or we could and if we would,  
Or if we list to speake; or there be and if there might,  
Or such ambiguous giuing out to note,  
That you know ought of me; this not to doe:  
So grace and mercy at your most neede helpe you:  
Sweare.

**Ghost.** Sweare.

**Hamlet.** Rest, rest perturbed Spirit: so Gentlemen,  
~~Nay, come let's goe together.~~  
With all my loue I doe commend me to you;  
And what so poore a man as Hamlet is,  
May doe t' express his loue and friending to you,  
God willing shall not lacke: let vs goe in together,  
Nay, come let's goe together.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Act II*

*Scene 1*

[*Enter Polonius, and Reynoldo.*]

*Polonius.* Giue him his money, and these notes *Reynoldo*.

*Reynol.* I will my Lord.

[*Exit.*]

*Polonius.* Farewell:

[*Enter Ophelia.*]

How now *Ophelia*, what's the matter?

*Ophelia.* Alas my Lord, I haue beene so affrighted.

*Polonius.* With what, in the name of Heauen?

*Ophelia.* My Lord, as I was sowing in my Chamber,  
Lord *Hamlet* with his doublet all vnbrac'd,  
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,  
And with a looke so pitious in purport,  
As if he had been loosed out of hell,  
To speake of horrors: he comes before me.

*Polonius.* Mad for thy Loue?

*Ophelia.* My Lord, I doe not know: but truly I do feare it.

*Polonius.* What said he?

*Ophelia.* He tooke me by the wrist, and held me hard;  
Then goes he to the length of all his arme;  
And with his other hand thus o're his brow,  
He fals to such perusall of my face,  
As he would draw it. Long staid he so,  
At last, a little shaking of mine Arme:  
And thrice his head thus wauing vp and downe;

He rais'd a sigh, so pittious and profound,  
That it did seeme to shatter all his bulke,  
And end his being. That done, he lets me goe,  
And with his head ouer his shoulders turn'd,  
He seem'd to finde his way without his eyes,  
For out adores he went without their helpe;  
And to the last, bended their light on me.

**Polonius.** Goe with me, I will goe seeke the King,  
This is the very extasie of Loue, ~~I am sorrie,~~  
What haue you giuen him any hard words of late?

**Ophelia.** No my good Lord: but as you did command,  
I did repell his Letters, and deny'de  
His accesse to me.

**Polonius.** That hath made him mad. Come, go we to the King,  
This must be knowne,

[*Exeunt.*]

## *Scene 2*

[*Enter King, Queene, Rosincrance, and Guildensterne*]

**King.** Welcome deere *Rosincrance* and *Guildensterne*.  
Moreouer, that we much did long to see you,  
The neede we haue to vse you, did prouoke  
Our hastie sending. Something haue you heard  
Of *Hamlets* transformation: so I call it,  
Since not th' exterior, nor the inward man  
Resembles that it was. What it should bee  
More then his Fathers death, that thus hath put him  
So much from th' vnderstanding of himselfe,  
I cannot deeme of. I intreat you both,  
That being of so young dayes brought vp with him:  
That you vouchsafe your rest heere in our Court  
Some little time: so by your Companies  
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather  
So much as from Occasions you may gleane,  
That open'd lies within our remedie.

**Gertrude .** Good Gentlemen, If it will please you  
To shew vs so much Gentry, and good will,  
As to expend your time with vs a- while,  
For the supply and profit of our Hope,  
Your Visitation shall receiue such thanks  
As fits a Kings remembrance.

**Rosincrance.** Both your Maiesties  
Might by the Soueraigne power you haue of vs,  
Put your dread pleasures, more into Command  
Then to Entreatie.

**Guildensterne.** We both obey,

And here giue vp our selues, in the full bent,  
To lay our Seruices freely at your feete,  
To be commanded.

**King.** Thankes *Rosincrance*, and gentle *Guildensterne*.

**Gertrude .** Thankes *Guildensterne* and gentle *Rosincrance*.

And I beseech you instantly to visit

My too much changed Sonne.

Go some of ye,

And bring the Gentlemen where *Hamlet* is.

**Guildensterne.** Heauens make our presence and our practises

Pleasant and helpfull to him.

[*Exit both.*]

**Queene.** Amen.

[*Enter Polonius.*]

**Polonius.** My good Liege,

I do thinke that I haue found

The very cause of *Hamlets* Lunacie.

**King.** Oh speake of that, that I do long to heare.

**Gertrude .** I doubt it is no other, but the maine,

His Fathers death, and our o're- hasty Marriage.

**Polonius.** I will be breefe. Your Noble Sonne is mad:

Mad call I it; for to define true Madnesse,

What is't, but to be nothing else but mad.

But let that go.

**Gertrude .** More matter, with lesse Art.

**Polonius.** Madam, I sweare I vse no Art at all:

That he is mad, 'tis true: 'Tis true 'tis pittie,

And pittie it is true: A foolish figure,

But farewell it: for I will vse no Art.  
Mad let vs grant him then: and now remains  
That we finde out the cause of this effect,  
Or rather say, the cause of this defect;  
For this effect defectiue, comes by cause,  
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus. Perpend,  
I haue a daughter: haue, whil'st she is mine,  
Who in her Dutie and Obedience, marke,  
Hath giuen me this: now gather, and surmise.

*[The Letter.]*

*To the Celestiall, and my Soules Idoll, the most beautifed O-phelia.*

That's an ill Phrase,

**Gertrude .** Came this from *Hamlet* to her.

**Polonius.** Good Madam stay awhile, I will be faithfull.

*Doubt thou, the Starres are fire,*

*Doubt, that the Sunne doth moue:*

*Doubt Truth to be a Lier,*

*But neuer Doubt, I loue. Hamlet.*

This in Obedience hath my daughter shew'd me:

And more aboute hath his solicensing,

As they fell out by Time, by Meanes, and Place,

All giuen to mine eare.

**King.** But how hath she receiu'd his Loue?

**Polonius** ~~And~~ (my yong Mistris) thus I did bespeake

Lord *Hamlet* is a Prince out of thy Starre,

This must not be: and then, I Precepts gaue her,

That she should locke her selfe from his Resort,

Admit no Messengers, receiue no Tokens:  
Which done, she tooke the Fruites of my Aduice,  
And he repulsed. A short Tale to make,  
Fell into a Sadnesse, then into a Fast,  
Thence to a Watch, thence into a Weaknesse,  
Thence to a Lightnesse, and by this declension  
Into the Madnesse whereon now he raues,  
And all we waile for.

**King.** Do you thinke 'tis this?

**Gertrude .** It may be very likely.

**Polonius.** Hath there bene such a time, I'de fain know that,  
That I haue possitiuely said, 'tis so,  
When it prou'd otherwise?

**King.** Not that I know.

**Polonius.** Take this from this; if this be otherwise,  
If Circumstances leade me, I will finde  
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeede  
Within the Center.

**King.** How may we try it further?

**Polonius.** You know sometimes  
He walkes foure houres together, heere  
In the Lobby.

**Gertrude .** So he ha's indeed.

**Polonius.** At such a time Ile loose my Daughter to him,  
Be you and I behinde an Arras then,  
Marke the encounter: If he loue her not,  
And be not from his reason falne thereon;

Let me be no Assistant for a State,  
And keepe a Farme and Carters.

**King.** We will try it.

[ *Enter Hamlet reading on a Booke.* ]

**Gertrude .** But looke where sadly the poore wretch  
Comes reading.

**Polonius.** Away I do beseech you, both away,  
Ile boord him presently.

[*Exit King & Queen.*]

Oh giue me leaue. How does my good Lord *Hamlet*?

**Hamlet.** Well, God- a- mercy. Well well.

**Polonius.** Do you know me, my Lord?

**Hamlet.** Excellent, excellent well: y'are a Fishmonger.

**Polonius.** Not I my Lord.

**Hamlet.** Then I would you were so honest a man.

**Polonius.** Honest, my Lord?

**Hamlet.** I sir, to be honest as this world goes, is to bee one man pick'd out of two thousand.

**Polonius.** That's very true, my Lord. What do you read my Lord?

**Hamlet.** Words, words, words.

**Polonius.** What is the matter, my Lord?

**Hamlet.** Betweene who?

**Polonius.** I meane the matter you meane, my Lord.

**Hamlet.** Slanders Sir: for the Satyricall slaue saies here, that old men haue gray Beards; that their faces are wrin-kled; their eyes purging thicke Amber, or Plum- Tree Gumme: and that they haue a plentifull locke of Wit, together with weake Hammes. All which Sir, though I most powerfully, and potently beleeeue; yet I holde it not Honestie to haue it thus set downe: For you your selfe Sir, should be old as I am, if like a Crab you could go backward.

**Polonius.** Will you walke Out of the ayre my Lord?

**Hamlet.** Into my Graue?

**Polonius.** Indeed that is out o'th' Ayre: My Honourable Lord, I will most humbly Take my leaue of you.

**Hamlet.** You cannot Sir take from me any thing, that I will more willingly part withall, except my life, my life.

**Polonius.** Fare you well my Lord.

**Hamlet.** These tedious old fooles.

[ Enter Rosincran and Guildensterne.]

**Polonius.** You goe to seeke my Lord *Hamlet*; there hee is. [Exit]

**Rosincrance.** God saue you Sir.

**Guildensterne.** Mine honour'd Lord?

**Rosincrance.** My most deare Lord?

**Hamlet.** My excellent good friends? How do'st thou *Guildensterne*? Oh, *Rosincrance*; good Lads: How doe ye both?

**Rosincrance.** As the indifferent Children of the earth.

**Guildensterne.** Happy, in that we are not ouer- happy: on For-tunes Cap, we are not the very Button.

**Hamlet.** Nor the Soales of her Shoo?

**Rosincrance.** Neither my Lord.

**Hamlet.** Then you liue about her waste, or in the mid-dle of her fauour?

**Guildensterne.** Faith, her priuates, we.

**Hamlet.** In the secret parts of Fortune? Oh, most true: she is a Strumpet. What's the newes?

**Rosincrance.** None my Lord; but that the World's growne honest.

**Hamlet.** Then is Doomesday neere: But your newes is not true. Let me question more in particular: what haue you my good friends, deserued at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to Prison hither?

**Guildensterne.** Prison, my Lord?

*Hamlet.* Denmark's a Prison.

*Rosincrance.* Then is the World one.

*Hamlet.* A goodly one, in which there are many Con-fines, Wards, and Dungeons; *Denmarke* being one o'th'worst.

*Rosincrance.* We thinke not so my Lord.

*Hamlet.* Why then 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison. What make you at *Elsonower*?

*Rosincrance.* To visit you my Lord, no other occasion.

*Hamlet.* Is it your owne inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deale iustly with me: come, come; nay speake.

*Guildensterne.* What should we say my Lord?

*Hamlet.* Why any thing. But to the purpose; you were sent for; and there is a kinde confession in your lookes; which your modesties haue not craft enough to co-lor, I know the good King & Queene haue sent for you.

*Rosincrance.* To what end my Lord?

*Hamlet.* That you must teach me: but let mee coniure you by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth; be euen and direct with me, whether you were sent for or no.

*Rosincrance.* What say you?

*Hamlet.* Nay then I haue an eye of you: if you loue me hold not off.

*Guildensterne.* My Lord, we were sent for.

*Hamlet.* I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation preuent your discouery of your secrie to the King and Queene: moult no feather, I haue of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custome of ex-ercise; and indeed, it goes so heauenly with my dispositi-on; that this goodly frame the Earth, seemes to me a ster-rill Promontory. What a piece of worke is a man! how Noble in Reason? how infinite in faculty? in forme and mouing how expresse and admirable? in Action, how like an An-gel? in apprehension, how like a God? the beauty of the world, the Parragon of Animals; and

yet to me, what is this Quintessence of Dust? Man delights not me; no, nor Woman  
neither; though by your smiling you seeme to say so.

**Rosincrance.** My Lord, there was no such stuffe in my thoughts.

**Hamlet.** Why did you laugh, when I said, Man delights not me?

**Rosincrance.** To thinke, my Lord, if you delight not in Man, To thinke, my Lord, if you  
delight not in Man, what Lenton entertainment the Players shall receiue from you: wee  
coated them on the way, and hither are they comming to offer you Seruice.

*[Enter Polonius.]*

**Hamlet.** Hearke you Guildensterne, and you too: at each eare a hearer: that great Baby you see  
there, is not yet out of his swathing clouts.

**Rosincrance.** Happily he's the second time come to them: for they say, an old man is twice a childe.

**Hamlet.** I will Prophesie. Hee comes to tell me of the Players. Mark it, you say right Sir: for a  
Monday mor-ning 'twas so indeed.

**Polonius.** My Lord, I haue Newes to tell you.

**Hamlet.** My Lord, I haue Newes to tell you.

When Rossius an Actor in Rome—

**Polonius.** The Actors are come hither my Lord.

**Hamlet.** Buzze, buzze.

**Polonius.** Vpon mine Honor.

**Hamlet.** Then can each Actor on his Asse—

**Polonius.** The best Actors in the world, either for Trage-die, Comedie, Historie, Pastorall:  
Pastoricall- Comicall- Historicall- Pastorall: Tragicall- Historicall: Tragicall- Comicall-  
Historicall- Pastorall: Scene indiuidible: or Po-em vnlimited. Seneca cannot be too  
heauy, nor Plautus too light, for the law of Writ, and the Liberty. These are the onely  
men.

**Hamlet.** Take them in.

*[Exit Polonius.]*

Gentlemen, you are welcom to *Elsonower*: your hands, come: You are welcome: but

my Vnckle Father, and Aunt Mother are deceiu'd.

**Guiltensterne.** In what my deere Lord?

**Hamlet.** I am but mad North, North- West: when the Winde is Southerly, I know a Hawke from a Handsaw. Follow him Friends: wee'l heare a play to mor-row.

*[Exit all. Manet Hamlet]*

**Hamlet.** Now I am alone.

Oh what a Rogue and Pesant slaue am I?

Is in not monstrous that this Player heere,

But in a Fixion, in a dreame of Passion,

Could force his soule so to his whole concient,

That form her working, all his visage warm'd;

Tears in his eyes, distraction in's Aspect,

A broken voyce, and his whole Function suiting

With Formes, to his Conceit? And all for nothing?

For Hecuba?

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,

That he should weepe for her? What would he doe,

Had he the Motiue and the Cue for passion

That I haue?

Am I a Coward?

Who calles me Villaine? breakes my pate a- crosse?

Pluckes off my Beard, and blowes it in my face?

Tweakes me by'th' Nose? giues me the Lye i'th' Throate,

As deepe as to the Lungs? Who does me this?

Ha? Why I should take it: for it cannot be,

But I am Pigeon- Liuer'd, and lacke Gall

To make Oppression bitter, or ere this,

I should haue fatted all the Region Kites  
 With this Slaues Offall, bloody: a Bawdy villaine,  
 Remorselesse, Treacherous, Letcherous, kindles villaine!  
 Oh Vengeance!  
 Who? What an Asse am I? I sure, this is most braue,  
 That I, the Sonne of the Deere murdered,  
 Prompted to my Reuenge by Heauen, and Hell,  
 Must (like a Whore) vnpacke my heart with words,  
 And fall a Cursing like a very Drab.  
 A Scullion? Fye vpon't: Foh. About my Braine.  
 I haue heard, that guilty Creatures sitting at a Play,  
 Haue by the very cunning of the Scoene,  
 Bene strooke so to the soule, that presently  
 They haue proclaim'd their Malefactions.  
 For Murther, though it haue no tongue, will speake  
 With most myraculous Organ. Ile haue these Players,  
 Play something like the murder of my Father,  
 Before mine Vnkle. Ile obserue his lookes,  
 Ile rent him to the quicke: If he but blench  
 I know my course. The Spirit that I haue seene  
 May be the Diuell, and the Diuel hath power  
 T' assume a pleasing shape, yea and perhaps  
 Out of my Weaknesse, and my Melancholly,  
 As he is very potent with such Spirits,  
 Abuses me to damne me. Ile haue grounds  
 More Relatiue then this: The Play's the thing,  
 Wherein Ile catch the Conscience of the King.

*Act III*

*Scene 1 [Continues from previous scene]*

[Enter King, Queene, Polonius, Ophelia,]

**King.** And can you by no drift of circumstance  
Get from him why he puts on this Confusion:  
Grating so harshly all his dayes of quiet  
With turbulent and dangerous Lunacy.

**Rosincrance.** He does confesse he feeles himselfe distracted,  
But from what cause he will by no meanes speake.

**Guildensterne.** Nor do we finde him forward to be sounded,  
But with a crafty Madnesse keepes aloofe:  
When we would bring him on to some Confession  
Of his true state.

**Gertrude .** Did he receiue you well?

**Rosincrance.** Most like a Gentleman.

**Guildensterne.** But with much forcing of his disposition.

**Rosincrance.** Niggard of question, but of our demands  
Most free in his reply.

**Gertrude.** Did you assay him to any pastime?

**Rosincrance.** Madam, it so fell out, that certaine Players  
We ore- wrought on the way: of these we told him,  
And there did seeme in him a kinde of ioy  
To heare of it: They are about the Court,  
And (as I thinke) they haue already order  
This night to play before him.

**Polonius.** 'Tis most true:

And he beseech'd me to intreate your Maiesties

To heare, and see the matter.

**King.** Good Gentlemen,  
Giue him a further edge, and driue his purpose on  
To these delights.

**Rosincrance.** We shall my Lord.

[*Exeunt.*]

**King.** Sweet *Gertrude* leaue vs too,  
For we haue closely sent for *Hamlet* hither,  
That he, as 'twere by accident, may there  
Affront *Ophelia*. Her Father, and my selfe (lawful espials)  
Will so bestow our selues, that seeing vnseene  
We may of their encounter frankly iudge,  
And gather by him, as he is behaued,  
If't be th' affliction of his loue, or no.  
That thus he suffers for.

**Gertrude .** For your part *Ophelia*, I do wish  
That your good Beauties be the happy cause  
Of *Hamlets* wildenesse: so shall I hope your Vertues  
Will bring him to his wonted way againe,

**Ophelia.** Madam, I wish it may.

**Polonius.** *Ophelia*, walke you heere. Gracious so please ye  
We will bestow our selues: Reade on this booke,  
That shew of such an exercise may colour  
Your lonelinesse.

**Polonius.** I heare him comming, let's withdraw my Lord.

[*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter Hamlet.*]

**Hamlet.** To be, or not to be, that is the Question:

Whether 'tis Nobler in the minde to suffer  
The Slings and Arrowes of outrageous Fortune,  
Or to take Armes against a Sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them: to dye, to sleepe  
No more; and by a sleepe, to say we end  
The Heart- ake, and the thousand Naturall shockes  
That Flesh is heyre too? 'Tis a consummation  
Deuoutly to be wish'd. To dye to sleepe,  
To sleepe, perchance to Dreame; I, there's the rub,  
For in that sleepe of death, what dreames may come,  
When we haue shuffel'd off this mortall coile,  
Must giue vs pawse. There's the respect  
That makes Calamity of so long life:  
For who would beare the Whips and Scornes of time,  
Who would these Fardles beare  
To grunt and sweat vnder a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,  
The vndiscovered Countrey, from whose Borne  
No Traueller returnes, Puzels the will,  
And makes vs rather beare those illes we haue,  
Then flye to others that we know not of.  
Thus Conscience does make Cowards of vs all,  
And thus the Natiue hew of Resolution  
Is sicklied o're, with the pale cast of Thought,  
And enterprizes of great pith and moment,  
With this regard their Currants turne away,  
And loose the name of Action. Soft you now,

The faire *Ophelia*? Nimph, in thy Orizons

Be all my sinnes remembred.

*Ophelia.* Good my Lord,

How does your Honor for this many a day?

*Hamlet.* I humbly thanke you: well, well, well.

*Ophelia.* My Lord, I haue Remembrances of yours,

That I haue longed long to re- deliuer.

I pray you now, receiue them.

*Hamlet.* No, no, I neuer gaue you ought.

*Ophelia.* My honor'd Lord, I know right well you did,

There my Lord.

*Hamlet.* Ha, ha: Are you honest?

*Ophelia.* My Lord.

*Hamlet.* Are you faire?

*Ophelia.* What meanes your Lordship?

*Hamlet.* That if you be honest and faire, your Honesty should admit no discourse to your

Beautie.

*Ophelia.* Could Beautie my Lord, haue better Commerce then your Honesty?

*Hamlet.* I trulie: for the power of Beautie, will sooner transforme Honesty from what is, to a

Bawd, then the force of Honesty can translate Beautie into his likeness. This was

sometime a Paradox, but now the time giues it prooffe. I did loue you once.

*Ophelia.* Indeed my Lord, you made me beleeeue so.

*Hamlet.* You should not haue beleeeued me. For virtue cannot so innoculate our old stocke, but

we shall relish of it. I loued you not.

*Ophelia.* I was the more deceiued.

*Hamlet.* Get thee to a Nunnerie. Why would'st thou be a breeder of Sinners? I am my selfe

indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were better my Mother had not borne me. I am very proud, revengeful, Ambitious, with more offences at my beck, then I have thoughts to put them in imagination, to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such Fellows as I do, crawling between Heaven and Earth. We are arrant Knaves all, believe none of us. Go thy wayes to a Nunnery. Where's your Father?

**Ophelia.** At home, my Lord.

**Hamlet.** Let the doores be shut vpon him, that he may play the Foole no way, but in's owne house. Farewell.

**Ophelia.** O helpe him, you sweet Heavens.

**Hamlet.** If thou doest Marry, Ile give thee this Plague for thy Dowrie. Be thou as chaste as Ice, as pure as Snow, thou shalt not escape Calumny. Get thee to a Nunnery. Go, Farewell. Or if thou wilt needs Marry, marry a fool: for Wise men know well enough, what monsters you make of them. To a Nunnery go, and quickly too. Far-well.

**Ophelia.** O heavenly Powers, restore him.

**Hamlet.** I have heard of your prattlings too well enough. God has given you one pace, and you make your selfe another: Go too, Ile no more on't, it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more Marriages. Those that are married already, all but one shall live, the rest shall keep as they are. To a Nunnery, go.

[Exit Hamlet.]

**Ophelia.** O what a Noble minde is here o're-throwne?  
The Courtiers, Soldiers, Schollers: Eye, tongue, sword,  
Th' expectancies and Rose of the faire State,  
The glasse of Fashion, and the mould of Forme,  
Th' obseru'd of all Obseruers, quite, quite downe.  
Have I of Ladies most dejected and wretched,  
That suck'd the Honie of his Musicke Vowes:

Now see that Noble, and most Soueraigne Reason,  
Like sweet Bels iangled out of tune, and harsh,  
That vnmatch'd Forme and Feature of blowne youth,  
Blasted with extasie. Oh woe is me,  
T'haue seene what I haue seene: see what I see.

[ *Enter King, and Polonius.* ]

**King.** Loue? His affections do not that way tend,  
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd Forme a little,  
Was not like Madnesse. There's something in his soule?  
O're which his Melancholly sits on brood,  
And I do doubt the hatch, and the disclose  
Will be some danger, which to preuent  
I haue in quicke determination  
Thus set it downe. He shall with speed to England  
~~From fashion of himselfe.~~ What thinke you on't?

**Polonius.** It shall do well. But yet do I beleeeue  
The Origin and Commencement of this greefe  
Sprung from neglected loue. How now *Ophelia*?  
You neede not tell vs, what Lord *Hamlet* saide,  
We heard it all. My Lord, do as you please,  
But Let his Queene Mother all alone intreat him  
To shew his Greefes: let her be round with him,  
And Ile be plac'd so, please you in the eare  
Of all their Conference. If she finde him not,  
To England send him: Or confine him where  
Your wisdome best shall thinke.

**King.** It shall be so:

Madnesse in great Ones, must not vnwatch'd go.

[ *Exeunt.* ]

*Scene 2*

[*Enter Hamlet. Enter Horatio*]

*Hamlet.* What hoa, *Horatio*?

*Horatio.* Heere sweet Lord, at your Seruice.

*Hamlet.* *Horatio*, thou art eene as iust a man  
As ere my Conuersation coap'd withall.

*Horatio.* O my deere Lord.

*Hamlet.* Nay, do not thinke I flatter:  
For what aduancement may I hope from thee,  
That no Reuennue hast, but thy good spirits  
To feed & cloath thee. Why shold the poor be flatter'd?  
No, let the Candied tongue, like absurd pompe,  
And crooke the pregnant Hindges of the knee,  
Where thrift may follow faining? Dost thou heare,  
Since my deere Soule was Mistris of my choyse,  
And could of men distinguish, her election  
Hath seal'd thee for her selfe. For thou hast bene  
As one in suffering all, that suffers nothing.  
A man that Fortunes buffets, and Rewards

Hath 'tane with equall Thankes. And blest are those,  
Whose Blood and Iudgement are so well co- mingled,  
That they are not a Pipe for Fortunes finger.  
To sound what stop she please. Giue me that man,  
That is not Passions Slaue, and I will weare him  
In my hearts Core. I, in my Heart of heart,  
As I do thee. - Something too much of this.  
There is a Play to night to before the King.  
One Scoene of it comes neere the Circumstance  
Which I haue told thee, of my Fathers death.  
I prythee, when thou see'st that Acte a- foot,  
Euen with the verie Comment of my Soule  
Obserue mine Vnkle: If his occulted guilt,  
Do not it selfe vnkennell in one speech,  
It is a damned Ghost that we haue seene:  
And my Imaginations are as foule  
As Vulcans Stythe. Giue him needfull note,  
For I mine eyes will riuet to his Face:  
And after we will both our iudgements ioyne,  
To censure of his seeming.  
Hora. Well my Lord.  
If he steale ought the whil'st this Play is Playing,  
And scape detecting, I will pay the Theft.

*[Enter King, Queene, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosincrance, Guildensterne,  
and other Lords attendant with his Guard carrying Torches]*

**Hamlet.** They are comming to the Play: I must be idle.  
Get you a place.

**King.** How fares our Cosin Hamlet?

**Hamlet.** Excellent Ifaith, of the Camelions dish: I eate the Ayre promise- cramm'd, you cannot feed Capons so.

**King.** I haue nothing with this answer Hamlet, these words are not mine.

**Hamlet.** No, nor mine. Now my Lord, you plaid once i'th' Vniuersity, you say?

**Polonius.** That I did my Lord, and was accounted a good Actor.

**Hamlet.** And what did you enact?

**Polonius.** I did enact Iulius Caesar, I was kill'd i'th' Capitol:  
Brutus kill'd me.

**Hamlet.** It was a brute part of him, to kill so Capitall a Calfe there. Be the Players ready?

**Polonius.** I my Lord, they stay vpon your patience.

**Gertrude.** Come hither my good Hamlet, sit by me.

**Hamlet.** No good Mother, here's Mettle more attractiue.

**King.** What do you call the Play?

**Hamlet.** The Mouse- trap: Marry how? Tropicallly: This Play is the Image of a murder done in Vienna: Gon-zago is the Dukes name, his wife Baptista: you shall see anon: 'tis a knauish peece of worke: But what o'that? Your Maiestie, and wee that haue free soules, it touches vs not: let the gall'd iade winch: our withers are vnrunge.  
He poysons Gonzago i'th' Garden for's estate: ~~His name's Gonzago:~~ the Story is extant and writ in choice Italian. You shall see anon how the Murtherer gets the loue of Gonzago's wife.

*[The King rises. All Exit]*

*[Manet Hamlet & Horatio.]*

**Hamlet.** What! Frighted with false fire  
Oh good Horatio, Ile take the Ghosts word for a thousand pound. Did'st perceiue?

**Horatio.** Verie well my Lord.

**Hamlet.** Vpon the talke of the poysoning?

*Horatio.* I did verie well note him.

[ *Enter Rosinrance and Guildensterne.* ]

*Hamlet.* Oh, ha? Come some Musick. Come y Recorders:

*Guildensterne.* Good my Lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

*Hamlet.* Sir, a whole History.

*Guildensterne.* Good my Lord put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildely from my affayre.

*Hamlet.* I am tame Sir, pronounce.

*Guildensterne.* The Queene your Mother, in most great affli-ction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

*Hamlet.* You are welcome.

*Guildensterne.* Nay, good my Lord, this courtesie is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a whol-some answer, I will doe your Mothers command'ment: if not, your pardon, and my returne shall bee the end of my Businesse.

*Hamlet.* Sir, I cannot.

*Guildensterne.* What, my Lord?

*Hamlet.* Make you a wholesome answer: my wits dis-eas'd. But sir, such answers as I can make, you shal com-mand: or rather you say, my Mother: therefore no more but to the matter. My Mother you say.

*Rosinrance.* Then thus she sayes: your behauior hath stroke her into amazement, and admiration.

*Hamlet.* Oh wonderfull Sonne, that can so astonish a Mother. But is there no sequell at the heeles of this Mo-thers admiration?

*Rosinrance.* She desires to speake with you in her Closset, ere you go to bed.

*Hamlet.* We shall obey, were she ten times our Mother. Haue you any further Trade with vs?

*Rosinrance.* My Lord, you once did loue me.

*Hamlet.* So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

*Rosinrance.* Good my Lord, what is your cause of distem-per? You do freely barre the doore

of your owne Liber-tie, if you deny your greefes to your Friend.

**Hamlet.** Sir I lacke Aduancement.

*[Enter one with a Recorder.]*

O the Recorder. Let me see, to withdraw with you, why do you go about to recouer the winde of mee, as if you would driue me into a toyle?

**Guildensterne.** O my Lord, if my Dutie be too bold, my loue is too vnmanly.

**Hamlet.** I do not well vnderstand that. Will you play vpon this Pipe?

**Guildensterne.** My Lord, I cannot.

**Hamlet.** I pray you.

**Guildensterne.** Beleeue me, I cannot.

**Hamlet.** I do beseech you.

**Guildensterne.** I know no touch of it, my Lord.

**Hamlet.** 'Tis as easie as lying: gouerne these Ventiges with your finger and thumbe, giue it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most excellent Musicke. Looke you, these are the stoppes.

**Guildensterne.** But these cannot I command to any vtterance of hermony, I haue not the skill.

**Hamlet.** Why looke you now, how vnworthy a thing you make of me: you would play vpon mee; you would seeme to know my stops: you would pluck out the heart of my Mysterie; you would sound mee from my lowest Note, to the top of my Compasse: and there is much Mu-sicke, excellent Voice, in this little Organe, yet cannot you make it. Why do you thinke, that I am easier to bee plaid on, then a Pipe? Call me what Instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play vpon me. God blesse you Sir.

*[Enter Polonius.]*

**Polonius.** My Lord; the Queene would speak with you, and presently.

**Hamlet.** Do you see that Clowd? that's almost in shape like a Camell.

**Polonius.** By'th' Masse, and it's like a Camell indeed.

**Hamlet.** Me thinkes it is like a Weazell.

**Polonius.** It is back'd like a Weazell.

**Hamlet.** Or like a Whale?

**Polonius.** Verie like a Whale.

**Hamlet.** Then will I come to my Mother, by and by: They foole me to the top of my bent.

I will come by and by.

**Polonius.** I will say so. [Exit.]

**Hamlet.** By and by, is easily said. Leaue me Friends:

'Tis now the verie witching time of night,

When Churchyards yawne, and Hell it selfe breaths out

Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood,

And do such bitter businesse as the day

Would quake to looke on. Soft now, to my Mother:

Oh Heart, loose not thy Nature; let not euer

The Soule of *Nero*, enter this firme bosome:

Let me be cruell, not vnnaturall,

I will speake Daggers to her, but vse none:

My Tongue and Soule in this be Hypocrites.

How in my words someuer she be shent,

To giue them Seales, neuer my Soule consent.

[Exit]

*Scene 3*

[*Enter King, Rosincrance, and Guildensterne.*]

**King.** I like him not, nor stands it safe with vs,  
To let his madnesse range. Therefore prepare you,  
I your Commission will forthwith dispatch,  
And he to England shall along with you:

**Both.** We will haste vs. [Exeunt *Gent.*]

[*Enter Polonius.*]

**Polonius.** My Lord, he's going to his Mothers Closset:  
Behinde the Arras Ile conuey my selfe  
To heare the Processe. Ile warrant shee'l tax him home,  
Ile call vpon you ere you go to bed,  
And tell you what I know.

**King.** Thankes deere my Lord. [Polonius *Exit*]

Oh my offence is ranke, it smels to heauen,  
It hath the primall eldest curse vpon't,  
A Brothers murther. Pray can I not,  
Though inclination be as sharpe as will:  
My stronger guilt, defeats my strong intent,  
And like a man to double businesse bound,  
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,  
And both neglect; what if this cursed hand  
Were thicker then it selfe with Brothers blood,

Is there not Raine enough in the sweet Heauens  
To wash it white as Snow? Whereto serues mercy,  
But to confront the visage of Offence?  
And what's in Prayer, but this two- fold force,  
To be fore- stalled ere we come to fall,  
Or pardon'd being downe? Then Ile looke vp,  
My fault is past. But oh, what forme of Prayer  
Can serue my turne? Forgiue me my foule Murther:  
That cannot be, since I am still possest  
Of those effects for which I did the Murther.  
My Crowne, mine owne Ambition, and my Queene:  
May one be pardon'd, and retaine th' offence?  
In the corrupted currants of this world,  
Offences gilded hand may shoue by Iustice,  
And oft 'tis seene, the wicked prize it selfe  
Buyes out the Law; but 'tis not so aboue,  
There is no shuffling, there the Action lyes  
In his true Nature, and we our selues compell'd  
Euen to the teeth and forehead of our faults,  
To giue in euidence. What then? What rests?  
Try what Repentance can. What can it not?  
Yet what can it, when one cannot repent?  
Oh wretched state! Oh bosome, blacke as death!  
Oh limed soule, that struggling to be free,  
Art more ingag'd: Helpe Angels, make assay:  
Bow stubborne knees, and heart with strings of Steele,  
Be soft as sinewes of the new- borne Babe,

All may be well.

[*Enter Hamlet.*]

**Hamlet.** Now might I do it pat, now he is praying,  
And now Ile doo't, and so he goes to Heauen,  
And so am I reueng'd: that would be scann'd,  
A Villaine killes my Father, and for that  
I his foule Sonne, do this same Villaine send  
To heauen. Oh this is hyre and Sallery, not Reuenge.  
Vp Sword, and know thou a more horrid hent  
When he is drunke asleepe: or in his Rage,  
Or in th' incestuous pleasure of his bed,  
At gaming, swearing, or about some acte  
That ha's no rellish of Saluation in't,  
Then trip him, that his heeles may kicke at Heauen,  
And that his Soule may be as damn'd and blacke  
As Hell, whereto it goes. My Mother stayes,  
This Physicke but prolongs thy sickly dayes.

[*Exit.*]

**King.** My words flye vp, my thoughts remain below,  
Words without thoughts, neuer to Heauen go.

[*Exit.*]

*Scene 4*

[ *Enter Queene and Polonius.* ]

*Polonius.* He will come straight:  
Looke you lay home to him,  
Tell him his pranks haue been too broad to beare with,  
And that your Grace hath screen'd, and stoode betweene  
Much heate, and him. Ile silence me e'ene heere:  
Pray you be round with him.

*Hamlet. within.* Mother, mother, mother.

*Gertrude .* Ile warrant you, feare me not.

Withdraw, I heare him coming.

[ *Enter Hamlet.* ]

*Hamlet.* Now Mother, what's the matter?

*Gertrude .* *Hamlet*, thou hast thy Father much offended.

*Hamlet.* Mother, you haue my Father much offended.

*Gertrude .* Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

*Hamlet.* Go, go, you question with an idle tongue.

*Gertrude .* Why how now *Hamlet*?

*Hamlet.* Whats the matter now?

*Gertrude .* Haue you forgot me?

*Hamlet.* No by the Rood, not so:

You are the Queene, your Husbands Brothers wife,

But would you were not so. You are my Mother.

*Gertrude .* Nay, then Ile set those to you that can speake.

*Hamlet.* Come, come, and sit you downe, you shall not boudge:

You go not till I set you vp a glasse,

Where you may see the inmost part of you?

*Gertrude .* What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murther me?

Helpe, helpe, hoa.

*Polonius.* What hoa, helpe, helpe, helpe.

*Hamlet.* How now, a Rat? ~~dead for a Ducate, dead.~~ [*Killes Polonius.*]

*Polonius.* Oh I am slaine.

*Gertrude .* Oh me, what hast thou done?

*Hamlet.* Nay I know not, is it the King?

*Gertrude .* Oh what a rash, and bloody deed is this?

*Hamlet.* A bloody deed, almost as bad good Mother,  
As kill a King, and marrie with his Brother.

*Gertrude .* As kill a King?

*Hamlet.* I Lady, 'twas my word.

Thou wretched, rash, intruding foole farewell,

I tooke thee for thy Betters, take thy Fortune,

Thou find'st to be too busie, is some danger.

Leaue wringing of your hands, peace, sit you downe,

And let me wring your heart, for so I shall

If it be made of penetrable stufte;

*Gertrude .* What haue I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tong,

In noise so rude against me?

*Hamlet.* Such an Act

That blurres the grace and blush of Modestie,

*Gertrude .* Aye me; what act, that roares so lowd, & thun-ders in the Index.

*Hamlet.* Looke heere vpon this Picture, and on this,

The counterfet presentment of two Brothers:

See what a grace was seated on his Brow,

*Hyperions* curls, the front of Ioue himselfe,

An eye like Mars, to threaten or command

A Station, like the Herald Mercurie  
New lighted on a heauen- kissing hill:  
A Combination, and a forme indeed,  
Where euery God did seeme to set his Seale,  
To giue the world assurance of a man.  
This was your Husband. Looke you now what followes.  
Heere is your Husband, like a Mildew'd eare  
Blasting his wholsom breath. Haue you eyes?  
Could you on this faire Mountaine leaue to feed,  
And batten on this Moore? Ha? Haue you eyes?  
You cannot call it Loue: For at your age,  
The hey- day in the blood is tame, it's humble,  
And waites vpon the Iudgement: and what Iudgement  
Would step from this, to this? ~~What diuell was't,~~

**Gertrude .** O *Hamlet*, speake no more.

Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soule,  
And there I see such blacke and grained spots,  
As will not leaue their Tinct.

**Hamlet.** Nay, but to liue

In the ranke sweat of an enseamed bed,  
Stew'd in Corruption; honying and making loue  
Ouer the nasty Sty.

**Gertrude .** Oh speake to me, no more,

These words like Daggers enter in mine eares.  
No more sweet *Hamlet*.

**Hamlet.** A Murderer, and a Villaine:

**Gertrude .** No more.

**Hamlet.** A King of shreds and patches.  
Saue me; and houer o're me with your wings  
You heauenly Guards. What would your gracious figure?

**Gertrude .** Alas he's mad.

**Hamlet.** Do you not come your tardy Sonne to chide,

**Ghost.** Do not forget: this Visitation  
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.  
But looke, Amazement on thy Mother sits;  
O step betweene her, and her fighting Soule,  
Conceit in weakest bodies, strongest workes.  
Speake to her *Hamlet*.

**Hamlet.** How is it with you Lady?

**Gertrude .** Alas, how is't with you?  
That you bend your eye on vacancie,  
And with their corporall ayre do hold discourse.  
Vpon the heate and flame of thy distemper  
Sprinkle coole patience. Whereon do you looke?

**Hamlet.** On him, on him: look you how pale he glares,  
Least with this pitteous action you coneurt  
My sterne effects: then what I haue to do,  
Will want true colour; teares perchance for blood.

**Gertrude.** To who do you speak this?  
Do you see nothing there?

**Gertrude .** Nothing at all, ~~yet all that is I see.~~

**Hamlet.** Nor did you nothing heare?

**Gertrude .** No, nothing but our selues.

**Hamlet.** Why look you there: looke how it steals away:  
My Father in his habite, as he liued,  
Looke where he goes euen now out at the Portall. [ *Ghost Exit.*]

**Gertrude .** This is the very coynage of your Braine,  
This bodilesse Creation extasie is very cunning in.

**Hamlet.** Extasie?  
My Pulse as yours doth temperately keepe time,  
And makes as healthfull Musicke. It is not madnesse  
That I haue vttered; bring me to the Test  
And I the matter will re- word: which madnesse  
Would gamboll from. Mother, for loue of Grace,  
Lay not a flattering Vnction to your soule,  
That not your trespasse, but my madnesse speakes:  
It will but skin and filme the Vlcerous place,  
Whil'st ranke Corruption mining all within,  
Infects vnseene. Confesse your selfe to Heauen,  
Repent what's past, auoyd what is to come,  
And do not spred the Compost on the Weedes,  
To make them ranke.

**Gertrude .** Oh *Hamlet*,  
Thou hast cleft my heart in twaine.

**Hamlet.** O throw away the worser part of it,  
And liue the purer with the other halfe.  
Good night, but go not to mine Vnkles bed,  
Assume a Vertue, if you haue it not, refraine to night,  
And that shall lend a kinde of easinesse  
To the next abstinence. For this same Lord,

I do repent: but heauen hath pleas'd it so,  
To punish me with this, and this with me,  
That I must be their Scourge and Minister.  
I will bestow him, and will answer well  
The death I gaue him: ~~so againe~~, good night.  
I must be cruell, onely to be kinde;  
Thus bad begins and worse remaines behinde.

**Gertrude .** What shall I do?

**Hamlet.** Not this by no meanes that I bid you do:  
Let the blunt King tempt you againe to bed,  
And let him for a paire of reechie kisses,  
Make you to rauell all this matter out,  
That I essentially am not in madnesse,  
But made in craft. 'Twere good you let him know,

**Gertrude .** Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath,  
And breath of life: I haue no life to breath  
What thou hast saide to me.

**Hamlet.** I must to England, you know that?

**Gertrude .** Alacke I had forgot: 'Tis so concluded on.

**Hamlet.** There's letters sealed, and my two schoolfellows,  
Whom I will trust as I will adders fanged,  
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way  
And marshall me to knavery.  
This man shall set me packing:  
Ile lugge the Guts into the Neighbor roome,  
Come sir, to draw toward an end with you.  
Good night Mother.

[*Exit Hamlet tugging in Polonius.*]

*Act IV*

*Scene 1 (continue)*

[*Enter King. Enter Rosencrance & Guildensterne.*]

**King.** Where is your Sonne?

**Gertrude .** Ah my good Lord, what haue I seene to night?

**King.** What *Gertrude*? How do's *Hamlet*?

**Gertrude .** Mad as the Seas, and winde, when both contend

Which is the Mightier, in his lawlesse fit

Behinde the Arras, hearing something stirre,

He whips his Rapier out, and cries a Rat, a Rat,  
And in his brainish apprehension killes  
The vnseene good old man.

**King.** Oh heauy deed:  
It had bin so with vs had we beene there:  
His Liberty is full of threats to all,  
To you your selfe, to vs, to euery one.  
Alas, how shall this bloody deede be answered?  
It will be laide to vs, whose prouidence  
Should haue kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt,  
This mad yong man. Ho *Guildestern*:  
Friends both go ioyne you with some further ayde:  
Go seeke him out, speake faire, and bring the body  
Into the Chappell. I pray you hast in this. *[Exit Gent.]*  
Come *Gertrude*, wee'l call vp our wisest friends,  
To let them know both what we meane to do,  
And what's vntimely done. *[Exit]*

## *Scene 2*

*[Enter Hamlet.]*

**Hamlet.** Safely stowed.

*[Gentlemen within.] Hamlet, Lord Hamlet.*

**Hamlet.** What noise? Who cals on *Hamlet*?

Oh heere they come. *[Enter Rosinrance and Guildesterne.]*

**Rosinrance.** What haue you done my Lord with the dead body?

**Hamlet.** Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis Kinne.

**Rosinrance.** Tell vs where 'tis, that we may take it thence,  
And beare it to the Chappell.

*Hamlet.* Do not beleue it.

*Rosincrance.* I vnderstand you not my Lord.

*Hamlet.* I am glad of it: a knauish speech sleeps in a foolish eare.

*Rosincrance.* My Lord, you must tell vs where the body is, and go with vs to the King.

*Hamlet.* The body is with the King, but the King is not with the body. The King, is a thing—

*Guildensterne.* A thing my Lord?

*Hamlet.* Of nothing: ~~bring me to him, hide Fox, and all after.~~

### *Scene 3 (continues)*

[*Enter King.*]

*King.* Now *Hamlet*, where's *Polonius*?

*Hamlet.* At Supper.

*King.* At Supper? Where?

*Hamlet.* Not where he eats, but where he is eaten, a cer-taine conuocation of wormes are e'ne at him.

*King.* Where is *Polonius*.

*Hamlet.* In heauen, send thither to see. If your Messen-ger finde him not there, seeke him i'th other place your selfe: but indeed, if you finde him not this moneth, you shall nose him as you go vp the staires into the Lobby.

*King.* Go seeke him there.

*Hamlet.* He will stay till ye come.

*King.* *Hamlet*, this deed of thine, for thine especial safety  
Which we do tender, as we deerely greeue  
For that which thou hast done, must send thee hence  
With fierie Quicknesse. Therefore prepare thy selfe,  
The Barke is readie, and the winde at helpe,  
Th' Associates tend, and euery thing at bent

For England.

*Hamlet.* For England?

*King.* I *Hamlet*.

*Hamlet.* Good. Come, for England. *[Exit]*

*King.* Follow him at foote,  
Tempt him with speed aboard:  
Delay it not, Ile haue him hence to night.  
Away, for euery thing is Seal'd and done  
That else leanes on th' Affaire, pray you make hast.  
And England, if my loue thou holdst at ought,  
As my great power thereof may giue thee sense,  
Since yet thy Cicatrice lookes raw and red  
After the Danish Sword, and thy free awe  
Payes homage to vs; thou maist not coldly set  
Our Soueraigne Processe, which imports at full  
By Letters coniuring to that effect  
The present death of *Hamlet*. Do it England,  
For like the Hecticke in my blood he rages,  
And thou must cure me: Till I know 'tis done,  
How ere my happes, my ioyes were ne're begun. *[Exit]*

*Scene 5*

[ *Enter Queene and Horatio.* ]

*Gertrude* . I will not speake with her.

*Horatio* . She is importunate, indeed distract:  
Her moode will needs be pittied.

*Gertrude* . What would she haue?

*Horatio* . She speakes much of her Father; saies she heares  
There's trickes i'th' world, and hems, and beats her heart,  
Spurnes enuiously at Strawes, speakes things in doubt,  
That carry but halfe sense: Her speech is nothing,  
Yet the vnshaped vse of it doth moue  
The hearers to Collection; they ayme at it,  
And botch the words vp fit to their owne thoughts,  
Which as her winkes, and nods, and gestures yeeld them,

Indeed would make one thinke there would be thought,

Though nothing sure, yet much vnhappily.

**Gertrude .** 'Twere good she were spoken with,  
For she may strew dangerous coniectures  
In ill breeding minds. Let her come in.

[ *Enter Ophelia distracted.* ]

**Ophelia.** Where is the beauteous Maiesty of Denmark.

**Gertrude .** How now *Ophelia*?

**Ophelia.** *How should I your true loue know from another one?*

*By his Cockle hat and staffe, and his Sandal shoone.*

**Gertrude .** Alas sweet Lady: what imports this Song?

**Ophelia.** Say you? Nay pray you marke.

*He is dead and gone Lady, he is dead and gone,*

*At his head a grasse- greene Turfe, at his heeles a stone.*

[ *Enter King.* ]

**Gertrude .** Nay but *Ophelia*.

**Ophelia.** Pray you marke.

*White his Shrow'd as the Mountaine Snow.*

**Gertrude .** Alas, looke heere my Lord.

**Ophelia.** *Larded with sweet Flowers:*

*Which bewept to the graue did not go,*

*With true- loue showres.*

**King.** How do ye, pretty Lady?

**Ophelia.** Well, God dil'd you. They say the Owle was a Bakers daughter. Lord, wee know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your Table.

**King.** Conceit vpon her Father.

**Ophelia.** Pray you let's haue no words of this: but when they aske you what it meanes, say you this:

*To morrow is S[aint]. Valentines day, all in the morning betime,  
And I a Maid at your Window, to be your Valentine.  
Then vp he rose, & don'd his clothes, & dupt the chamber dore,  
Let in the Maid, that out a Maid, neuer departed more.*

**King.** Pretty *Ophelia*.

**Ophelia.** Indeed la? without an oath Ile make an end ont.

*By gis, and by S[aint]. Charity,  
Alacke, and fie for shame:  
Yong men wil doo't, if they come too't,  
By Cocke they are too blame.  
Quoth she before you tumbled me,  
You promis'd me to Wed:  
So would I ha done by yonder Sunne,  
And thou hadst not come to my bed.*

**King.** How long hath she bin thus?

**Ophelia.** I hope all will be well. We must bee patient, but I cannot choose but weepe, to thinke they should lay him i'th' cold ground: My brother knowe of it, and so I thanke you for your good counsell. Come, my Coach: Goodnight Ladies: Goodnight sweet Ladies: Goodnight, goodnight.

[*Exit.*]

**King.** Follow her close,  
Giue her good watch I pray you:

[*Noise within. Enter Laertes.*]

**Laertes.** Oh thou vilde King, giue me my Father.

**Gertrude .** Calmely good *Laertes*.

**Laertes.** Where's my Father?

**King.** Dead.

**Gertrude .** But not by him.

**King.** Let him demand his fill.

**Laertes.** How came he dead? Ile not be Iuggel'd with.

[ *A noise within. Enter Ophelia.* ]

**Laertes.** How now? what noise is that?

Oh heate drie vp my Braines, teares seuen times salt,

Burne out the Sence and Vertue of mine eye.

**Ophelia.** *They bore him bare fac'd on the Beer,*

*Hey non nony, nony, hey nony:*

*And on his graue raines many a teare,*

*Fare you well my Doue.*

**Laertes.** Had'st thou thy wits, and did'st perswade Re-ueenge,

it could not moue thus.

**Ophelia.** *You must sing downe a- downe, and you call him a- downe- a.*

Oh, how the wheele becomes it? It is the false Steward that stole his masters daughter.

**Laertes.** This nothings more then matter.

**Ophelia.** There's Rosemary, that's for Remembraunce. Pray loue remember: and there is

Paconcies, that's for Thoughts.

**Laertes.** A document in madnesse, thoughts & remem-brance fitted.

**Ophelia.** There's Fennell for you, and Columbines: ther's Rew for you, and heere's some for me.

Wee may call it Herbe- Grace a Sundaies: Oh you must weare your Rew with a

difference. There's a Daysie, I would giue you some Violets, but they wither'd all when my Father dy-ed: They say, he made a good end;

*For bonny sweet Robin is all my ioy.*

**Laertes.** Thought, and Affliction, Passion, Hell it selfe:

She turnes to Fauour, and to prettinesse.

**Ophelia.** *And will he not come againe,*

*And will he not come againe:*

*No, no, he is dead, go to thy Death- bed,*

*He neuer wil come againe.*

*His Beard as white as Snow,*

*All Flaxen was his Pole:*

*He is gone, he is gone, and we cast away mone,*

*Gramercy on his Soule.*

And of all Christian Soules, I pray God.

God buy ye.

[*Exeunt Ophelia*]

**Laertes.** Do you see this, you Gods?

**King.** *Laertes*, I must common with your greefe,

I pray you go with me.

[*Exeunt all but Horatio*]

**Scene 6 (continues)**

[*Enter an Attendant.*]

**Horatio.** What are they that would speake with me?

**Ser.** Saylor's sir, ~~they say they haue Letters for you.~~

**Horatio .** Let them come in,

I do not know from what part of the world

I should be greeted, if not from Lord *Hamlet*.

[*Enter Saylor.*]

**Say.** ~~There's a Letter for you Sir: It comes from th' Ambassadors that was bound for England, if your name be *Horatio*, as I am let to know it is.~~

[*Horatio* Reads the Letter.]

Horatio, ~~When thou shalt haue ouerlook'd this, giue these Fellowes some meanes to the King: They haue Letters for him.~~ Ere we were two dayes old at Sea, a Pyrate of very Warlicke appointment gaue vs Chace. Finding our selues too slow of Saile, we put on a compelled Valour. In the Grapple, I boarded them: On the instant they got cleare of our Shippe, so I alone became their Prisoner. They haue dealt with mee, like Theeues of Mercy, but they knew what they did. I am to doe a good turne for them. ~~Let the King haue the Letters I haue sent, and~~ Repaire thou to me with as much hast as thou wouldest flye death. I haue words to speake in your eare, will make thee dumbe, yet are they much too light for the bore of the Matter. These good Fellowes will bring thee where I am. Rosincrance and Guildensterne, hold their course for England. Of them I haue much to tell thee, Farewell. He that thou knowest thine, Hamlet.

~~Come, I will giue you way for these your Letters,  
And do't the speedier, that you may direct me  
To him from whom you brought them.~~

[Exit.]

[Enter Horatio and the Queene.]

**Horatio.** Madame, your sonne is safe arriv'de in Denmarke,  
This letter I euen now receiv'd of him,  
Whereas he writes how he escap't the danger,  
And subtile treason that the king had plotted,  
Being crossed by the contention of the windes,  
He found the Packet sent to the king of England,  
Wherein he saw himselfe betray'd to death,  
As at his next conuersion with your grace,  
He will relate the circumstance at full.

*Queene.* Then I perceiue there's treason in his looks  
That seem'd to sugar o're his villanie:  
But I will soothe and please him for a time,  
For murderous mindes are alwayes jealous,  
But know not you Horatio where he is?

*Horatio.* Yes Madame, and he hath appoynted me  
To meete him on the east side of the Cittie  
To morrow morning.

*Queene.* O faile not, good Horatio, and withall, comA mothers care to him, bid him a while  
Be wary of his presence, lest that he  
Faile in that he goes about.

*Horatio.* Madam, neuer make doubt of that:  
I thinke by this the news be come to court:  
He is arriv'de, obserue the king, and you shall  
Quickely finde, Hamlet being here,  
Things fell not to his minde.

*Queene.* But what became of Gilderstone and Rossencraft?

*Horatio.* He being set ashore, they went for England,  
And in the Packet there writ down that doome  
To be perform'd on them poynted for him:  
And by great chance he had his fathers Seale,  
So all was done without discouerie.

*Queene.* Thankes be to heauen for blessing of the prince,  
Horatio once againe I take my leaue,  
With thowsand mothers blessings to my sonne.

*Horatio.* Madam adue.

*Scene 7*

[*Enter King and Laertes.*]

**King.** Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,  
And you must put me in your heart for Friend,  
Sith you haue heard, and with a knowing eare,  
That he which hath your Noble Father slaine,  
Pursued my life.

**Laertes.** It well appeares. But tell me,  
Why you proceeded not against these feates,  
So crimefull, and so Capitall in Nature,

**King.** O for two speciall Reasons,  
Which may to you (perhaps) seeme much vnsinnowed,  
And yet to me they are strong. The Queen his Mother,  
Liues almost by his lookes: The other Motiue,  
Why to a publike count I might not go,  
Is the great loue the generall gender beare him,  
Who dipping all his Faults in their affection,  
Would like the Spring that turneth Wood to Stone,  
Conuert his Gyues to Graces. So that my Arrowes  
Too slightly timbred for so loud a Winde,  
Would haue reuerted to my Bow againe,

And not where I had arm'd them.

**Laertes.** And so haue I a Noble Father lost,  
A Sister driuen into desperate tearmes,  
But my reuenge will come.

[ *Enter a Messenger.* ]

How now? What Newes?

~~**Mes.** Letters my Lord from *Hamlet*, This to your  
Maiesty: this to the Queene.~~

**King.** From *Hamlet*? Who brought them?

~~**Mes.** Saylor my Lord they say, I saw them not:~~

**King.** *Laertes* you shall heare them:

~~Leaue vs.~~

[*Exit Messenger*]

*High and Mighty, you shall know I am set naked on your Kingdome. To morrow shall I begge leaue to see your Kingly Eyes. When I shall (first asking your Pardon thereunto) re-count th' Occasions of my sodaine, and more strange returne. Hamlet.*

What should this meane? Are all the rest come backe?

If it be so *Laertes*, will you be rul'd by me?

**Laertes.** If so you'l not o'rerule me to a peace.

**King.** To thine owne peace: I will worke him  
To an exployt now ripe in my Deuice,  
Vnder the which he shall not choose but fall;  
And for his death no winde of blame shall breath,  
But euen his Mother shall vncharge the practice,  
And call it accident: Some two Monthes hence  
Here was a Gentleman of *Normandy*,  
Hee mad confession of you,  
And gaue you such a Masterly report,

For Art and exercise in your defence;  
And for your Rapier most especiall,  
That he cryed out, t'would be a sight indeed,  
If one could match you Sir. This report of his  
Did *Hamlet* so envenom with his Enuy,  
That he could nothing doe but wish and begge,  
Your sodaine comming ore to play with him;  
Now out of this.

**Laertes.** Why out of this, my Lord?

**King.** *Laertes* was your Father deare to you?

**Laertes.** Why aske you this?

**King.** Not that I thinke you did not loue your Father,  
But that I know Loue is begun by Time:  
And that I see in passages of prooffe,  
Time qualifies the sparke and fire of it:  
*Hamlet* comes backe: what would you vndertake,  
To show your selfe your Fathers sonne indeed,  
More then in words?

**Laertes.** To cut his throat i'th' Church.

**King.** Good *Laertes*  
Will you doe this, keepe close within your Chamber,  
*Hamlet* return'd, shall know you are come home:  
Wee'l put on those shall praise your excellence,  
And set a double varnish on the fame  
The Frenchman gaue you, bring you in fine together,  
And wager on your heads, he being remisse,  
Most generous, and free from all contriuing,

Will not peruse the Foiles? So that with ease,  
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose  
A Sword vnbaited, and in a passe of practice,  
Requit him for your Father.

**Laertes.**

I will doo't.  
And for that purpose Ile annoint my Sword:  
I bought an Vnction of a Mountebanke  
So mortall, I but dipt a knife in it,  
Where it drawes blood, no Cataplasme so rare,  
Collected from all Simples that haue Vertue  
Vnder the Moone, can saue the thing from death,  
That is but scratcht withall: Ile touch my point,  
With this contagion, that if I gall him slightly,  
It may be death.

**King.**

Let's further thinke of this,  
Weigh what conuenience both of time and meanes  
May fit vs to our shape, if this should faile;  
And that our drift looke through our bad performance,  
'Twere better not assaid; therefore this Proiect  
Should haue a backe or second, that might hold,  
If this should blast in prooffe: Soft, let me see  
Wee'l make a solemne wager on your commings,  
I ha't: when in your motion you are hot and dry,  
As make your bowts more violent to the end,  
And that he cals for drinke; Ile haue prepar'd him  
A Challice for the nonce; whereon but sipping,  
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,

Our purpose may hold there; how sweet Queene.

[*Enter Queene.*]

*Queen.* One woe doth tread vpon anothers heele,  
So fast they'l follow: your Sister's drown'd *Laertes*.

*Laertes.* Drown'd! O where?

*Queen.* There is a Willow growes aslant a Brooke,  
That shewes his hore leaues in the glassie streame:  
There with fantasticke Garlands did she come,  
Of Crow- flowers, Nettles, Daysies, and long Purples,  
That liberall Shepheards giue a grosser name;  
But our cold Maids doe Dead Mens Fingers call them:  
There on the pendant boughes, her Coronet weeds  
Clambring to hang; an enuious sliuer broke,  
When downe the weedy Trophies, and her selfe,  
Fell in the weeping Brooke, her cloathes spred wide,  
And Mermaid- like, a while they bore her vp,  
Which time she chaunted snatches of old tunes,  
As one incapable of her owne distresse,  
Or like a creature Natiue, and indued  
Vnto that Element: but long it could not be,  
Till that her garments, heauy with her drinke,  
Pul'd the poore wretch from her melodious buy,  
To muddy death.

*Laertes.* Alas then, is she drown'd?

*Queen.* Drown'd, drown'd.

*Laertes.* Too much of water hast thou poore *Ophelia*,

And therefore I forbid my teares: Aduē my Lord,

I haue a speech of fire, that faine would blaze,

But that this folly doubts it.

[*Exit.*]

**King.**

Let's follow, *Gertrude*:

How much I had to doe to calme his rage?

Now feare I this will giue it start againe;

Therefore let's follow.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Act V*

*Scene 2*

[ *Enter Hamlet and Horatio.* ]

*Hamlet.* So much for this Sir; now let me see the other,  
You doe remember all the Circumstance.

*Horatio .* Remember it my Lord?

*Hamlet.* Sir, in my heart there was a kinde of fighting,  
That would not let me sleepe; Vp from my Cabin  
My sea- gowne scarft about me in the darke,  
Grop'd I to finde out them; had my desire,  
Finger'd their Packet, and in fine, withdrew  
To mine owne roome againe, making so bold,  
(My feares forgetting manners) to vnseale  
Their grand Commission, where I found *Horatio*,  
Oh royall knauery: An exact command,  
No not to stay the grinding of the Axe,  
My head should be struck off.

*Horatio .* Ist possible?

*Hamlet.* Here's the Commission, read it at more leysure:  
But wilt thou heare me how I did proceed?

*Horatio .* I beseech you.

*Hamlet.* I sate me downe,  
Deuis'd a new Commission, wrote it faire,  
England should the bearers put to sodaine death,  
Not shriuing time allowed.

*Horatio .* How was this seal'd?

*Hamlet.* Why, euen in that was Heauen ordinate;

I had my fathers Signet in my Purse,

**Horatio .** So *Guildesterne* and *Rosincrance*, go too't.

**Hamlet.** Why man, they did make loue to this imployment  
They are not neere my Conscience;

**Horatio .** Why, what a King is this?

**Hamlet.** Does it not, thinkst thee, stand me now vpon  
He that hath kil'd my King, and whor'd my Mother,  
Popt in betweene th' election and my hopes,  
Throwne out his Angle for my proper life,  
And with such coozenage; is't not perfect conscience,  
To quit him with this arme?

**Horatio .** It must be shortly knowne to him from England  
What is the issue of the businesse there.

**Hamlet.** It will be short,  
The *interim*'s mine, and a mans life's no more  
Then to say one:

**Horatio .** Peace, who comes heere? [ *Enter young Osricke.* ]

**Osricke.** Your Lordship is right welcome back to Den-marke.

**Hamlet.** I humbly thank you Sir, dost know this waterflie?

**Horatio .** No my good Lord.

**Osricke.** Sweet Lord, if your friendship were at leysure,  
I should impart a thing to you from his Maiesty.

**Hamlet.** I will receiue it with all diligence of spirit;

**Osricke.** My Lord, his Maiesty bad me sig-nifie to you, that he ha's laid a great wager on your  
head: Sir, you are not ignorant of what excellence *Laertes* is at his weapon.

**Hamlet.** What's his weapon?

**Osricke.** Rapier and dagger.

**Hamlet.** That's two of his weapons; but well.

**Osricke.** The King Sir, hath laid that in a dozen passes be-tweene you and him, hee shall not exceed you three hits; He hath one twelue for mine, and that would come to imediate tryall, if your Lordship would vouchsafe the Answer.

**Hamlet.** How if I answere no?

**Osricke.** I meane my Lord, the opposition of your person in tryall.

**Hamlet.** Sir, I will walke heere in the Hall; if it please his Maiestie, 'tis the breathing time of day with me; let the Foyles bee brought, the Gentleman willing, and the King hold his purpose; I will win for him if I can: if not, Ile gaine nothing but my shame, and the odde hits.

**Osricke.** Shall I redeliuer you ee'n so?

**Hamlet.** To this effect Sir, after what flourish your na-ture will.

**Osricke.** I commend my duty to your Lordship.

*[Exit]*

**Horatio .** You will lose this wager, my Lord.

**Hamlet.** I doe not thinke so, since he went into France, I haue beene in continuall practice; I shall winne at the oddes: but thou wouldest not thinke how I'll all's heere a-bout my heart: but it is no matter.

**Horatio .** Nay, good my Lord.

**Hamlet.** It is but foolery; but it is such a kinde of gain- giuing as would perhaps trouble a woman.

**Horatio .** If your minde dislike any thing, obey. I will fore-stall their repaire hither, and say you are not fit.

**Hamlet.** Not a whit, we defie Augury; there's a special Prouidence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come: if it bee not to come, it will bee now: if it be not now; yet it will come; the readinesse is all, since no man ha's ought of what he leaues. What is't to

leau be-times?

[*Enter King, Queene, Laertes and Lords, with other*

*Atten-dants with Foyles, and Gauntlets, a Table and Flagons of Wine on it.*]

**King.** Come *Hamlet*, come, and take this hand from me.

**Hamlet.** Giue me your pardon Sir, I'ue done you wrong,  
But pardon't as you are a Gentleman.  
Sir, in this Audience,  
Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd euill,  
Free me so farre in your most generous thoughts,  
That I haue shot mine Arrow o're the house,  
And hurt my Bother.

**Laertes.** I am satisfied in Nature,  
I do receiue your offer'd loue like loue,  
And wil not wrong it.

**Hamlet.** I do embrace it freely,  
And will this Brothers wager frankly play.  
Giue vs the Foyles: Come on.

**Laertes.** Come one for me.

**Hamlet.** Ile be your foile *Laertes*, in mine ignorance,  
Your Skill shall like a Starre i'th' darkest night,  
Sticke fiery off indeede.

**Laertes.** You mocke me Sir.

**Hamlet.** No by this hand.

**King.** Giue them the Foyles yong *Osricke*,  
Cousen *Hamlet*, you know the wager.

**Hamlet.** Verie well my Lord,  
Your Grace hath laide the oddes a'th' weaker side.

**Laertes.** This is too heauy,  
Let me see another.

**Hamlet.** This likes me well,  
These Foyles haue all a length. *[Prepare to play.]*

**Osricke.** I my good Lord.

**King.** Set me the Stopes of wine vpon that Table:  
Now the King drinkes to *Hamlet*. Come, begin,  
And you the Iudges beare a wary eye.

**Hamlet.** Come on sir.

**Laertes.** Come on sir. *[They play.]*

**Hamlet.** One.

**Laertes.** No.

**Hamlet.** Iudgement.

**Osricke.** A hit, a very palpable hit.

**Laertes.** Well: againe.

**King.** Stay, giue me drinke.  
*Hamlet*, this Pearle is thine,  
Here's to thy health. Giue him the cup,  
*[ Trumpets sound, and shot goes off.]*

**Hamlet.** Ile play this bout first, set by a- while.  
Come: Another hit; what say you?

**Laertes.** A touch, a touch, I do confesse.

**King.** Our Sonne shall win.

**Gertrude .** He's fat, and scant of breath.  
Heere's a Napkin, rub thy browes,  
The Queene Carowses to thy fortune, *Hamlet*.

**Hamlet.** Good Madam.

**King.**        *Gertrude*, do not drinke.

**Gertrude .**    I will my Lord;  
I pray you pardon me.

**Hamlet.**        I dare not drinke yet Madam,  
By and by.

**Gertrude .**    Come, let me wipe thy face.

**Hamlet.**        Come for the third.  
*Laertes*, you but dally,  
I pray you passe with your best violence,  
I am affear'd you make a wanton of me.

**Laertes.**        Say you so? Come on. [*Play.*]

**Osricke.**        Nothing neither way.

**Laertes.**        Haue at you now. [*In scuffling they change Rapiers.*]

**King.**            Part them, they are incens'd.

**Hamlet.**        Nay come, againe.

**Osricke.**        Looke to the Queene there hoa.

**Horatio .**        They bleed on both sides. How is't my Lord?

**Osricke.**        How is't *Laertes*?

**Laertes.**        Why as a Woodcocke  
To mine Sprindge, *Osricke*,  
I am iustly kill'd with mine owne Treacherie.

**Hamlet.**        How does the Queene?

**King.**            She sounds to see them bleede.

**Gertrude .**    No, no, the drinke, the drinke.  
Oh my deere *Hamlet*, the drinke, the drinke,  
I am poyson'd.

**Hamlet.**        Oh Villany! How? Let the doore be lock'd.

Treacherie, seeke it out.

**Laertes.** It is heere *Hamlet*.

*Hamlet*, thou art slaine,

No Medicine in the world can do thee good.

In thee, there is not halfe an houre of life;

The Treacherous Instrument is in thy hand,

Vnbated and envenom'd: the foule practise

Hath turn'd it selfe on me. Loe, heere I lye,

Neuer to rise againe: Thy Mothers poyson'd:

I can no more, the King, the King's too blame.

**Hamlet.** The point envenom'd too,

Then venome to thy worke.

[*Hurts the King.*]

**King.** O yet defend me Friends, I am but hurt.

**Hamlet.** Heere thou incestuous, murdrous,

Damned Dane,

Drinke off this Potion: Follow my Mother.

[*King Dyes.*]

**Laertes.** He is iustly seru'd.

It is a poyson temp' red by himselfe:

Exchange forgiuenesse with me, Noble *Hamlet*;

Mine and my Fathers death come not vpon thee,

Nor thine on me.

[*Dyes.*]

**Hamlet.** Heauen make thee free of it, I follow thee.

I am dead *Horatio*, *Horatio*, I am dead,

Thou liu'st, report me and my causes right

To the vnsatisfied.

**Horatio .** Neuer beleeeue it.

I am more an Antike Roman then a Dane:

Heere's yet some Liquor left.

**Hamlet.** As th'art a man, giue me the Cup.

Let go, by Heauen Ile haue't.

Oh good *Horatio*, what a wounded name,

(Things standing thus vnknowne) shall liue behind me.

If thou did'st euer hold me in thy heart,

Absent thee from felicitie awhile,

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in paine,

To tell my Storie.

[*Dyes*]

**Horatio.** Now cracke a Noble heart:

Goodnight sweet Prince,

And flights of Angels sing thee to thy rest,

**FINIS.**

**The tragedie of HAMLET, Prince of Denmarke.**

Shakespeare's

# HAMLET

DIRECTED BY THYS HEYDENRYCH & PETER TALJAARD



## Published article

*'To tell our Storie': Reflections on a Queer  
Adaptation of Hamlet in Twenty-first  
Century South Africa*



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# “To tell our Storie”: Reflections on a Queer Adaptation of *Hamlet* in Twenty-first Century South Africa

THYS HEYDENRYCH

## ABSTRACT

From my actor-director’s point of view, ‘decolonising’ Shakespeare means not to keep to the original, ‘traditional’ concept of performing and interpreting Shakespeare’s plays; it means giving them my voice as a gay white male. Hamlet’s “To be, or not to be” soliloquy incited me to approach *Hamlet* from a queer perspective. This article reflects on how I approached the play, without forcing the queer issue, by looking at the relationship between Horatio and Hamlet. Horatio is present in key moments of the play, and most of their interactions are when they are alone. By doing a close reading of the play, identifying queer cues, I adapted the play with Hamlet and Horatio in a same-sex relationship. Reading *Hamlet* from a queer perspective answers the question as to why Horatio is in Elsinore and present at key moments in the play. By placing Hamlet and Horatio in a same-sex relationship, Horatio’s presence becomes more meaningful. The interpretation of the “To be, or not to be” soliloquy, the ‘nunnery scene’, the ‘mousetrap scene’ and his exile adds a new layer to the character of Hamlet, and by extension Horatio. Next, I reflect on the performance of the queer adaptation, which was done in 2014 at the University of the Free State with a professional cast, co-directed by Peter Taljaard and myself. I offer a close reading, in chronological order, of the adaptation, highlighting key moments in the play that were used to establish Hamlet and Horatio’s relationship, while referring to interpretation choices made by my co-director and myself.

## Introduction

What does it mean to ‘decolonise’? In his article “‘Decolonisation’, the new ideology” Bert Olivier<sup>1</sup> explains that those who seek to ‘decolonise’ aim to obtain ‘independence’ from colonial oppression and “exploitative power” and to find, among other things, with that independence, their “own voices”: “decolonising’ themselves”, meaning “to become independent in their thinking, speaking and writing”.<sup>2</sup> He adds that to decolonise “is NOT to return to some mythical state that supposedly existed before the arrival of the colonising settlers”.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Bert Olivier is attached to the University of the Free State as Extraordinary Professor of Philosophy. He is also an adjunct professor in the School of Humanities at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

2 Bert Olivier, “‘Decolonisation’, the new ideology”, *Mail & Guardian*, March 3, 2016. <http://thoughtleader.co.za/bertolivier/2016/03/23/decolonisation-the-new-ideology/>

3 Bert Olivier, “What ‘decolonisation’ means: E.M. Forster’s *A Passage to India*”, *Mail and Guardian*, September 7, 2016. <http://thoughtleader.co.za/bertolivier/2016/09/27/what-decolonisation-means-e-m-forsters-a-passage-to-india/>

Bringing this conception to the current debates in education, Behari-Leak et al state that: “[A]n understanding of the process of “decolonisation” lies more in its detail than its definition”. In essence, it means to break away from the traditional (colonial) way of doing things, focus on the how to do – a kind of ‘doing it in your way’.<sup>4</sup>

How then can that be applied to Shakespeare? And more specifically to the staging of *Hamlet* in Bloemfontein, South Africa in 2014? From an actor-director’s point of view, it might mean not to keep to the original, ‘traditional’ concept of performing Shakespeare and implies moving away from the traditional interpretation of his scripts. In this adaptation, what new perspectives and interpretations could be arrived at? Would these not constitute a form of decolonisation if they created a space for marginalised identities to be foregrounded? Starting from the politics of the personal, it meant taking Shakespeare from its original cultural context and, as a gay white male, giving it my voice – or, in the reflective context of this article, as an actor-director, approaching *Hamlet* from a queer perspective.

Hanna Kubowitz reflects on a statement made by Beloff that “[b]eing heterosexual has several benefits ... One can enter into most cultural narratives, that is novels, films, fine art, on the basis of simple and satisfying identification”.<sup>5</sup> For Kubowitz, this means that being homosexual inadvertently hampers the “entrance to, and identification with” most cultural narratives. As a gay man, I find that while reading certain plays, I do identify on a personal level with the characters and situations, but interpret the characters and situations from a queer perspective. One Shakespearean play that enables my ‘queer interpretation’ is *Hamlet*, and the passage that most resonates from this (personal) perspective is his “To be, or not be” soliloquy.

But why does *Hamlet* feel so familiar and easy to relate too? Marjorie Garber writes that “the experience of Hamlet is almost always that of recognition”.<sup>6</sup> Sandra Young adds that it can also be because we recognise the internal conflict between his duty as prince and his “inner yearnings”, his self-doubt, and his emotional self-examination and that maybe all this comes to characterise our contemporary time.<sup>7</sup> According to John Gouws *Hamlet* is very similar to Shakespeare’s sonnets: “both works seem capable of functioning like Rorschach inkblots, by making us reveal (increasingly) more about ourselves the more we try saying something about them”.<sup>8</sup> As mentioned earlier Hamlet’s most famous soliloquy resonates with me on a personal level, but what is the soliloquy really about? Brian Pearce claims that in his “To be, or not to be” soliloquy Hamlet “directly contemplates both suicide and the possibility of taking action”.<sup>9</sup>

Ray Eston Smith has suggested that instead of contemplating suicide, Hamlet could be agonising about whether or not to kill Claudius, more importantly how to avoid damnation for killing him, knowing that it would be a suicidal attack.<sup>10</sup> Another suggestion by Eston Smith is that Hamlet might be questioning his motives for killing Claudius: does he want to kill him to save the Danish people from a murdering tyrant or is it for his own ambitions? Or, is Hamlet trying to solve his dilemma “whether ‘to be or not to be,’ like the Ghost”, his father? Charles Darnay adds that this soliloquy does not advance the plot but rather acts as a reminder as to where Hamlet is, “we need to take stock and realise the central conflict within him”.<sup>11</sup> But as Eston Smith declares: “Hamlet is too often portrayed as an indecisive,

4 Kasturi Behari-Leak et al., “Decolonising the curriculum: it’s in the detail, not just in the definition”, *The Conversation*, March 9, 2017. <https://theconversation.com/decolonising-the-curriculum-its-in-the-detail-not-just-in-the-definition-73772>

5 Hanna Kubowitz, “The Default Reader and a Model of Queer Reading and Writing Strategies Or: Obituary for the Implied Reader”, *Style* 46. 2 (2012): 201. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/10.5325/style.46.2.201.pdf>

6 Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare After All* (New York: Random House, 2004), 466, quoted in Sandra Young, “Recognising Hamlet” *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* 26. 1 (2014): 13. <http://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC159614>

7 Sandra Young, “Recognising Hamlet”, *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* 26. 1 (2014): 13. <http://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC159614>

8 John Gouws, “Shakespeare and the Self: Being True to Hamlet”, *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* 9. 1 (1996): 32. <http://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC48092>

9 Brian Pearce, “Hamlet, the Actor”, *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* 19. 1 (2007): 66. <http://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC48092>.

10 Ray Eston Smith, “To be or not to be”, *Literature Network Forums* comment, October 31, 2011, <http://www.online-literature.com/forums/showthread.php?65221-To-be-or-not-to-be>

11 Charles Darnay, “To be or not to be”, *Literature Network Forums* comment, December 28, 2011, <http://www.online-literature.com/forums/showthread.php?65221-To-be-or-not-to-be>

suicidal wimp... I see him rather as a valiant soldier of the spirit, fighting a desperate internal battle to defend the sovereignty of his soul”.

There is yet another way to look at the “To be, or not to be” soliloquy: Hamlet goes to Wittenberg and is characterised as a scholar.<sup>12</sup> When Hamlet says to Horatio “in your philosophy” it indicates the subject that distinguishes University from grammar-school. Margreta de Grazia suggests that while Hamlet is questioning “To be, or not to be” it might be that, as a scholar who studies philosophy, he is, in fact, reading from a book.<sup>13</sup> After all, it is a prop he prominently uses elsewhere in the play. Elizabeth Hanson comments that if it is so, it might be “a treatise by Gorgias of Leontini”, the same book Faustus, another Wittenberg scholar, throws aside at the beginning of *Dr Faustus* when he “bid[s] *on kai me on* [on being and not being] farewell”.<sup>14</sup> This suggests that Hamlet is not focussing on his inner life and identity but rather that he is involved in academic discourse.

Ben Crystal<sup>15</sup> makes an interesting observation; that as a departure to the speech, instead of the familiar phrase, one could use “the notion of life and death, or being and not being”.<sup>16</sup> However, to me, Hamlet’s critical question had a very personal resonance: to be or not to be ‘gay’ – or rather whether or not to accept being gay. This question pointed to my internal struggle around self-acceptance, even into my early 20s. It made me wonder, what if that was Hamlet’s struggle? Could it be interpreted that Hamlet is struggling here with his sexuality?

But why study homosexuality in *Hamlet* in a South African context? South Africa is one of sixteen countries worldwide that permits same-sex marriages but as Rebecca Davis states: “South Africa brings together the best and the worst of realities for gays: deeply progressive legislation, and deeply regressive social attitudes”.<sup>17</sup> In 2013 several posters on Rhodes campus and at a shopping centre outraged university staff, students and alumni. One of the posters had the following text: “Homosexuality is a crime punished by imprisonment hanging or beheading in Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria and others”. However, the University of Rhodes’ Fairness Forum, declared these posters as acceptable “on the basis of free speech”.<sup>18</sup> At the United Nation’s Free & Equal campaign in July 2013 the UN human rights chief Navi Pillay pointed out: “South Africa has some of the worst cases of homophobic violence. People are literally paying for their love with their lives”. The Archbishop Desmond Tutu declared his support for this launch by saying: “If God, as they say, is homophobic, I wouldn’t worship that God”.<sup>19</sup> The ACDP leader, Rev Meshoe, lashed out against this comment saying God is not homophobic and he does not hate anybody, but homosexuality is a sin and if people cannot “live up to the standard of the word of God they should not find fault with scripture”.<sup>20</sup> Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe also attacked

12 Elizabeth Hanson, “Fellow Students: Hamlet, Horatio, and the Early Modern University” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 19. 1 (2011): 219–220. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23025628>

13 Margreta de Grazia, “Soliloquies and Wages in the Age of Emergent Consciousness” *Textual Practice* 9 (1995): 69–72, esp. 73–74, quoted in Elizabeth Hanson, “Fellow Students: Hamlet, Horatio, and the Early Modern University” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 19. 1 (2011): 219–220. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23025628>

14 Elizabeth Hanson, “Fellow Students: Hamlet, Horatio, and the Early Modern University” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 19. 1 (2011): 219–220. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23025628>

15 Ben Crystal co-wrote with his father David Crystal: *Shakespeare’s Words* (Penguin 2002) and *The Shakespeare Miscellany* (Penguin 2005). In 2013 he published for Arden Shakespeare / Bloomsbury the *Springboard Shakespeare* quartet series where he gives “the reader a clear route through thinking about, understanding and enjoying four of Shakespeare’s greatest works”. See <http://www.bencrystal.com/about/>

16 Ben Crystal, *Springboard Shakespeare: Hamlet*. (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2013), p.119.

17 Rebecca Davis, “Analysis: Why Tutu’s support for gay rights matters” *Daily Maverick*, July 29, 2013. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-07-29-analysis-why-tutus-support-for-gay-rights-matters/#.Wa0d2IR95hE> (accessed August 13, 2015).

18 Victoria John, “Outrage over ‘homophobia’ posters” *Mail and Guardian*, June 6, 2013, <http://reference.sabinet.co.za/document/SAM052013122> (accessed August 13, 2015).

19 Rebecca Davis, “Analysis: Why Tutu’s support for gay rights matters” *Daily Maverick*, July 29, 2013. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-07-29-analysis-why-tutus-support-for-gay-rights-matters/#.Wa0d2IR95hE> (accessed August 13, 2015).

20 Babalo Ndenze, “Tutu lashed by Meshoe over gay statement”, *Cape Times*, July 31, 2013. <http://reference.sabinet.co.za/document/SAM0520131277> (accessed August 13, 2015).

Tutu's statement saying: "Tutu should just step down, because he supports gays, something that is evil. We say no to gays".<sup>21</sup>

It is clear that although the South African constitution includes protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation, socially it is still an issue. In 2017 Clayson Monyela, spokesman for the Department of International Relations and Co-operation acknowledged that "South Africa was still faced with the challenge of homophobia and violence against gays and lesbians".<sup>22</sup>

Hamlet's "To be, or not to be" soliloquy was the passage that incited my queer interpretation of the play. But how could I approach the rest of the play without forcing the queer issue? I started to look at the relationship between Horatio and Hamlet. Horatio is present in key moments of the play. Most of Horatio's interactions with Hamlet are when they are alone. I started to wonder how it would influence the interpretation of the whole play if Hamlet and Horatio were to be in a same-sex relationship. But, to do that, I first had to analyse Horatio's position in the play and his interaction with Hamlet and the rest of the characters.

What follows is a summary of Horatio's appearances in the play. Act 1 opens with the changing of the guards. They had asked Horatio, Hamlet's friend from Wittenberg, to come and talk to the ghost. During the scene, Horatio and the guards discuss current affairs. Horatio offers insight into why Denmark appears to be preparing for a war and explains the historical background. In light of this, I started to ask: how does Horatio, who is not Danish and has only recently arrived at the castle, know so much about the historical and political situation in Denmark? One plausible answer is that Hamlet and Horatio are confidants, lovers.

In the next scene, Horatio and Marcellus go to inform Hamlet of the ghost. From Hamlet's reaction upon seeing Horatio, it is clear that he did not expect him to be in Elsinore. When Horatio greets him, Hamlet says "I am glad to see you well: / Horatio, or I do forget my selfe" to which Horatio replies "The same my Lord" (346–348).<sup>23</sup> Hamlet asks why he is at Elsinore and Horatio answers that he came for old King Hamlet's funeral. Whether this is true or not, Horatio had to travel for three weeks from Wittenberg to Elsinore.<sup>24</sup> A rather long journey just to attend the funeral of your friend's father. It can be interpreted from this gesture that Hamlet and Horatio have a special relationship. Horatio is also the only person in whom Hamlet confides about what the ghost told him. Hamlet sees Horatio as "just" and in his speech where he says "Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man / as e'er my conversation cop'd withal!" (1904–5) it is clear that he trusts Horatio, more than anybody else.

After Hamlet's exile to England, Horatio is the person who advises Gertrude that she should speak to Ophelia before Ophelia's famous 'mad scene'. Later Horatio receives a letter from Hamlet, telling him that he is on his way back to Denmark. Why was Horatio still at the castle after Hamlet left? How did Hamlet know that Horatio was still there? These moments were the starting point for my queer adaptation with Hamlet and Horatio in a same-sex relationship. But could it be put on stage?

### The 'dependent' Hamlet

How has *Hamlet* been interpreted over the centuries? In a letter to a friend in 1897, Sigmund Freud compared Oedipus to Hamlet and came to consider "falling in love with the mother and jealousy of the father ... as a universal event of early childhood". The work of Freud's biographer Ernest Jones had a significant influence on performances of Hamlet. According to Jones, Hamlet's 'mystery' is rooted in his Oedipus complex.<sup>25</sup> Young claims that since Freud, audiences see Hamlet as "caught in a vortex of

21 City Press editor, "Mugabe attacks 'gay-supporting Archbishop'" *City Press*, July 28, 2013, <http://www.news24.com/Archives/City-Press/Mugabe-attacks-gay-supporting-Archbishop-Desmond-Tutu-20150429> (accessed August 13, 2015).

22 SAinfo reporter, "Anti-gay discrimination is wrong: South Africa" *Brand South Africa* news, February 26, 2014. <https://www.brandsouthafrica.com/south-africa-fast-facts/news-facts/lgbti> (accessed August 13, 2015).

23 When I quote from the First Folio text (DjVu Editions e-book) line numbers, rather than act/scene/line references, will be provided.

24 During the Middle Ages, travel by horse averaged 20–30 miles (+/- 40 km per day). See [https://www.reddit.com/r/AskHistorians/comments/32n9ji/what\\_was\\_it\\_like\\_to\\_travel\\_during\\_the\\_middle\\_ages/](https://www.reddit.com/r/AskHistorians/comments/32n9ji/what_was_it_like_to_travel_during_the_middle_ages/) Estimated distance from Wittenberg to Elsinore is approximately 860 km walking (google maps)

25 Ernest Jones, *Hamlet and Oedipus* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976), quoted in Philip Weller, "Freud's Footprints in Films of 'Hamlet'," *Literature/Film Quarterly* 25. 2 (1997): 119. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4379678>

tormented, inward-looking decisions and Oedipal self-doubt”.<sup>26</sup> This representation, however, has been influenced by centuries of interpretation, supported by the obsession of post-Enlightenment Europe and the theories of Freud and post-Freudian theorists of subjectivity and sexuality.

The first film adaptation of *Hamlet* in 1900, where sexuality played a significant role, became a blueprint for future interpretations.<sup>27</sup> The Freudian interpretation of Hamlet’s repressed Oedipal desire for his mother Gertrude was the basis for Laurence Olivier’s portrayal of Hamlet in his 1947 adaptation and established the idea that “Hamlet’s motivation was sexually based”.<sup>28</sup> The kisses Gertrude gave Hamlet in the film were too intense to be regarded as mere motherly affection.<sup>29</sup> In Franco Zeffirelli’s film in 1990, Hamlet (portrayed by Mel Gibson) enters his mother’s room, and during his confrontation with her, he throws her onto the bed, “mounts her and violently thrusts his hips into her groin”.<sup>30</sup> Gertrude then grabs Hamlet’s head and gives him such a passionate kiss on the mouth that if the “Ghost did not appear at this point, full-fledged intercourse would follow”.<sup>31</sup> The mainstream appeal of Olivier’s award-winning film gave Freud and Jones’ theory, about the source of Hamlet’s motivations, much more credibility, but it was Zeffirelli’s film that established Hamlet’s Oedipal desires as ‘fact’. He also implied that Gertrude’s actions towards Hamlet accounted for this desire.<sup>32</sup>

Recent productions started to move away from the ‘Oedipal desire’ interpretations. In the Royal Shakespeare Company’s 2008 production, with David Tennant as Hamlet, director Gregory Doran focused on “constructing his inward-looking hero”.<sup>33</sup> He re-established the play’s idea of secrecy, corruption and betrayal.<sup>34</sup> Jude Law portrayed Hamlet in 2009 and the director, Michael Grandage, moved away from Hamlet’s “psychological conundrums” and established a much more mature, heroic Hamlet.<sup>35</sup> In 2010 the National Theatre production of *Hamlet* with Rory Kinnear as Hamlet focused on Denmark’s repressive political system which is governed by surveillance and control, a clear comment on the abuse of power.<sup>36</sup> In the 2015 production at the Barbican Theatre in London, the director placed a heavy focus on suicide throughout the play. To portray Hamlet’s ultimate desire to commit suicide, he had Benedict Cumberbatch in the title role, come on stage with a noose around his neck. Ophelia left after her mad scene to go and commit suicide while Gertrude drank from the cup in the final scene in a clear attempt to commit suicide.<sup>37</sup>

Although bound to British culture in ‘the colonies’, there have been several acclaimed productions and adaptations of *Hamlet* in South Africa. Most notable is Janet Suzman’s production of *Hamlet* in 2005 where Hamlet comes across “as an Angry Young Man”.<sup>38</sup> The production, with John Kani as Claudius, Dorothy Ann Gould as Gertrude and Vaneshran Arumugam as Hamlet, was performed at several theatres in South Africa, as well as the Swan Theatre in London. The performance had a multicultural South African hue: a black Claudius, a white Gertrude and an Indian Hamlet.<sup>39</sup> At the 2007 Grahamstown

26 Young, “Recognising Hamlet”, p.13.

27 James R. Simmons Jr, ““In the Rank Sweat of an Enseamed Bed”: Sexual Aberration and the Paradigmatic Screen “Hamlets”,” *Literature/Film Quarterly* 25. 2 (1997): 111. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43796782>.

28 Ibid., p.112.

29 Ibid., p.113.

30 William van Watson, “Shakespeare, Zeffirelli, and the Homosexual Gaze”, *Literature/Film Quarterly* 20. 4. (1992): 308. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43796567>

31 Simmons, “In the Rank Sweat of an Enseamed Bed”, p.116.

32 Simmons, “In the Rank Sweat of an Enseamed Bed”, p.116.

33 Young, “Recognising Hamlet”, p.21.

34 Yvonne Griggs, “Review of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* (directed by Gregory Doran for BBC TV), BBC Two, 29 December 2009,” *Shakespeare* 6. 2 (2010): 253. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17450911003790257>

35 John Lahr, “Swash and Buckle.” *The New Yorker*, October 19, 2009. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/10/19/swash-and-buckle> (accessed August 23, 2017).

36 Young, “Recognising Hamlet”, p.22.

37 Gemma Miller, “Review of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* (directed by Lyndsey Turner) at the Barbican Theatre, London, 24 October 2015,” *Shakespeare* 12. 4 (2016): 463. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17450918.2016.1146792>.

38 Len Ashton, “Hamlet as an angry young man”, *Sunday Independent*, July 17, 2005. <http://reference.sabinet.co.za/document/SAM0620053072> (accessed August 13, 2015).

39 David Blair, “Shakespeare: The quintessential storyteller of Africa”, *Star*, April 24, 2006. <http://reference.sabinet.co.za/document/SAM0620061628> (accessed August 13, 2015).

National Arts Festival, Shakespeare SA (a performance arm of the Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa) did a production of *Hamlet* set on-board The Red Dragon, a ship moored just off the coast of Sierra Leone in 1607.<sup>40</sup> Fred Abrahams directed a similar production at the Pieter Toerien Montecasino Theatre in 2017 set on-board The Red Dragon with a cast of six men, doubling several roles.<sup>41</sup>

### My 'decolonised' Hamlet

To summarise lesbian, gay or queer approaches to literature, Lois Tyson offers several questions. Relevant to my adaptation is:

How might the works of heterosexual writers be reread to reveal an unspoken or unconscious lesbian, gay, or queer presence? That is, does the work have an unconscious lesbian, gay, or queer desire or conflict that it submerges (or that heterosexual readers have submerged)?<sup>42</sup>

According to Peter Barry, queer critics do the following:

Identify lesbian/gay episodes in mainstream work and discuss them as such (for example, the relationship between Jane and Helen in *Jane Eyre*), rather than reading same-sex pairings in non-specific ways, for instance, as symbolising two aspects of the same character.<sup>43</sup>

I used the First Folio as a source for the adaptation process to stay as true as possible to Shakespeare and/or his first editors' use of punctuation marks. I focused on Hamlet as a young man struggling with his father's death and his mother's hasty marriage, but also his internal conflict about his sexuality and his feelings for Horatio. If we imagine that this is the subtext, how would that affect the interpretation of the "To be, or not to be" soliloquy, in light of the aspect of "being or not being"? How would it play into Hamlet's rejection of Ophelia and her consequent madness as well as the 'mousetrap scene'? Perhaps Hamlet's sexuality was the 'disgrace' to the family and kingdom that motivated Claudius' immediate decision to exile Hamlet, in addition to the murder of Polonius? Could a possible sexual relationship be the reason why Horatio is intent on sharing the poisoned wine in the final scene?

I did a close reading of the script and identified queer cues, which supported a possible love relationship between the two men: Horatio is present in key moments of the play as discussed previously. Most of Horatio's interactions are with Hamlet. The first time the court sees Hamlet and Horatio together is during the mousetrap scene. It is only after Hamlet's exile that Horatio interacts with Gertrude and Claudius. It is not clear where Horatio originates from, but we know he is from the lower class. He is well versed in the political aspects of Denmark as seen in his retelling of Old King Hamlet's victory with the soldiers. He is a scholar, studying with Hamlet in Wittenberg and they are friends. From this I was able to generate a motivated and convincing queer adaptation; however this also required that I cut all references to the political aspects of the play (with regards to young Fortinbras' revenge) and only focus on Hamlet's personal journey.

In 2014 I was able to produce my queer adaptation of *Hamlet* with a professional cast at the University of the Free State to explore the above concept. I co-directed the play with Peter Taljaard (who also portrayed Claudius), and I also portrayed the role of Hamlet. In the next section, I will offer a close reading, in chronological order, of the adaptation highlighting key moments in the play (with examples from the text) I used to establish Hamlet and Horatio's relationship. I will also refer to interpretation choices made by Peter and myself or the actors. The spelling in the quoted passages is the original spelling of the First Folio.

40 Christopher Thurman, "Shakespeare at the National Arts Festival, 2007: theatre review", *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* 20, no. 1 (2008): 63. <http://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC48110>

41 Chris Thurman, "Editorial: Aboard the Red Dragon in 2017", *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* 29, no. 1 (2017): iii. <http://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-875562bfa>.

42 Lois Tyson, *Critical theory today: a user-friendly guide*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge, 2006), p.341.

43 Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: an introduction to literary and cultural theory*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Manchester University Press, 2002), p.143.

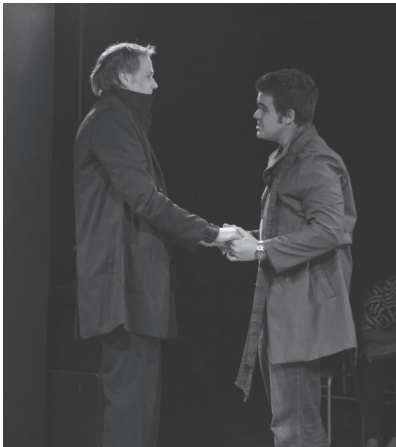
## The adaptation

### *Act 1 Scene 1*

Peter and I used this scene to establish the play in a South African context and introduce Horatio and the ghost. I cut Horatio's discussion on why Denmark appears to be preparing for a war in the opening scene with the changing of the guard. To establish the South African context of the play, the guards wore SANDF uniforms.<sup>44</sup>

### *Act 1 Scene 2*

In scene 2 Horatio and Marcellus arrive to inform Hamlet of the ghost. Hamlet is clearly surprised to see Horatio.



**Hamlet** I am glad to see you well:  
Horatio, ~~or I do forget my selfe.~~

**Horatio** The same my Lord,  
And your poore Seruant euer.

**Hamlet** Sir my good friend,  
Ile change that name with you:  
But what in faith make you from Wittenberge?

**Horatio** A truant disposition, good my Lord.

**Hamlet** I know you are no Truant:  
But what is your affaire in Elsenour?  
Wee'l teach you to drinke deepe, ere you depart.

**Horatio** My Lord, I came to see your Fathers Funerall.  
(346–364)

In Act 1 Scene 2 Claudius and Gertrude refuse that Hamlet returns to Wittenberg (294–299). Hamlet has not been back to Wittenberg since his father's death, which at this moment in the play, is a month. Hamlet and Horatio's first meeting occurs immediately after Hamlet's soliloquy, "O, that this too, too solid flesh would melt, / Thaw, and resolute it selfe into a Dew" (313–343). Shakespeare's placement of this meeting right after Hamlet's sombre soliloquy is ingenious. In the speech, Hamlet talks about suicide, and Horatio's presence momentarily dispels Hamlet's grim mood. Peter and I decided that Hamlet feels completely alone and isolated at this moment, especially now that he cannot go back to Wittenberg.

I cut Hamlet's line "or I do forget my selfe" which indicates that he does not recognise Horatio immediately. In the performance, Hamlet was relieved and happy to see Horatio. This scene was the first moment where we could introduce the concept of them being in a same-sex relationship. To the question why he is in Elsinore, Horatio claims that he felt like playing truant to which Hamlet replies that he knows Horatio would never leave school without permission and again asks why he is there. In the performance, the second time Hamlet asks he does so more lovingly and intimately, taking Horatio's hand and kissing it, for a moment forgetting that he is at the court and that Marcellus is also present. When Hamlet realises what just happened in front of Marcellus, he quickly changes attitude and adds "Wee'l teach you to drinke deepe, ere you depart." (363). A clear attempt to conceal what has just happened in front of Marcellus.

Horatio then admits that he was there for King Hamlet's funeral. In our discussions, Peter and I decided that as Hamlet's lover, Horatio's motivation was to support Hamlet during this tough time. It is approximately a three-week journey from Wittenberg to Elsinore. We felt that logically this was quite a long journey for a young man to come to old King Hamlet's funeral unless there was another underlying reason. As mentioned earlier we used this scene to establish the romantic relationship between Hamlet and Horatio; but now in addition to having to process his mother's hasty marriage, Hamlet is confronted with Horatio and his internal conflict about his sexuality. Hamlet ends the scene with:

44 We only made use of the army costumes for visual reference. The characters still talked about Denmark, Wittenberg etc.



**Hamlet** (to Horatio) ... so fare ye well:  
Vpon the Platforme twixt eleuen and twelue,  
Ile visit you.

**Horatio** [*All*]  
**Hamlet** My [*Our*] duty to your Honour.  
Your loue, as mine to you: farewell.

(451–455)

In the performance Hamlet took Horatio's hands during "so fare ye well: / Vpon the Platforme twixt eleuen and twelue, / Ile visit you.", then kissed his hand before placing it on his heart on "Your loue, as mine to you: farewell." In this way the concept was carried through the words into the action.

#### *Act 1 Scene 4*

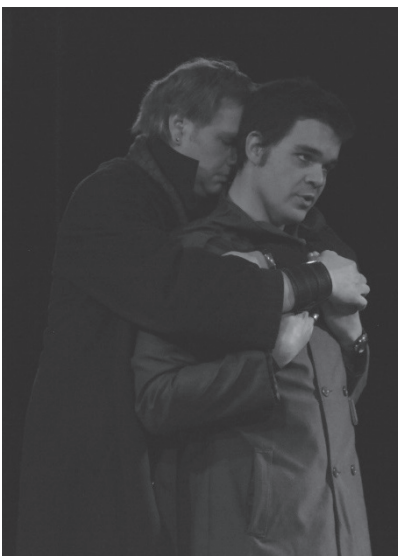
In the original script Hamlet, Horatio and Marcellus arrive at the watch tower together. I am sure Shakespeare did not put a lot of thought into why they arrive together. On the Elizabethan stage, the actors needed to enter and start the scene. For the adaptation, however, Peter and I wanted to show the audience that it is the first time after their first meeting in scene 2 that Horatio and Hamlet are together. It would strengthen their 'coming out' in the 'mousetrap scene' where the other members of the court see Hamlet and Horatio together for the first time. To establish that to the audience we had Marcellus and Horatio wait for Hamlet at the watch tower.

*[Marcellus and Horatio waiting for Hamlet. Hamlet enters]*

**Hamlet** The Ayre bites shrewdly: is it very cold?  
**Horatio** It is a nipping and an eager ayre.  
**Hamlet** What hower now?  
**Horatio** I thinke it lacks of twelue.

(604–607)

In the scene, Horatio wore a red scarf, which he placed around Hamlet's neck during their greeting. Props like pieces of clothing or accessories are frequently used in Shakespeare's plays to further the plot. Desdemona's handkerchief in *Othello*, the rings Portia and Nerissa give to Bassanio and Gratiano in *The Merchant of Venice*, and the letter Malvolio reads in *Twelfth Night* are a few examples. In our pre-production discussions around Hamlet and Horatio's relationship, Peter and I realised that Hamlet would need something of Horatio's during his "To be, or not to be" soliloquy to visually show the audience that he is referring to their relationship. We felt that this was the moment where Horatio could give something to Hamlet. It was important for the audience to see that the prop came from Horatio. Small items like rings, bracelets, necklaces, are too small and would have 'disappeared' on stage. However, Hamlet mentions that it is cold and we decided that a scarf would work best. It needed to be red, not only for the symbolic meaning of love, but also because of the colour filters we used in the lighting design which made the scarf stand out.



Hamlet and Horatio stood in a loving embrace while waiting for the ghost to appear. It is the first time they are alone (except for Marcellus who is there) and away from the eyes of the court. They could be intimate in a stolen moment without fear that someone might see them. We needed to make it clear to the audience, without a doubt, that they are in a sexual relationship.

After the ghost reveals to Hamlet what actually happened in the orchard, Horatio and Marcellus arrive. Hamlet refuses to tell them what the ghost revealed to him. However, he takes both Horatio and Marcellus into his confidence and informs them that he intends "To put an Anticke disposition on" (868) and makes them swear not to reveal anything. In the performance I ended the scene with Hamlet

saying to Marcellus while holding Horatio in an embrace, “Neuer speake of this that you haue heard or seen” (new line), after which Hamlet and Horatio exit hand in hand.

### *Act 2*

Nearly two months have passed since the events of Act 1. In Act 2 Scene 2, Rosincrance and Guildensterne<sup>45</sup> arrive after Claudius sent for them. It is interesting to note that Claudius did not ask for Horatio’s assistance. Peter and I decided that it would reinforce the idea that nobody knows Horatio is there, which would also add strength to the ‘coming out’ of Hamlet and Horatio in the ‘mousetrap scene’. After Hamlet’s encounter with Rosincrance and Guildensterne and the actors, Hamlet conceives the plan to catch “the conscience of the King”.

### *Act 3 Scene 1*

In our concept, the “To be, or not to be” soliloquy is a pinnacle moment for Hamlet regarding his relationship with Horatio. We used this speech as the moment where Hamlet had to decide whether to accept his sexuality and his relationship with Horatio or not as discussed earlier. As mentioned previously, no-one has ever seen Hamlet with Horatio except for Marcellus, who swore that he would reveal nothing.

Hamlet enters with the scarf Horatio gave him in Act 1, fiddling with it and smelling it while starting with “To be, or not to be, that is the Question”. During the speech, there are key moments where Hamlet refers back to the scarf: “Whether ’tis Nobler in the minde to suffer / The Slings and Arrowes of outrageous Fortune, / Or to take Armes against a Sea of troubles, / And by opposing end them” (1710–1714). Conceptually,



“The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune” implied dealing with and accepting the possible negative reactions to his sexuality and relationship with Horatio while “or to take arms ... by opposing end them” we read as denying his own identity and his feelings for Horatio. Keep in mind he is a prince and Laertes makes it clear in Act 1 Scene 3 that “He may not, as unvalued persons do, / Carve for himself”(482–483).

There is no denying that the question of death and suicide are present in this soliloquy, but ‘death’ need not only concern physical death but also the ‘death’ of identity and the self. For Hamlet to deny his sexuality is the same as “killing” a part of himself. In the lines “For in that sleepe of death, what dreames may come, / When we haue shuffel’d off this mortall coile, / Must giue vs pawse. ... But that the dread of something after death, ... Puzels the will, ...” (1720–1734), we interpreted the fear after ‘death’ not only as the fear of the unknown but also the fear of regret for denying who he is. In the performance Hamlet puts the scarf back around his neck before seeing Ophelia; a gesture to indicate that he accepts his sexuality and more importantly his relationship with Horatio and the choice to be open about it.

In the ‘nunnery scene’ that follows, Hamlet famously rejects Ophelia. There are several interpretations as to why Hamlet treats Ophelia so harshly. The most accepted one is that he is aware of her betrayal and that Claudius and Polonius are listening<sup>46</sup>. He gives her several opportunities to admit that she is lying to him and when she lies about the whereabouts of her father, Hamlet flies into a rage. Another approach to this scene is that Hamlet is expressing pent-up anger towards his mother. He feels that she has been unfaithful to his father and that her marriage to his uncle is incestuous. During his confrontation with Ophelia, Hamlet’s hate towards his mother becomes evident. Ophelia becomes the substitute for Hamlet’s mother, at whom he indirectly aims his rage.

For our performance, we approached it from a different angle. Act 1 makes it clear that there is a sort of ‘relationship’ between Ophelia and Hamlet. To support our proposal that Hamlet is a gay man, we decided that for the sake of pretence Hamlet uses Ophelia to take suspicion away from his sexuality.

45 First Folio spelling.

46 James Hirsh, “The “To Be, or Not to Be” Speech: Evidence, Conventional Wisdom, and the Editing of “Hamlet”,” *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 23 (2010). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24322554>

There is no denying that they know each other very well and one can assume that they grew up together and are very good friends. Seeing Ophelia after deciding to come out is very hard for Hamlet, and we used the beginning of this scene to indicate that to the audience.

Hamlet assumes that she is reading a prayer book and asks her “Nymph, in thy Orizons / Be all my sinnes remembred.” (1743–1744), as he feels guilty about his deceit towards her and the decision he has just made. She tells him that she wants to return the gifts he gave her. Hamlet’s first instinct is to deny that he ever gave her anything. He finds it difficult to lie to her like that and says “I did loue you once.” (1770). He then admits that “I loued you not.” (1774). When she says that “I was the more deceiued.” (1775), he responds that men are untrustworthy and that she would be better off in a nunnery. The use of the word ‘nunnery’ can be interpreted in two ways; either as a euphemism for “brothel” (as was the case in the Protestant Elizabethan world)<sup>47</sup> or literally as a nunnery. We used both interpretations. The first time Hamlet uses ‘nunnery’ he means a nunnery, a place where she cannot marry at all; she cannot be under the influence of any man, or influence men in any way, safe from men, like him, who will use her.

However, after she denies the whereabouts of her father, Hamlet realises that she is also deceiving him, and he then insinuates that she should go to a brothel. He relapses into his “antic disposition” to make Claudius and Polonius think that his madness is because of Ophelia.

### Act 3 Scene 2



In the adaptation, I cut the beginning of this scene where Hamlet talks to the actors about their acting. To focus on Hamlet and Horatio’s relationship we needed to build up momentum and Hamlet’s talk to the actors would have broken the tempo.

Hamlet went through a journey during the “To be, or not to be” soliloquy from a) questioning whether or not to accept, to b) accepting his sexuality, to c) rejecting Ophelia during the ‘nunnery scene’. In the performance we started the scene with Horatio waiting for Hamlet,

again reinforcing that when they are at the castle, they are not together. Upon his arrival, Hamlet greets him with “Horatio, thou art eene as iust a man / As ere my Conuersation coap’d withall” (1904–1905). This speech was the moment where Hamlet tells Horatio that he chose him as his partner “Since my deere Soule was Mistris of my choyse, / And could of men distinguish, her election / Hath seal’d thee for her selfe” (1914–1916). He ends with “Giue me that man, / That is not Passions Slaue, and I will weare him / In my hearts Core. I, in my Heart of heart, / As I do thee” (1922–1925) telling Horatio that he is committed to him and their relationship. They embrace and hold each other for a while. For me, as an actor, this speech was the moment where Hamlet revealed his innermost being to Horatio. Peter and I realised that for the first time Hamlet could be open in his affection towards Horatio without being afraid that people might find out they are in a relationship. The secrecy and lying to others and himself is over. After they embrace Hamlet informs him what the ghost told him and asks for his help in observing Claudius.

The ‘mousetrap scene’ is now not only a scene where Claudius’ guilt about the murder is revealed to Hamlet, but it is also the moment where Hamlet reveals his relationship with Horatio to the court and his parents. As the court enters for the play, Hamlet and Horatio are holding hands. Gertrude asks Hamlet to come and sit next to her, to



47 “According to the Oxford English Dictionary, this text contains the first quotation in which ‘nunnery’ is used as slang for ‘brothel’ – the ironic opposite of a virginal community of nuns. In his book, *Christes Teares over Jerusalem* (1593), Thomas Nash or Nashe (1597–1601) refers to prostitutes who ‘give free privileged’ to gentlemen in ‘theyr Nunnery’ (pp.79r–v). ... Critics have debated whether this simply implies that she should enter a convent to escape corruption, or whether it also hints ambiguously that she should go to a brothel – because the world will inevitably corrupt her with its impure ways.” See more at: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/first-use-of-the-word-nunnery-to-mean-brothel-1593#sthash.36HK27pC.dpuf>

which he replies “No good Mother, here’s Mettle more attractiue.” (1964), indicating Horatio. For the adaptation, I cut the dialogue between him and Ophelia.

### *Act 3 Scene 3*

Claudius’ outburst “I like him not, nor stands it safe with vs, / To let his madnesse range” (2272–2273) not only now refers to Hamlet’s apparent madness, but also to his sexuality and forms part of Claudius’ motivation for sending him to England.

### *Act 4 Scene 5*

It is unclear how much time has passed after Hamlet left for England in scene 3, but it is safe to assume that it is at least a few weeks as Polonius has already been buried. Horatio is still at Elsinore and we decided that Gertrude accepts them as a couple and therefore she allows him to counsel her.

During Ophelia’s mad scene she sings the following:



**Ophelia**     *By gis, and by S[aint] Charity,  
Alacke, and fie for shame:  
Yong men wil doo’t, if they come too’t,  
By Cocke they are too blame.  
Quoth she before you tumbled me,  
You promis’d me to Wed:  
So would I ha done by yonder Sunne,  
And thou hadst not come to my bed.*

(2796–2803)

In the performance, she placed her head on Horatio’s chest during “You promis’d me to Wed: / So would I ha done by yonder Sunne, / And thou hadst not come to my bed”. We conceived that she is talking to Hamlet through Horatio. On the line “I hope all will be well. We must bee patient”, she places her hand on his cheek as a way of accepting Horatio and Hamlet’s relationship. When she exits, Claudius instructs Horatio to follow.

### *Act 4 Scene 6*

In the original script, Horatio receives a letter from Hamlet, telling him that he is on his way back to Denmark and that Horatio should meet him. In our pre-production discussions on why Horatio was still at Elsinore and how Hamlet knew he was still there, we decided that Horatio stayed at the castle and that he and Hamlet were in constant contact through text messaging. Instead of a letter, we had Hamlet send Horatio a text message where he recounts how pirates attacked the ship and that he ended up being the only person taken prisoner.

During my research, before I did the adaptation, I came upon a scene in Quarto 1<sup>48</sup>, not included in the First Folio, between Horatio and Gertrude which I included in this scene. Horatio informs Gertrude “Madame, your sonne is safe arriv’d in Denmarke, / This letter I euen now receiv’d of him, / Whereas he writes how he escap’t the danger, / And subtle treason that the king had plotted” (2985). Gertrude then confirms her suspicion about Claudius, and it is clear that Gertrude knows about Claudius’ deceit and ill doings.

Gertrude asks Horatio “But know not you Horatio where he is?” He replies “Yes Madame, and he hath appoynted me / To meete him on the east side of the Cittie / To morrow morning”, to which she replies “O faile not, good Horatio”, Horatio informs her of what happened on the ship, and she greets him “Thankes be to heauen for blessing of the prince, / Horatio once againe I take my leaue, / With thowsand mothers blessings to my sonne”. (3515–25), to which I added “and you”. This scene was another moment we used to visually show that Gertrude accepts and respects Hamlet’s relationship with Horatio.

*Act 5 Scene 2*

Hamlet and Horatio enter holding hands and Hamlet recounts what happened on the ship. In the performance, Hamlet was very affectionate to Horatio. After Osric informs Hamlet about the duel with Laertes, Horatio for the first time pleads with Hamlet not to accept the challenge. Throughout the play, Horatio emotionally supports Hamlet with unwavering loyalty in every decision and endeavour. In our discussions around Hamlet and Horatio's relationship, Peter and I realised that even though they were in Wittenberg and away from the Danish court, Hamlet and Horatio would still have been very secretive about their relationship, as I mentioned previously in the 'mousetrap scene' discussion. Hamlet's acceptance of their relationship and his decision to 'come out' was also an important moment for Horatio. They did

not have to hide their relationship anymore, and Horatio could finally be open about his feelings towards Hamlet as well. With Hamlet's exile to England, Horatio 'lost' him again and now Hamlet is back. We decided that Horatio knows that Hamlet will lose the duel and he could not lose him again.

To Horatio's plea not to duel, Hamlet replies "If it be now, 'tis not to come: if it be not to come, it will be now: if it be not now; yet it will come; the readinesse is all, since no man ha's ought of what he leaues. What is't to leaue be-times?" (3669–3672). Peter and I discussed this moment at length: Hamlet could refuse, and he and Horatio could run away. It was difficult to justify why Hamlet would be ready to die, right after reuniting with Horatio. To motivate Hamlet's decision to duel we decided that Hamlet knows there is no way out since Claudius has already attempted to get rid of him, and chances are he'll try again. Hamlet is guilty of killing Polonius, and we thought that Hamlet would like to make amends with Laertes. Through my performance of this speech we revealed to the audience that it was difficult for Hamlet to admit that he knows he might lose this duel but that in some way he is ready, a hard decision for him for it means that he would lose Horatio. Hamlet was holding Horatio's hand while greeting Laertes when he entered. What worked for us was that this love-lost moment added to the tragedy of the tale.

In the performance, an important moment for Horatio was his eagerness to share the poisoned wine in the final scene – to die along with Hamlet. On the surface, the reference to him being an antic Roman refers to the practice in ancient Rome of committing suicide when defeated, as in the case with Cassius and Brutus in *Julius Ceasar*. Another aspect to look at is the acceptance of same-sex relationships in ancient Rome, usually between a man from the upper class and either a slave or man of lower class, as in the case of Hamlet and Horatio. It was a moment in the performance where we could show Horatio's love for Hamlet. Throughout the play, Hamlet took an active role in displaying his affection towards Horatio, but now it was Horatio's turn.

After Hamlet wrestles the cup from Horatio's hand, he tells him "If thou did'st euer hold me in thy heart, / Absent thee from felicitie awhile, / And in this harsh world draw thy breath in paine, To tell my Storie." (3832–3835). In the adaptation, I replaced "my story" with "our story".

The play ends with Horatio's final words "Now cracke a Noble heart: / Goodnight sweet Prince, / And flights of Angels sing thee to thy rest", (3848–3850) and then he kisses Hamlet. The image of Hamlet dying in Horatio's arms, with Horatio intent on drinking the poison too, is reminiscent of the tomb scene in *Romeo and Juliet*.

**Epilogue**

The original text lends itself to a queer interpretation of Hamlet and Horatio's relationship without forcing the issue. Nowhere in the adaptation did I have to make any major changes to the dialogue to support Hamlet and Horatio's relationship. Peter and I found that the subtle changes in the actors'

interpretation of the lines and the physical interaction between the characters brought Hamlet and Horatio's relationship to the forefront.

A colleague once said, "Horatio is only a plot device to move the action forward". Yet reading *Hamlet* from a queer perspective answers the question as to why Horatio is in Elsinore and present at key moments in the play. By placing Hamlet and Horatio in a same-sex relationship, Horatio's presence becomes more meaningful. The interpretation of the "To be, or not to be" soliloquy, the 'nunnery scene', the 'mousetrap scene' and ultimately his exile adds a new layer to the character of Hamlet, and by extension Horatio. Isn't it time to move away from, or rather "decolonise" the old cliché that Hamlet is obsessed with death, suicide and his Oedipal desires for his mother, and rather focus on him as a young man coming of age – wanting to live and love?

Imagine an adaptation of the epilogue from *Romeo and Juliet* (5.3.321–26):

*A glooming peace this morning with it brings  
The sun for sorrow will not show his head.  
Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;  
Some shall be pardoned, and some punished;  
For never was a story of more woe  
Than this of Hamlet and his Horatio [sic].*

**Thys Heydenrych** ([HeydenrychM@ufs.ac.za](mailto:HeydenrychM@ufs.ac.za)) is a professional actor and director. He is involved in various productions and performs regularly on the local professional stage and at various festivals. In 2011 he attended a directing workshop at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Ontario, Canada. He completed his M.A. Theatre Directing degree at East 15 Acting School, University of Essex, London, in the UK in September 2013. His studies included modules on *Directing Shakespeare*, *Assistant Directing* and *Design Collaboration*. As part of his studies, he was Assistant Director for George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, adapted and directed by Glen Wilford, in the Tristan Bates Theatre, Covent Garden. He also completed a module in *Meyerholdt & Bio-Mechanics* at the Russian Academy of Theatre Arts (GITIS) in Moscow in March 2013. In September 2013 he directed his adaptation of Shakespeare's *Richard III* in modern English with students. In October 2014 he directed and acted in *Hamlet*, for which he also did the adaptation, with a professional cast. He is currently a lecturer at the University of the Free State, Department of Drama and Theatre Arts, and busy with his PhD.