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# On the Variations of 'Occupatio' in "Richard II"

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On the Variations of *Occupatio* in *Richard II*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in English

by

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University of Arkansas  
Bachelor of Arts in English, 2002

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This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

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## Abstract

Recent scholarship of Shakespeare's *Richard II* has been interested in or preoccupied with its historical relations. Particularly the plays association with the Essex Rising of 1601, and the censorship of the deposition scene, both of which seem to resonate for history with Elizabeth's enigmatic comment expressing her identification with Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard II.

This paper proposes to resolve the question of the play's censorship by interpreting the deposition scene as a dramatization of transubstantiation, perhaps triggering Elizabethan censors.

Transubstantiation is the doctrine by which the Catholic Church interprets the Eucharist using the distinction between *substance* and *accidens* (eternal and actual). As a matter of interpretation, I will show how the *substance / accidens* difference functions in the deposition scene and in the play at large in conjunction with the rhetorical battle between Richard and Bolingbroke, and also in the technological imagery of Richard's long speeches.

In this way, I advance on the deconstructive readings of Vance Adair and Jonathan Goldberg by explicating the phenomenal relations within the play in greater detail, specifically exploring the relationship of the doctrine of transubstantiation to Heidegger's sense of ontological transition.

The argument proceeds by first identifying the dominant rhetorical form within the play as *occupatio*. I demonstrate how this rhetorical figure is deployed in the rhetoric of *Richard II* as a deferred manner of mediating the conflict over land rights. The "postal effects" described in

other deconstructive readings are thereby brought into relation to the representation of transubstantiation and considered as part of Shakespeare's dramatic technique.

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## On the Variations of *Occupatio* in *Richard II*

### 1. Introduction: *Occupatio* as Dramatic Scheme

I propose, at the outset, to take up the question of *Richard II* under the heading of its contribution to our understanding of Elizabethan politics. The overall effect of the play indeed requires this approach. It seems to be the necessary aspect of Shakespeare's project: to depict a despised king of a different historical time in such a way so as to bring him and something about that time into the Elizabethan moment. Thus, the questions must have been asked: in what sense does the story of Richard II contribute to the present, how does the plight of this deposed medieval king stand in relation to the politics of Shakespeare's day?

No doubt, the question of the relationship between *Richard II* and Elizabeth has been of concern for recent scholarship on the play. This flurry of interest stems from the play's elliptical involvement with the Essex Rising of 1601, when, as the story goes, it was performed by the Lord Chamberlain's Men, with the deposition scene included, on the eve of an attempted political uprising on February 8, 1601 (Hammer 1).

Following the uprising, in August of the same year, Elizabeth is said to have remarked in a private conversation, "I am Richard II, know ye not that?" (Scott-Warren 208).

The historical drama surrounding the play is coupled with the fact that a major scene in the play, known as the Parliament Scene or the deposition scene (4.1), appears to have been censored for reasons that remain obscure. The scene did not appear in the printed plays until the fourth quarto of 1608 (Q4) (Hammer 2). However, it does seem to have been performed as, ac-

ording to the story, Essex's supporters rebels specifically requested its inclusion in the performance.

All of this has been of great interest to criticism. Does the play's involvement suggest a seditious intention by its author? Why would the deposition scene, depicting a peaceful deposition, have been censored in the first place? And what does this episode tell us about the role of drama within the Elizabethan *polis*? All of these questions have been addressed variously by critics from the new historicism of Stephen Greenblatt to the deconstruction of Vance Adair and the more properly historical explorations of Paul J. Hammer. The list could go on.

This confluence of historical narrative with Shakespeare's drama has influenced criticism to see the play as a product of Shakespeare's historical situation. In terms of deconstructive theory, Adair has argued that *Richard II* is irrevocably bound up and unaccountable for itself within the "posts" and "postal effects" of Elizabethan bureaucracy (55-56). *Postal effects* is a term first applied to *Richard II* by Jonathan Goldberg in his work *Shakespeare's Hand* (189). The term refers to Derrida's notion of a "postal principle," an expression of the relationship of language to technology in which a "telecommunication system" introduces a deferral within its foundation, which for Adair leads to the plays problems of reference in which a "telematics of the post constitutively unmoors identity from every assured destination" (Adair 46). In other words, Derrida describes the possibilities of the non-arrival of the message, as well the extent to which such technical difficulty can overdetermine subjectivity.

Here, while elaborating on the function of such postal effects and this posted condition in the play, we will question some of the assumptions in Adair's application of Derrida, in the spirit of exploring what Shakespeare himself might have to say regarding this posted condition and its

effect on the *polis* as it functions or mis-functions within the relationship of the one and the many. Keeping in mind Adair's analysis of "looking awry" (R2. 2.2.21) as a postal effect, I will attempt here to propose another reason all together for the censorship of the deposition scene in the representation of transubstantiation, and thus also different perspective from which to consider the play's encounter with Elizabeth herself.

The ceremony of the Eucharist, an important element of Catholic mass, was a central element of Martin Luther's revisions of Catholic doctrine. Elizabeth's *Thirty-Nine Articles*, a document addressing the major departures of the Protestantism under Elizabethan reign, takes up directly the question of the doctrine of transubstantiation as the interpretation of the Eucharist:

Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped. (Church of England 66).

Shakespeare appears to have participated, and perhaps commented, on the controversy surrounding the Eucharist through the depiction of Richard's deposition. Richard, in creating a dramatic performance out of his deposition, makes a rhetorical and dramatic performance that employs the elements of transubstantiation, perhaps triggering Elizabeth's ecclesiastical censors with its covert representation of the Catholic Eucharist, which was and remains contrary to the Protestant interpretation. The critical difference here is that Catholic thinkers including St. Thomas Aquinas employed the Platonic-Aristotelian doctrine of a difference between *substance* (eternal) and *accidens* (actual) in the interpretation of the Eucharist (Toner 228). Here, I will demonstrate how Shakespeare constructs the conflict of *Richard II* on the basis of this difference, and how the notion of trans-substantiation is expressed in the deposition scene. Furthermore,



this transubstantiation will shift the ground for a deconstructive reading, locating this well-documented but nonetheless elusive encounter with Elizabeth herself more directly in relation to the play's theme and within its central aims. At the same time, the paper will bring these postal effects into view in their relationship to the central action of transubstantiation, or to use a more phenomenological coinage, *ontological transition*.

Richard's story is unique because it hinges on an event that seems, at least in its own context, to be unprecedented. The event itself locates the center of the drama directly within the logocentric tendency of the monarchy, within the problem of the *nomos*. Adair's exploration of this terrain follows that of Goldberg who first assigns to Richard and to Shakespeare the monicker of "logocentrism" (Goldberg 192). And yet, while deconstructive criticism has been quick to point out moments in the play of Derridean "postal effects" (Goldberg 189), where even the action of writing the play itself is subsumed in the technicities of Elizabethan bureaucracy (Adair 56), its allegations of a logocentrism on Shakespeare's part risk themselves becoming instances of hypostatized critical language that interrupts the textuality of the text.

In these readings, Richard's deposition itself, in the entirety of its scope, only repeats the condition in the play in which a deferral of meaning at the foundation announces itself in the necessity of self-deposition. A deferral in this way constitutes the basis of action, and the play can therefore be reduced to an overdetermination of language that, in spite of its own aims, can only refer back into this originary delay (Adair 41). For instance, in trial that opens the play, Richard repeatedly defers the combat between Mowbray and Bolingbroke, calling the combatants repeatedly to, "return back to their chairs again" (*R2*. 1.3.120). Postal effects refer to this tendency of action in the play to return inexplicably to its point of origin in the delay itself (Adair 43).

Therefore, *Richard II* is in all ways caught up within a system of postal effects, whatever meaning is there is always “still to come” (56).

Adair’s reading marks a certain perimeter, the historical “edges” of the play, where the delay enters in in advance as a fundamental deferral to subvert any attempted meaning, causing this continual process of returning again. While no one would doubt that the monarchy is itself a logocentric system, the question of whether Shakespeare himself is reducible to such logocentrism is questionable, particularly given the extent to which Shakespeare’s history plays continually explore problems of speech and writing. To demonstrate Shakespeare’s depiction of postal effects is, in the first place, at odds with the idea that he would have been himself unaware of these effects. Furthermore, Derrida himself addresses Shakespeare in quite a different manner. Analyzing the plight of Shylock, the Jew from *The Merchant of Venice*, Derrida seems to identify Shakespeare’s phrasing of the problem of the Jewish question when Shylock asks, “must the Jew be merciful?” (Derrida, “Relevant Translation,” 186) with his call to recognize the depth of presence/absence relationships in language beyond what is represented or objectively present. Shakespearean drama is, in fact, replete with such moments where the argument of the character encounters its own limit, which marks not the invalidity of the perspective, but the point where an argument encounters its situation within a manifold of Being. In Shakespeare, such nuance becomes all the more compelling when an argument encounters its inevitable shattering against the manifold as it does in Shylock’s question. In this way Shakespeare adopts or modernizes the essential relationship between beings and Being of Greek drama, locating the question already within the play of presences and absences as he dramatizes these metaphysical differences with a view to their basis in the fundamentals of drama. Thus, deconstructive approaches, which are

guided by the assumption of Shakespeare's logocentrism, are themselves pressed to the edges of the play's meaning, perhaps looking awry in advance, as they interpret the play under the assumption that Shakespeare could not have understood the nuances and ambiguities within textuality itself, and thus veer toward this encounter with the historical context, affixing the term *logocentrism* in a logocentric manner, while other phenomenological terms might prove more sensitive tools for tracking Shakespeare's ability to express the subtleties of the relationships of presence and absence.

We nonetheless should remain within a deconstructive or phenomenological view, because the play is concerned with these postal effects. The condition of *being posted* belongs to Richard in the sense that Heidegger interprets a counter-turning condition in Sophocles' *Antigone*. The condition of man is one of "towering above the site, forfeiting the site" (Heidegger, *Ister* 79). In *Richard II*, a play that has long been recognized for its highly formalized structure as it sets a stage for Richard's performance of this self-deposition, it is a question of the relationship of this counter-turning condition to the view of the monarchy and the English state that becomes the concern of Richard's poetry. The play might be thought of as a chivalric ode to the Elizabethan present, with Shakespeare taking the position of the poet set off from the master through the analogous relationship of history being set off from the present, forced in advance to apologize for his own inadequacy, while nonetheless expressing the sincere desire to have earned a moment of the master's time through the telling of the poem. The *occupatio* of the chivalric romance is the form by which Shakespeare takes up this historical event within the monarchy where the conflict over land rights occurs entirely through the system of deferral and delay of the monarchical system, operating in terms of its overall evocation to place the present in a certain

light, to reflect this history back into Shakespeare's historical present. In this way the structure of the play itself corresponds with Richard's position in the deposition scene of being both "clerk and priest" (*RII*. 4.1 174), and is, in this way, analogous to the condition of counter-turning identified by Heidegger in his reading of Sophocles' *Antigone* as a condition of at once towering over the site, forfeiting the site.

This assessment would seem to correspond with Adair's claim that the meaning of the play is always "still to come," always deferred, at a distance from itself. However, the question emerges from a different perspective here regarding the question of transubstantiation. Instead of a mere embeddedness within a state bureaucracy, Shakespeare confronts that state in its own terms, representing determinate view of the being of the *polis* from Richard's perspective that would dare to enter into the transubstantiated view of the monarch herself.

Thus, in terms of de Grazia's claim that the historicity of Shakespearean drama is grounded in the human/humus relationship (de Grazia 23-44), the "dilations and dilatations" (202) of ousial and parousial power that structure the relationship of the human being to the land, naming the primary action of the play in transubstantiation will demonstrate how the human/humus relationship is grounded in *Richard II* in a view of the monarchy as a sublated relationship between the one and the many in which the rhetoric constantly announces itself in its own possibility through a deferential relationship to power. The question regarding *Richard II* becomes not about the "postal effects" themselves, but about their location within the *nomos* of the law and within Richard's view of the counter-turning central to a *polis* that becomes visible in the language itself. The question has to be asked not only of how the play circulates as a postal effect within a system of postal effects, but also where this encounter actually approaches

Elizabeth herself, Elizabeth both as the monarch and as a signifier for the Elizabethan present. If the play returns as a post within postal effects, was there not a sense in which it was already posted for, called for? If so, where does the responding posted script end, where does it post itself to Elizabeth herself. Or if this dilational structure of the play's *occupatio* is capable of more sensitivity, what is said in that last moment where Shakespeare's poetry quivers the tympanum of Elizabeth's ear, leading her to this obscure remark, "I am Richard II?" Does it not also have to mean at the same time, I am Shakespeare?

To answer this question requires us to deepen the textual terrain that deconstruction explores, softening its ear, so to speak, in order to avoid the problem of over-asserting the label of "logocentrism" under the assumption that these metaphysical relationships are unthought in Shakespeare's authorship. I propose here to sketch out a connection between such deconstructive moments (postal effects, counter-turning) and the historicist project of exploring Shakespeare through the opposition of human and humus, the relationship between the poetry of Shakespeare's characters and the land and land rights proposed by de Grazia.

The notion of the deposition scene as a representation of the transubstantiation of the Eucharist will indeed provide a greater account for these metaphysical structures and their problems as the monarchy itself is shown to be a particular mode of appropriating the real relations of the land through the necessity of an equally real delay that is foundational to this appropriation. As Antigone, for instance, stands facing the wrath of the ruler Creon, having defied his order against burying her rebellious brother, she responds, "Wilt thou delay?" (Sophocles 548). Though Creon remains steadfast in his judgement of Antigone, the question sends him into a fit of conscience because the very reverence that he insists on, and which unifies the *polis*, is based on this

tradition of respect for the dead. In *Richard II*, Shakespeare will elaborate on this notion of the delay, the question he is able to ask through Richard is *what is within the delay*. His concern for the event of his deposition and the implications for the monarchy itself are all understood within this question of the delay.

Thus, the length of the long speeches in *Richard II* is determined by this delay that grounds the relations within the *polis* in a counter-turning (towering above the site, forfeiting the site) through which the land is sublated into the *domum*, or realm. The action of the play is based on conflict over the occupation of the land, legal *occupatio* and military occupation, which resonates through the rhetoric of deferral and delay, as the problem addressed by the play becomes not only a matter of who pushes whom out of power, but also of a sense of concern over how and why that crisis emerges. Richard's concern that extends beyond his personal plight, and Bolingbroke's lack of concern that causes him to fall short of a certain ideal of the king, both contribute to an exploration of how to maintain a sense of continuity within the *nomos* of the law where the meaning of the internally motivated deposition must be interpreted in reference to the ideal of an eternal kingship.

The play opens with Richard speaking to Gaunt as the trial commences. We know through this speech that the trial poses some threat to Richard. Already he has deferred the matter. For some reason the trial itself is the cause of some delay, which, as Richard says, "our leisure would not let us hear" (*RII*. 1.1 5). His address to Gaunt takes up this worry that some "ancient malice" (9) actually lies beneath Bolingbroke's reasons for bringing the trial. In response, Gaunt subtly equivocates. On the surface, he appears to reassure Richard, and thereby

appears in the role of a gentle old man. But everything about the trial will then proceed to embarrass Richard precisely on this account which Gaunt dismisses.

At the same time that Gaunt appears to assure Richard, he slightly alters Richard's choice of words, changing Richard's "ancient malice" to "inveterate malice" (*RII*. 1.1 14). Bolingbroke shows, as near as Gaunt can tell, "On some apparent danger seen in him / Aimed at your highness; no *inveterate* malice" (13-14). At the same time that Gaunt performs the courtly obsequies to Richard, he implies precisely the opposite meaning, entering in a subtle difference through the word "inveterate," which indicates that, instead of a conflict that Richard wants to distance himself from ("ancient"), no malice exists that is un-fitting or of things past that cannot be changed. This suggests Gaunt's awareness of the possibility that some change is here set to occur in the trial. Nonetheless, with Gaunt and other lords present to vouch for the validity of Bolingbroke's complaint, Richard must continue on with the trial, towering over and also forfeiting the site.

This interchange between the two men is a microcosm of the condition of language at the beginning of the play. With the real matters of occupation overstanding the trial, speech has been reduced to mere formality at best. The conflict in the relation to land rights, the real matter that is at stake, is suspended around the scene, deferred away from the actual text, but at the same time imminent to it in this kind of breaching of implication and insinuation that shifts the fields of reference. The language can only address the matter indirectly as that which is left out, creating the play's tendency toward circumlocution.

This relationship of what is included (presence) and what is left out (absence) is the basis for what is expressed in the rhetorical figure of *occupatio*. The tension of the rhetoric is intensi-

fied as the trial progresses, the initial accusation of the mis-appropriation of crown funds gradually expands to include the entire monarchy this rhetorical suspension of presence and absence.

*Occupatio* will then become the dominant rhetorical figure in the play. It is marked in the history of rhetoric as the subtle entry of an argument through the purposeful or accidental acknowledgement of its omission. A classic example is given by H. A. Kelly translating Cicero: “I do not mention that you have taken monies from our allies; I do not concern myself with your having despoiled the cities, kingdoms and homes of them all. I pass by your thieveries and robberies, all of them” (312). In the *Ad Herennium*, also noted by Kelly, *occupatio* is defined as, “a figure in rhetoric when we will say that we will not tell a thing, and yet thereby covertly we will declare the matter or make it suspected” (313). Kelly’s essay describes the ambiguity regarding the precise definition of the term. This ambiguity is complicated by the fact that, in the *Ad Herennium* itself, the term may have been mistakenly entered in the place of *occultatio* (311).

Of course, it is well beyond our scope to address the details of the rhetorical figure and the precise definition of the term and its associated terms (*praeoccupatio*, *parelepsis*, *paralipsis*, and so on), all of which indicate this deferred way of addressing a matter. What is significant pertaining to *Richard II*, is that, beyond its technical definition in rhetoric, *occupatio* and its family of rhetorical terms originate in the play from a tendency to defer meaning in relationship to conflicts over legal and military occupation such as is found in the trial scenes, and indeed across most of the play. As Kelly notes, the rhetorical term takes its name from Roman law where the term *occupatio* is applied to describe the legal process of what is, in the common definition, simply, *a taking* (313).



Shakespeare's use of *occupatio* in *Richard II*, expands on the technical rhetorical term by grounding the rhetoric in the actual conditions in which rhetorical figures such as *occupatio* or *praeoccupatio* emerge in the direct relationship to the conflicts over land rights. *Occupatio* in this way is deployed throughout the play as a scheme that structures the poetry in relationship to the originary deferral and delay at the foundation of the *polis*. The *occupatio* allows the play's rhetoric to gather in the tension both within and without the *nomos* itself, as Richard and Bolingbroke implicitly argue the priority of substance versus actuality, and Richard struggles to hold together his own relationship to the law according to his understanding of his divine ordinance.

## Part 2: *Accidens*

It is necessary then to examine the *evental character* of Bolingbroke's performance at the trial scene, specifically the sense in which, as it sets the stage for the invasion and military occupation to come, it does so by first calling into question the ground of the court itself in the authority of Richard's speech. By implication, through Richard's position as the ground of the law and the authority of the speech of the king, this means that Bolingbroke will disrupt the *nomos* itself.

According to Adair, this tendency of language to appeal to itself even as it moves on, the sense in which everything is doubled and might re-double as it refers somewhere that doubles again, is not only a phenomenon that the play describes, but that even subsumes the play because, "the play appears never to advance anything that it does not immediately take back" (52). Ultimately for Adair, the play is reducible to these postal effects and their spacing through which

the play subverts its own meaning, and which also form the edges of its subsumption within its historical situation, the Elizabethan bureaucracy that is also determined by postal effects and their spacing. The drama, in spite of its lofty ambitions, is ultimately nothing more than an interlude of *jouissance* (supplement) within the technical functioning of the Elizabethan regime.

We can at least complicate this understanding of difference by demonstrating how the *occupatio* functions to transition between the ontic and ontological definitions of being, which Shakespeare is understanding in this play as the *accidens* / substance opposition. Certainly, in his action, Bolingbroke will find complication. However, the complication that arises does not amount to a stepping back, a simple re-tracing of the path. If this were the case, no transition would be possible. Rather, we can describe how one definition of being encounters its limit in the other.

Richard himself refers to this condition of postal effects later as he remarks on the “antic” within the crown, who, “...with a little pin bores through the castle walls, and farewell king!” (*RII*. 3.2 169-170). I would suggest that this is the proper context for viewing what happens in the trial scene. The “pin” is the entry of Bolingbroke’s suit within Richard’s court lists. Bolingbroke’s rhetorical performance constitutes this boring that subverts Richard’s authority publicly and catastrophically.

Bolingbroke’s intention in this *occupatio* is to announce himself as the origin, to send out a message along with the promise to answer for all of what returns, also announcing himself as the ground of these returns. From the moment of this announcement, which could never enter into the speech directly, everything becomes bound up in the problem of the origin, the ground of the *nomos*, because the problem has been announced of co-origins. A reading of Richard’s depo-

sition not only needs to account for his own interpretation of the self-deposition, but also the extent to which Bolingbroke makes it implicit, how he first makes a mark in the *parousial* ground of the body politic.

The postal effects issue from this problem. Two origins immediately appear as a wound that ruptures along the lines of their intersection. Richard's exploration of this counter-origin compels the play's poetry. Everything regarding the transition, from Richard's perspective, depends on the balancing of the two senses of being, the actual and the eternal. The *occupatio*, or the conceit (if we can call it such) of these postal effects, creates the space of interplay between linguistic presence and absence that encodes this transition, that brings the two senses of being, substance/accidens, back into relation.

We need then to observe Bolingbroke in the trial scene for how his rhetoric grounds the conflict of the play in mimesis, as a wholly embodied speech. This occurs when the event of occupation becomes legible as such.

Bolingbroke and Mowbray each open by exchanging long invocations of well wishes to the king, followed by even longer invectives accusing each other of high treason, with both promising to prove it in arms. Bolingbroke's proper charge against Mowbray begins as an allegation that Mowbray has mis-appropriated crown funds. Bolingbroke's argument here is already suspicious because it implies Richard's involvement through appropriation of the fisc and rings of Gaunt's later complaints against Richard's mode of appropriating the land. In all of this, as in the interludes where Gaunt and Bolingbroke exchange words following the trial, Bolingbroke's speech is double-edged, always laced with a double-meaning that implies his ambition toward

the crown. This hidden intention then becomes unmistakable as Bolingbroke intensifies his claims against Mowbray:

All the treasons of these eighteen years  
Completed and contrived in this land  
Fetch from false Mowbray their first head and spring. (*RII*. 1.1 95-98)

This reference to Mowbray as “head and spring,” is hyperbolic. In this going-beyond what is plausible or realistic, the phrase couples with the accusation of the misappropriation of funds to subtly imply an accusation Richard. Bolingbroke then follows this statement with an even more serious accusation against Mowbray:

That he did plot the Duke of Gloucester’s death,  
Suggest his soon-believing adversaries  
And consequently, like a traitor coward,  
Sluiced out his innocent soul through streams of  
blood —  
Which blood, like sacrificing Abel’s, cries  
Even from the tongueless caverns of the earth  
To me for justice and rough chastisement.  
And by the glorious worth of my descent,  
This arm shall do it, or this life be spent! (*RII*. 1.1 100-108)

These blistering lines take both Richard and Mowbray aback, and Mowbray appears to recognize Richard’s discomfort, “O, let my sovereign turn away his face / And bid his ears a little while be deaf” (*RII*. 1.1 111-112). Richard himself, as well, sees it necessary to re-affirm his control of the proceedings, assuring the audience of the “unstooping firmness” (121) of his soul, and that Mowbray has “free speech and fearless” (123). No doubt then, Bolingbroke’s bone-splitting tone here sends a shock wave through the court. In the immediate rhetorical situation, Mowbray seems to be frightened. He realizes that he may not be assured of Richard’s authority and protection, and that he may have to answer with his life to Lancaster for actions Richard’s

behalf. The reference to writing (Mowbray “did plot” Gloucester’s death) at the same time as it demonstrates Bolingbroke’s clarity and forcefulness also couches the accusation within an ambiguity that further opens the pathway to implicating Richard. It creates the sense in which Mowbray can account for himself to Lancaster by unfolding in this public space the plot surrounding the plot. Recognizing the potential need to secure his relationship to Lancaster, Mowbray then stumbles in relation to Richard, admitting even more explosive content into the text of the trial:

I slew him not, but to my own disgrace  
 Neglected my sworn duty in that case.  
 For you, my noble Lord of Lancaster,  
 The honorable father to my foe,  
 Once did I lay an ambush for your life —  
 A trespass that doth vex my grieved soul. (*RII*. 1.1 133-137)

Bolingbroke’s rhetoric here threatens Mowbray in a twofold manner, both placing him on the verge of committing treason against Richard, and pressing him forward in this admission through the physical threat implied by the trial and deafeningly asserted in Bolingbroke’s rhetoric. The occulted matter, the implication of Richard himself in Gloucester’s death, enters in both accidentally as Mowbray backpedals, and intentionally as Bolingbroke presses the accusations forward to implicate Richard, using the formal structure of the court and its rites to trap Mowbray into allowing Richard’s involvement itself to become the principle matter.

The *occupatio* however is difficult to recognize for the reader because it also belongs to the structure of the formal occasion itself. Thus, it is already distributed across the scene, introducing an ambiguity between the characters as a basic way of proceeding in the court. Both men speak superficially in deference to Richard, while Bolingbroke actually intends to do him ill, and then succeeds in making Mowbray complicit in this aim. This duplicity that results, in part, from

the situation in the technical relations to the law thus reaches a peak here as Mowbray calls Bolingbroke a liar, but then continues on to enumerate his involvement and implicate Richard. As the Arden editor describes, Mowbray admits Richard's involvement by "signalling Richard to come to his rescue" (192) in the line, "I slew him not," which thus accomplishes Bolingbroke's aim of transferring the vitriol directed at Mowbray onto Richard himself, completing the rhetorical intention of Bolingbroke's opening argument to make this implication visible without saying the thing.

The image of *plotting*, with which Bolingbroke begins this accusation, also seems important here as it implies a certain delay, creating the sense of a way out for Mowbray by suggesting that perhaps there was some other influence that must be considered if only Mowbray would unravel what is implicit in this *plotting*. Coupled with the intensity of his anger, as well as Richard's failure to step-in on his own account, the effect is to massage Mowbray's emotions into this softened approach to his relationship with Bolingbroke and Gaunt, which leads him into the crucial admission. In this way, Bolingbroke gestures through the accusations hurled at Mowbray toward a direct conflict with Richard, entering the unspeakable word of the treasonous king, if not explicitly into the text, certainly into the overall effect of the opening court scene.

Bolingbroke's *occupatio* progresses by allowing what stands in privation to emerge into the texture of the speeches. The rhetoric of the two accusers is laced with this thread of suspicion, implicating Richard at the same time as it flouts Bolingbroke's ability to displace Richard as the adjudicator. In this way, Bolingbroke extends his power to the limits of the court and to the *nomos* itself, subverting Richard's ability to even address the conflict. He occupies the legal terrain and controls how Richard appears, making a greater and greater spectacle of the king's

privation and also of his ineffectiveness as judge. Certainly, if Richard is generally interpreted, largely by virtue of this moment, to be an inept king, it is not so much the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of his rule that is called into question, but that Bolingbroke's performance succeeds in making him *appear* ineffectual, as Richard, either intimidated by the audience there in support of Bolingbroke, or simply as a matter of his demeanor, is hesitant to take on Bolingbroke's implicit accusation directly, attempting instead to continually defer the matter based on the assumption of his authority as the ground of the law even as Bolingbroke *bores* away at this notion.

Bolingbroke's scheme of *occupatio* then continues into the second trial scene, reaching a culmination as it closes. Richard again interrupts the procession toward a trial by combat, this time by decreeing the sentence of banishment for both men. Richard is compelled however, in the last moment, to call both men into taking an oath, not with himself, but a different kind of oath, an oath that gestures toward the fraternal fidelity that founds the idea of oaths in general. He calls the men into an oath that he knows he can't enforce as he again tries to close-off the wound that has become visible to the court audience. Here, whereas Mowbray begins to exit the scene upon Richard's decree, Bolingbroke has remained in place following his earlier sentencing by Richard. We pick up then as Richard calls Mowbray back:

Return again, and take an oath with thee.  
 [to Bolingbroke and Mowbray]  
 Swear by the duty that you owe to God —  
 Our part therein we banish with yourselves —  
 To keep the oath that we administer:  
 You never shall, so help you truth and God,  
 Embrace each other's love in banishment;  
 Nor never look upon each other's face;  
 Nor never write, regret, nor reconcile  
 This pouring tempest of your home-bred hate... (*RII*. 1.3 178-187)

Richard appears here to extend a pathway for the men to return into his presence by issuing an order that exceeds his jurisdiction. If no more is heard of the matter, the issue of banishment can be reconsidered. In doing so, Richard must appeal to a different ground, a ground beyond everything that has transpired, beyond this “home-bred hate.”

The appeal then is to a sense of substance. The call of the oath is not to take an oath with Richard himself necessarily, but first within themselves. “Take an oath with thee,” can be read as “take an oath with yourselves,” your own conscience, to abolish this behavior. At the same time, however, this need to transcend the normal bounds of an oath, together with Richard’s use of the term “banishment” to describe, in part, himself, reflects the success of Bolingbroke’s rhetorical scheme of displacing Richard’s authority as Richard seems acknowledge here being removed or displaced from the ground of his authority in the actual (*accidens*).

Bolingbroke then uses this moment to again drive home his point, pressing ever forward in the effort to out-face Richard. Immediately after swearing it, Bolingbroke breaks the oath by addressing Mowbray directly. He invites him to “confess,” which would further implicate Richard according to this alleged scenario when furthering the embarrassment is precisely what the idea of the oath was intended to avoid. In recognizing Richard’s intention, Bolingbroke immediately undercuts it. Here, we can almost already hear the shattering of the glass that will come later in the deposition scene:

Norfolk, so far as to mine enemy:  
 By this time, had the King permitted us,  
 One of our souls had wandered in the air,  
 Banished this frail sepulcher of our flesh,  
 As now our flesh is banished from this land.  
 Confess thy treasons ere thou fly the realm. (*RII*. 1.3 193-198)



This defiance then resonates dramatically with Bolingbroke's decision to remain in place, almost as if he has anticipated Richard's move. As he then defies the oath within the immediacy of Richard's presence, his own presence becomes all the more emphatic. The action of defying the oath itself even disappears behind this context. His physical occupation of the space becomes "the chief thing," the implicit presence becomes more significant than the oath, more significant even than Richard's word of banishment. The real, legal, military occupation is not only implied, but it is also demonstrated for the court audience that Richard's word is not the true authority because he does not and perhaps cannot respond to Bolingbroke's defiance. Again we are referred to this audience of nobles who have vouched for the matter, Gaunt no doubt prominent among them. Richard's problem seems to have been that, with respect to the body politic, he cannot, within in this legal terrain, out-face Gaunt to be more punitive to Bolingbroke. This, perhaps, is why Richard makes a show of reducing the number of years to the ostensibly weeping Gaunt who must, as a result of the banishment, part with his son in his old age. What this shows is that Bolingbroke succeeds in transferring the logic of such trials from the actual into the eternal or the parousial, the protected sphere of Richard's sovereignty. As Bolingbroke calls attention to his own presence, this notion that the truth of the body expresses the will of God transitions or trans-substantiates into a subversion of Richard's *parousial* authority, implying as clearly as can be, the frailty of Richard's rule merely by occupying the space as the words, the accusations and oaths that are constituted in and of Richard's authority, contradict themselves and appear meaningless.

Of course this notion of *occupatio* bends the definition of the already ambiguous term. It is not a matter of the conventional rhetorical figure, but of its technique being employed as a dis-

tributed strategy that expresses the conflict over land ownership and appropriation. The term still applies because the point Bolingbroke intends to make presses against the limits of the entire language of the law, referring in the same way as the rhetorical figure to the immanence of the technical situation, the context of courtly speech and calling its ground into question. By entering into Richard's court, Bolingbroke assumes already a reverence to Richard's speech, he pretends implicitly to honor the court and its laws as such, but in doing so succeeds in allowing the intention that he omits, that of subverting Richard's authority, to stand out ostensibly before the court. Not only is this an omission of Bolingbroke's primary point, his theme, but it is a point that precisely *must* be omitted, that can only be expressed through implication, thus demonstrating the rhetorical figure of *occupatio* as a deferral that is essential to the structure of the monarchy itself in its sublation of the land into the domain, the *domum*, of the law (*parousia*). To make such a statement overtly is to essentially enforce the opposite reaction, to gain sympathy for Richard. But, by subtly defying Richard, as if on accident, the trace of sentiment in Bolingbroke's speech becomes all the more pronounced, allowing the challenge to Richard's status through this occupation of the *nomos* to stand there for a moment for all to see, poised in the balance of their contradictory and conflicted presences as land owners.

In Shakespeare's rendition of this historical confrontation, the conflict between the two men must become dramatic. Across the history plays, Shakespeare develops an insight into *poesis* that involves locating historical characters in reference to the fundamentals of drama and the metaphysics of the monarchy. These two "realms" or "regions", though disparate in practice, are unified in their relationship to originary metaphysical concepts. In this way, Shakespeare's histo-

ry plays create a scene for the encounter between the Greek word and the English language, in particular here, the opposition is developed between *substance* and *accidens*.

Bolingbroke, though successful, is also not fully aware of the consequences of his actions. Nonetheless, his rhetoric calls attention to the priority of the actual as opposed to Richard's sense of divine right, the eternal (*substance*). Bolingbroke's rhetoric itself succeeds through the threat of combat, using this threat to displace Richard's control over speech as the ground of the law. But this effect on Richard would not be possible without Gaunt's consent and influence within the body politic, which positions Richard within this "ancient malice" that circulates ambiguously within the body politic, and which has perhaps always surrounded Richard's kingship and the basis of his claim in divine right. Thus, when Richard calls the men to this oath, he invokes a sense of conscience that is based on the Platonic notion of the eternal form, "Return and take an oath with thee," take an oath with your own eternal soul. This external realm is not only external to England, but to accidental reality itself, locating the "real" in this dimension of Platonic substance, while Bolingbroke stands firm within his own person, implicitly occupying this *parousial* space, and displacing Richard from his position as its sole ground and guarantor.

The trial scenes are therefore the exposition that sets the stage for the remainder of the play. It might seem inauspicious that this broken oath, the most innocuous event of the play, becomes central to our thesis. However, in the silence of its immediacy, everything contained and implied within Richard's long speeches opens up within the horizon of his delay that Bolingbroke here violates. As Heidegger writes of *Antigone*, within the rift that appears in the *polis* through Antigone's insurrection is a particular view of the historical destination of the Greek

people (*Ister*, 107). This destining is articulated in the relationship between *techne* and spirit that describes the unity within the *polis* drawn together through a determinate rift (archtrace) in which the way of life common to a particular historical people becomes visible (107). Though within a different historical context, it is this same sense of historical destiny that will concern Richard's poetry in his down-going. The relationship between spirit and *techne* will unfold within this same question of the delay, which both structures Richard's speeches in terms of the performative choices he makes in relation to their dramatic situation, and also forms the basis of his central theme as he interrogates the monarchy in its *being*.

### Part 3: Signifier and Event

Theoretically, we have embarked on a pathway toward the question of the event. The question of the event already unfolds around this rhetorical performance of Bolingbroke's. Something has happened, but it appears both to already have happened and to be on the way. In the most immediate un-staged action, Richard anticipates its meaning in having deferred the trial. When he addresses Gaunt as the play begins, he senses something is up. The performance only confirms everything that he may have suspected, and yet it remains far off, just over the horizon. The language of the trial scene and Bolingbroke's intention are opposed, but not entirely exclusive of one another. The event becomes visible as a thread of implication. As in *Hamlet*, everything *seems*.

In this way, the rhetoric acts as a kind of border, a pellicular limit, the site of a kind of fleshing-out that is not complete but must complete itself within the individual characters. The

event both stands out as something *not yet* and is interpreted already into their rhetoric and action.

The event becomes a thematic concern in the poetry by first coming radically into question as the deposition begins somewhere back in the privation of history. We may not be able to arrive at a final definition of the event, or a determination about whether the phenomenological questioning of Badiou and Heidegger relates in this or that manner. Nonetheless, the questioning of the event has been initiated, and it has been initiated along the pathway of the relationship between *substance* and *accidens*. The view of this relationship, which is unique to Richard, makes the event the object of his concern. In other words, his poetry is initiated from the monarchical view of *towering above the site*. Richard is already concerned with matters in this way. “Towering above” forms the basis by which matters are taken up, which is evident in his foreknowledge of Bolingbroke’s intention in the trial. Matters appear to him in a certain way; Adair calls Richard’s poetry “hyper-phenomenological” (18). Even though Bolingbroke is consummate in his chivalric performance, this view is lost to him. No doubt, a certain naiveté accompanies his boldness that will revisit itself in terms of a bad conscience. This re-entry of the event into Bolingbroke’s conscience has to do with the distributed nature of the event and the necessity of its interpretation, which itself refers back to a basis in an *a priori* delay, delay as the foundation of the *polis*. Richard will remain explicitly concerned with this delay in its construction of the dilational sense of causality within the monarchy, the sense in which such a “counter-turning” essence occupies the delay and extends into action where the event has determinate effects. The possibility of a change in the nature or character of the delay having a causal relationship to action constitutes the phenomenological question of the event. In this self-deposition, which dis-

rupts the stability of the *nomos*, Richard's view of the *polis* and his concern with that view, places the event itself at the center of his poetry. Although he is the ruler, in this kind of metaphysical banishment that he experiences, Richard follows the pathway of Antigone. In the "uncanniness" of the event (Heidegger, *Ister*, 68), Richard, like Antigone, becomes "the most unhomely." At the same time, in standing out in reverence to this observation, he also becomes "the most homely," (104) signifying this counter-turning as the foundational essence in the relationship between the one and the many.

The double character, the counter-turning of Richard's position, places him at odds with himself in reference to this concern. Richard seems, through his view of the body politic, already aware that Gaunt and Bolingbroke's political maneuver will hold sway. Even if this is not entirely the case at the beginning of the play, it becomes explicit as Richard returns from Ireland and the military power shifts to Bolingbroke. Richard again is in the same position as Antigone, nothing will prevent the event from coming. Thus, he is enforced into public performance of the office, all the while knowing full well the outcome means his own demise and death.

The ambiguity in Bolingbroke's *occupatio*, this implied threat that is all the more real the more it is implied, transfers into Richard's long speeches following Bolingbroke's military occupation, becoming present there as a certain ambivalence in Richard's performance. Richard cannot address the ambivalence itself directly until he is relieved of the burden of its publicness, and even then it seems somehow far away, on the edges of what is expressible.

In terms of the structure of the conflict between Bolingbroke and Richard, everything—both the theme of Bolingbroke's rhetoric and its rhetorical techniques, but in particular, how these are unified in the legal setting of the trial scene to call into question the ground of the

*nomos*—gives shape to the long speeches as a structural feature of the drama. The event seems present in this way, in *Richard's ambivalence and circumlocution*. The length of the speeches itself becomes an issue because everything that is implied in their occasion has been called into question. In the disjunction between the occasion of Richard's speeches and his foreknowledge of what is implied in that disjunction, Richard is reading his own demise, which translates as an ambivalence on his part that will not be addressed in its own right until Richard's final speech, where the dungeon, at least in its privacy, he finds a sense of respite where he can think his own thoughts.

Aumerle, in this respect, becomes the dramatic balance and moral ground for this meandering concern of Richard's poetry. Richard's concern matches with Aumerle's plight. As a result of the deposition, Aumerle finds himself in a kind of prison. After being caught with a letter betraying a plot against Bolingbroke, now King Henry IV, Aumerle must scurry ahead of his father and gain entry into the new king's presence. Soon, York arrives, followed closely by Aumerle's mother, Duchess of York, with both demanding entry to King Henry's presence as well. The whole family is up in arms. At the bottom of the uproar, as in *Hamlet*, is Aumerle's demotion to Rutland under the new regime, a faultless punishment for his loyalty to Richard. There seems not to have been sufficient time or opportunity for him to have concocted an ad-hoc plan to assassinate Henry. Nonetheless, we have good reason to believe that he may have had such thoughts, and himself wavers on the idea of making an attempt on Henry's life. As his parents arrive, however, the scene quickly de-escalates into comedy as York pleads with the king to execute his son, while his wife, the Duchess, simultaneously pleads for his life, inventing her

own sort of *occupatio* as she refuses to leave Henry's office until he has pronounced the word of pardon:

KING HENRY

Good aunt, stand up.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Nay, do not say 'Stand up'.

Say 'Pardon' first, and afterwards 'Stand up.' (*RII*. 5.3 109-111)

No doubt designed for comic relief, the scene nonetheless grasps the fundamental problem of the signifier in terms of the relationship to the hearth that centers the *polis*. What the Duchess seems to know and what she manages to get across to Bolingbroke is that Bolingbroke's deposition of Richard has consequences. Both Aumerle and York have become disoriented in this moment of commencement and return in relationship to the king as a master signifier, a signifier signifying the unity of the hearth that has now shifted and shifted in its fundamental ground.

Richard's ambivalence is grounded in the same problem as it is posed here for Aumerle as an eventuality of the deposition. In this respect, in his reverence to the distributing problems that Bolingbroke's rebellion causes and will continue to cause, that his reflection at the end of the play becomes analogous to Antigone's plight as she stands out against the tide in reverence to the ideal. For Richard, that ideal, that ground of reverence, is ironically himself or part of himself, the model against which he judges his actions and the actions of others. Heidegger would describe this as *ontic* in a particular way. Antigone and Richard share the characteristic of *standing out* within this condition of a down-going and, in that down-going, creating an inception into the questioning of Being on behalf of the eternal. Whereas Creon and Bolingbroke are determined solely in relation to beings, caught up referentially in a web of ontological actions and transac-



tions with no oversight, no gathering-in of the view of the whole, both Richard and Antigone signify in that standing out, a reverence to the ontic condition of death. The distinction substance/accidens then, through Richard's deposition, this down-going, has the moment, not of inquiring explicitly into the question of being as Heidegger does regarding the tradition of philosophy, but of demonstrating why it is necessary to do so as the difference between Being and beings does indeed become an issue in the disruption of the ordering of the ordinal relations. It is within this relationship of ontic and ontological (ontological difference) that we can say that Shakespeare's *poesis* encounters the originary Greek word and is capable then of the expression of the event in Heidegger's sense of *ereignis* (Heidegger, *Contributions*, 1-7).

#### Part 4: Richard's Long Speeches

This ontic disposition, though, also becomes a trap for Richard. The *posting* of his onticality exposes Richard in this openness, in this necessity of the overseer to forfeit the site, the ground of the actual. Having inherited the throne through the lineage to Edward III, Richard, even before being placed in this position of the tragic hero, already sees himself and is seen by many, as Northumberland says, as "such a sacred king" (*RII*. 3.3 9); but it is precisely in this distinction between his sacredness and his action that he becomes vulnerable. There seems to be a division in Richard's reception within the body politic that relates to the basis of his kingship in divine right, in its status as an inherited title. For Northumberland this becomes a further cause for lamenting the deposition. But for Gaunt and Bolingbroke, it is employed to deride Richard. For Gaunt, Richard only mocks his relationship to the patriarchal line through his actions and

policies. Its meaning has been exhausted. As Gaunt says, “that blood already, like the pelican, hast thou tapped out, and drunkenly caroused” (2.1 126-127).

The double-sidedness of the relation to divine right seems to suggest not only how the notion of divine right constructs the pellicular structure of Richard’s subjectivity, but also a sense in which Being itself becomes determinate in a phenomenological sense, as it functions as a repository for the ill sentiment toward Richard. The basis in the sanctity of the right itself signifies the condition of being posted, itself calling attention to the opposition between the king as symbol of divine substance and the actuality of the *polis* through the law. In this way, the reverence surrounding Richard seems to invite the aggression of the other nobles, which here is signified in Bolingbroke’s rebellion.

However, for Bolingbroke to actually accomplish the rebellion, he must be positioned to do so within the body politic. In the trial scenes, Gaunt has first signed-on to the suit, and then appeared to endorse his son’s ambitions in the moment of his banishment (“Think not the King did banish thee, / But thou the King”) (*RII*. 1.3 279-280).

The clearest evidence of Gaunt’s involvement may, in fact, be the encounter between Richard and Gaunt, which follows Bolingbroke’s banishment and comes just before both Gaunt’s death and Richard’s legal action of seizing the Lancastrian estate.

Gaunt here appears as a sympathetic character as Shakespeare leads into this scene with Gaunt’s rousing speech of “This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England” (*RII*. 2.1 50). But, looking deeper within the text, and keeping in mind Gaunt’s equivocation at the trial, we can understand why Richard has misgivings about the encounter. Shakespeare here performs I think a dramatic move that shows the depth to which the language and rhetoric of the play calls

into question the phenomenal structure of the event itself. There is so much that we don't know in terms of what actually transpires, how far back it was that Richard set his sights on the Lancastrian estate, whether the move was a response to Bolingbroke's aggression, perhaps calculated in the initial delay of the trial that precedes the staged action, or whether it perhaps preceded even this murder of Gloucester as part of an overall strategy against his uncles. In any case, as the events of Bolingbroke's occupation unfold, one is compelled to look back to Richard's appropriation of the estate as reasoning for Northumberland and York's acceptance of Bolingbroke's revolt. For those who stand between Bolingbroke and Richard in the conflict, primarily Northumberland and York, Richard's legal *occupatio* has the effect of staking his own right to the crown on the claim he has made against Lancaster. Indeed, it is the fact of having performed this *occupation*, and then being forced to retract it, that contributes to the charge of ineptness or unfitness to rule. The legal *occupatio* dramatically balances the military occupation, as Richard's assertion of his *parousial* power, the power to return and the power of the law's delay, is turned against itself, providing a way for Bolingbroke to justify a military response. However, as we have shown, everything about the trial scene suggests that this rebellion was already underway. The trial seems to have been a vehicle to provoke Richard, and for Bolingbroke to demonstrate his intention publicly.

This negation of causality, like the trial scene, ultimately calls our attention back into the text itself, into the tension between the two men as Gaunt has his final word with Richard. The exchange contains elements of a game of stature between the two men. Gaunt begins by repeatedly insulting Richard, interchanging their subjectivity, "Ill in myself to see, and in the, seeing ill" (*RII*. 2.1 94). And later, in closing:

Join with the present sickness that I have,  
 And thy unkindness be like crooked Age  
 To crop at once a too long withered flower. (*RII*. 2.1 132-134)

Gaunt suggests here that he may know what Richard is up to, again anticipating Richard's responses. But he also suggests something else, this plan, perhaps Gaunt's private will as he approaches death, that seems to emerge just beneath the surface of his speech. Rhetorically, Gaunt places himself on a level playing field with Richard, evoking Edward III's name to insult Richard's very claim to the throne, and provoking Richard's ire: "Thou lunatic lean-witted fool, Presuming an ague's privilege! (*RII*. 2.1 114-115), which seems to be enough to prevent Richard from receiving this warning as "good advice". Given already the trial scene, and Gaunt's deception of Richard in the play's opening exchange, it starts to become clear that, more than providing a warning to Richard, Gaunt is manipulating him. When he says "thou art bonds slave to the law" (114), the implication may not simply be a reference to Richard's management of the *fisc*, but also to the extent to which Gaunt has circumvented Richard's authority.

When Richard then performs this "decisive" action of legal *occupatio*, he does so with some ambivalence. Gaunt has predicted the move ("Since thou dost seem to kill my name in me" (*RII*. 2.1 86), and warned of grave consequences, but at the same time has clearly relished the moment of having out-manuevered Richard. The plot that Gaunt appears to allude to is the validation of Bolingbroke's earlier post. His rhetoric reflects the insult of the trial scene, and promises to make it a reality so that when Richard faces the moment of Bolingbroke's invasion, he is already exposed. That exposure itself doubles for Richard because it calls into question the foundational principle of his relationship to the law, the ground of his *parousial* authority.

In a sense, then, Richard is trapped. The principle of the law is itself already invalidated, or Richard is in a position of needing to validate it since he is encompassed by it, since everything that has been implied implies also that it will determine his fate. The aggression, and also the rhetorical mode of the aggression of Gaunt and Bolingbroke, doubles because it constantly implies the subversion of Richard's sovereignty. The question of occupation in this way remains imminent to the action of the play by determining its language as a system of deferral. The system which is instituted within the delay becomes visible because everything that is at stake involves the technicities, legal, rhetorical, military, of the *polis* itself. It is in this sense that Richard's ontic disposition, this priority of a certain reverence, binds him to Being, and thus his interrogation and interpretation of the event is co-originary with the withdrawal of Being, described by Heidegger (*Contributions* 231). Together, they constitute the elements of the event of a change in the occupation of the land. What is unique in Shakespeare, and something Heidegger points to, is the quality of being "sealed-off" from originary relations (Heidegger, *Parmenides* 73). Richard is exposed in the sense that he himself *is* or becomes the site that is always already forfeited. The sublation involved in the delay in which ontic reality becomes universalized as *domum* is thought or posited as being Richard himself. Thus, Richard is the ontic one in a different sense than Antigone, he is sealed-off in the sense of destiny or fate from the fundamental involvement with the ground of the actual within this sense of reverence. As a child king, he has been positioned in this respect through history itself. The subsequent events will then reinforce not only Gaunt's prediction but also this problem for Richard in which Being itself becomes an issue.

The sense in which Richard is bound up with Being becomes radically visible as the withdrawal of Being through Richard's speeches as he returns from Ireland with Bolingbroke's insurrection under way. There is an unmistakable anxiety in his first address here in which he deploys the imagery of travel and the encounter with alterity to mark the moment of *parousial* return. Richard here is anachronistic in a particular way. On one hand, his speech deploys a language of travel not during the travel itself but on the occasion of return. And then, as if catching his own error, in the second speech he refers back to the journey to Ireland as "wand'ring with the Antipodes" (*RII*. 3.2 49) leaving it uncertain as to whether he references the travel itself or his own alienation that has become visible in the first speech.

But what is even stranger than the speech itself is the sense in which it seems appropriate, because the moment of actual *parousia*, the king's return, is met with Bolingbroke's rebellion, which is already alienating to Richard, interrupting the unity that is presupposed in the occasion of his speech and fractured, even temporally, in its content. Thus, in returning, Richard is farthest away, even beyond the borders of Christendom itself, farthest away from the moment itself. His speech, here, becomes alien to itself as a signifier of the unity of the *nomos*, and in this alienation, Richard also is out of phase with himself.

The cumulative effect of Lancastrian rhetoric seems to have become embedded in Richard's conscience in a way that informs his perception of the event. In the same sense as the rhetorical aggression creates an ambivalence in Richard's seizure of the estate, Richard seems not to be able to escape its influence even over his own understanding of what is happening. But if this is a weakness, it also appears to be related to his ability to diagnose the situation, infusing his poetry with what Adair calls a "hyperphenomenology" (54). His perception in this way ex-

tends beyond the immediate and into the technicity of the body politic which, as Gaunt predicts and likely himself influenced, has turned a cold shoulder to Richard's return, which comes to bear in moment of a real *parousia*, a return.

Criticism has often remarked on Richard's association with the sun. Adair points in this regard to the simultaneity of life with death, the sun giving life but also exhausting it (54). What has not been adequately noted however is the fact that Richard himself has a complex relationship to this imagery in as much as it is grounded in the action of the play. The image is evoked by Shakespeare to signify Richard's association with an originary, *ontic*, idea of the law. The sun re-presents an *a priori* basis in a natural order, which, even as it signifies Richard's authority, also signifies the sense in which he himself, the monarch, is a supplement to this universal condition. The sun imagery in this way corresponds to Richard's relationship to Being. But in the context of the action, it appears only in crisis, becoming an image that, instead of the monarch's privileged relationship to Being, signifies its withdrawal. This is evidenced by the fact that the first reference to the sun comes not from Richard himself, but from Bolingbroke, who employs it upon Richard's pronouncement of his banishment:

Your will be done. This must my comfort be:  
 That sun that warms you here shall shine on me,  
 And those his golden beams to you here lent  
 Shall point on me and gild my banishment. (*RII*. 1.3 144-147)

The sun, here in Bolingbroke's rhetoric, can appear to flatter Richard. Perhaps Bolingbroke considers himself grateful, even in banishment, to be reminded of England's grace through the sun. But of course, what Bolingbroke actually means is that his banishment has already been carved out as a pathway to the crown. The sun here is only superficially associated with Richard,

the *parousial* power of the body politic and the authority over the law, is only “lent,” to him, while that same power, presumably through some intervention on Gaunt’s part, has the possibility of altering to embolden Bolingbroke.

Thus, in the second of Richard’s speeches, given in this interlude as the military advantage gradually shifts decisively to Bolingbroke, Richard returns to this familiar imagery in the attempt to reconstitute in language the *parousial* power that is conspicuously absent. Richard begins with an image of the sun, likening Bolingbroke and his accomplices to common thieves who will scatter when daylight breaks, in the moment of return that is failing to complete itself. By comparison to Bolingbroke’s image, the sun here is opaque, hidden as it rises behind these shadowy images of the land and the thieves that it makes visible:

...knowst thou not  
 That when the searching eye of heaven is hid  
 Behind the globe and lights the lower world,  
 Then thieves and robbers range abroad unseen  
 In murders and in outrage boldly here;  
 But when from under this terrestrial ball  
 He fires the proud tops of the eastern pines  
 And darts his light through every guilty hole,  
 Then murders, treasons and detested sins,  
 The cloak of night being plucked from off their backs,  
 Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves? (*RII*. 3.2 36-46)

We begin already with Bolingbroke, in a slight of hand rhetorical play, claiming the sun imagery of the monarch for himself. In the trial scenes, it is Bolingbroke himself who shines and “outfaces” Richard. Therefore, the association between Richard and the sun is *negated* even before it becomes associated with Richard in the course of the play. Already, a seemingly cosmological shift is underway. He imagines here a sun that “searches” and “darts,” revealing enigmatic beings in their concealment. Instead of reigning over them in the full power and majesty of its



light, Richard projects, instead of an omnipotent power of military strength and might, rather the opaque way that the crisis is beginning to appear to him. The images of the “thieves and robbers” recall the shadowy way that Bolingbroke’s intention becomes visible in the *occupatio* of the trial scene. When we thus consider these two uses of the sun image, the first by Bolingbroke in that scene, and this moment where Richard projects the metaphor nearest to him, the image is out of sync with the moment. In fact, moment of the appropriation of the image, the first speech, has already passed. Instead of a synchronization with the imagery of the natural order, Richard begins with the image of being behind the sun, in the Antipodes. Thus, when the sun image is deployed, there is an ambiguity not only about whether the sun is rising or setting, but also about who’s sun it actually is. The Lancastrian rhetoric seems to have prepared Richard for this moment, further fracturing Richard’s concept of himself as the prediction of Gaunt and the allusions of his exchanges with Bolingbroke now become actual.

In delivering the message to the body politic as a whole, in driving a stake in Richard’s command over that political body and putting it into crisis, Bolingbroke has also shaken Richard’s view of the world. This view of the world in turn becomes the mode by which Richard must grapple with the event of Bolingbroke’s occupation as he attempts to gather in its full consequences, including his own death. Here, the beings that Richard perceives have become the puppets in Plato’s cave. They have become visible in their lack of substance. This becoming-visible occurs in the implausibility, the impossibility, of the message that Bolingbroke sends, usurpation from within, the absolute absence of Richard’s right, divine or otherwise, an absolute negation of his foundational world-view, the very mode of that gathering-in.

In the third of these speeches, Richard's poetry becomes more intentional as he accepts or is allowed to accept his fate, to give up the facade of majesty and embrace his position within this withdrawal. This occurs following the news of the beheading of Richard's supporters, Bushy, Green, and the Earl of Wiltshire. Here, the ambivalence that is indicated structurally in the first two speeches, where Richard attempts to maintain the countenance of authority, itself becomes the object of his reflection. As Shakespeare telescopes the decisive developments of the historical events of Bolingbroke's occupation, it remains difficult to imagine why Richard doesn't put up more of a fight. If there is an answer to this question, it seems to involve this dissemination of Lancaster's case, which is marked by the successful persuasion of York who declares himself "neuter" (*RII*. 2.3 159). Along with the earlier disbanding of the Welsh army, Richard finds himself clearly without a sufficient power. In this respect, Richard has clearly erred. Indeed, he has behaved exactly as Gaunt predicts when he says that Richard is "Now bondslave to the law," by thinking he could dash away to Ireland and at the same time perform the legal *occupatio* of the Lancastrian estate. In hindsight, to be sure, the situation called for a far more careful tuning of the relationships within the body politic,

Shakespeare's dramatic task then is to recover a sense of Richard's heroism from this thin layer of Richard's innocence in the matter, constructed carefully through the process of inclusion and omission of historical information in order to emphasize Richard's commonalities with Antigone, the archetypal tragic hero. As Richard accepts his fate in the third speech, he becomes more poetic, "Let's talk of graves and epitaphs" (*RII*. 3.2 145). This poetry then follows the pathway of *Antigone* as Richard begins to inquire within the delay itself.

Richard's ambivalence is based on the encroachment, the occupation of the delay itself in the rhetoric of Bolingbroke and Gaunt, which presses him to the limits of his authority in the law where he encounters this re-doubling at the border. Richard, as Gaunt predicts, becomes "bondslave to the law," but this is indeed radicalized as Gaunt and Bolingbroke together threaten and create a legal trap of that supposedly foundational relationship, cornering Richard into the position of having to re-claim the authority of his *parousia*. The law and the *nomos* thus become Richard's theme as he begins to question within that delay from a perspective that is unique to his historical situation. In this way, Shakespeare enjoins the sense of historicity of Sophocles as Richard begins to question within the delay on the basis of how the monarchy structures the delay as a foundation that mitigates the originary relationship between the one and the many.

As in the chorus of *Antigone*, the tension within Being that is now completely admitted as the withdrawal of Being divides into a two-fold relationship between spirit and techné. Techné in the broad sense of the history of human knowledge, appears within the differential that becomes visible in the withdrawal. Richard's ambivalence now transforms into a sense of personal longing, as he uses the "royal" we not to indicate the state but the common fate of his nearest supporters.

Let's talk of graves, of worms and epitaphs,  
 Make dust our paper and with rainy eyes  
 Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.  
 Let's choose executors and talk of wills,  
 And yet not so, for what can we bequeath  
 Save our deposed bodies to the ground? (*RII*. 3.2 145-150)

Thus, when the speech closes with a clear if somewhat ironic statement of Richard's own subjectivity, "For you have mistook me all this while. / I live with bread like you...", the overall

sense is that Richard genuinely longs for the simplicity of a common life, for some other mode of being. The kingship here, probably since the trial scenes, has become merely a space of writing and a space of desire, an *objet a*, in the absence of any reverence. This notion will be illustrated further in the scene where Aumerle, having just been caught in a conspiracy against Bolingbroke (Henry IV), insists his way into the new king's office, which becomes the scene of familial dispute that devolves into absurdity, but that Bolingbroke has clearly caused and must now adjudicate. The sense of orientation, the commencement and return that in Sophocles belongs to the essence of the *polis*, has been reduced to a mere technicity. Here, the technicity of crown appears alongside Richard's lamentation. It is what will accompany him to the grave, "this model of the barren earth" (*RII*. 3.2 153). Like many of the images in this play, the referentiality of this "model" becomes obscure in its fragmented construction; it "serves as paste and cover to our bones" (154). The "model" and the "paste" do not really cohere into an image. And yet certainly Richard has something in mind, a particular view of the kingship that involves an ontological transition, a sublation, a negation and re-distribution of the earth into the referential field of the realm or *domum*. Within this sublation, however, and precisely because it is a sublation, difference enters in:

... Within the hollow crown  
 That rounds the mortal temples of a king  
 Keeps Death his court, and there the antic sits,  
 Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp.  
 ...  
 Infusing him with self and vain conceit,  
 As if this flesh which walls about our life  
 Were brass impregnable... (*RII*. 3.2 160-168)

“Death,” “the antic,” and “the king,” here form another circuitous system of grammatical relations. Death and the antic seem to form a constellation that represents the collective desire of the body politic; certainly Richard’s crown has become merely a screen against which the body politic projects its misplaced desire. Richard seems to become aware here of that psychological nature of the signifier as a receptacle for a collective anxiety, and this is figured in the antic who “comes at the last and with a little pin bores through his castle wall” (*RII*. 3.2 169-170). The opposition then is between this “flesh” and the “pin.” The flesh, however, is not actual flesh, but more like a flesh-ing that “walls about,” that forms a structure and a unity, something like language itself. And, no doubt, the “pin” is a reference to Bolingbroke’s post that can puncture this fleshing that constitutes the king’s castle, a castle of rhetoric that finally must rely on actual military power to occupy the land.

Because Richard does not mention Bolingbroke or Gaunt directly, he seems to reference a condition of the kingship for which this episode is simply the final instance. The fact that Richard can figure Bolingbroke’s rebellion in a way that encompasses both the rhetoric of Gaunt and Bolingbroke, and views their action as a phenomena of the monarchy itself, says more about this notion of a model and this transitional or sublated view. Richard here seems to respond to the inter-subjectivity employed in Gaunt’s rhetoric, the “antic” with his “pin” encompasses Bolingbroke’s action. All of it for Richard seems to have the familiar ring of base desire.

The opposition of the “flesh” and the “pin” refers to a relationship between language and technology. The walls that have been penetrated by Bolingbroke are walls of rhetorical persuasion, predisposition, or *comportment*, that are bound up with legal, military, and fiscal implications. The situation Richard describes, seems to mirror that of the trial scenes in which language

has this quality of the self conceit of being “brass impregnable” while at the same time being entirely dependent upon everything that is indicated here as “brass.” The self-conscious hyperbole of the first two speeches also refer to this condition, where the high-flown obsequies of majesty are underwritten by military power and are dependent on a distribution of individual agents that are subverted in advance by Bolingbroke’s post within the court lists. The language is both constantly referential to some pressure or force that cannot enter into the text as that which is named (*nomos*), and also ambivalent, always capable of a double or even contrary meaning, always exhibiting the deferral and innuendo of *occupatio*.

Richard here is recognizing a Platonic condition. The language of the trial scene, used to initiate the rebellion, is like the puppets inside Plato’s cave. Indeed the crown itself has become subject to this un-grounded condition of language. In his sublated view, Richard begins to formulate a different sense a ground based on the notion of Platonic substance, of “the real” as a domain of ideal forms. The king in Richard’s view is a re-presentation of an eternal man, of what is eternal regarding man. This eternity has nothing to do with the particular possibilities of the actual, but rather sublates what is most common, the common *pathos*. The ontic definition of man has already transitioned into the proximity of the realm. Richard’s actions, according to this model, are instances of the eternal substance. When Richard says, “I live with bread...feel want...taste grief” (*RII*. 3.2 175-76), he is not really outside his mastery of his role as monarch. Indeed, it is here that he is most within it as he reveals the *concern* of the monarch with this universal condition.

This is the view, the “model,” that Bolingbroke defies in his very action, and in that defiance, marks the limit of his character, and also sets the stage for the moment of representing on-

tological transition that will constitute Richard's rhetorical refutation of Bolingbroke's claim in the deposition scene.

#### Part 5: Counter-Turning

The next time we see Richard, he appears atop the fortifications at Flint Castle, as Bolingbroke and his army have surrounded the castle, performing a military occupation of Richard's personal body. Anticipating the significance of the encounter, Richard appears in his monarchical position, towering above the site, forfeiting the site, and performing this condition by making a spectacle of the moment. As York remarks on his appearance:

Yet looks he like a king. Behold, his eye,  
As bright as is the eagle's, lightens forth  
Controlling majesty. (*RII*. 3.3 68-70)

Just before Richard appears, Bolingbroke gives a long speech as he orders Northumberland to deliver a list of demands to Richard, summoning Richard officially back into this performance of the kingship. Here, at the consummate moment of Bolingbroke's military occupation, Bolingbroke imagines himself to be holding sway over the rhetoric through everything that is implied in his military power, jibing earlier that the castle "contains no king" (*RII*. 3.3 23). This reflects what everyone knows is happening, and yet Bolingbroke is incorrect in that the system of delay must continue in its deference. In fact, the occupation indeed emphasizes this delay. It now stands out in its necessity, implicitly setting the stage for Richard, who must still be acknowledged as king, who is even more visible now to the audience of nobles as the signifier of the law of the land.

As things appear to be set within the law's delay, Bolingbroke can come into accord with the law by justifying his invasion as a legal defense against Richard's legal *occupatio* of the Lancastrian estate. This, apparently, will also tilt the scale of Parliament toward deposition because the banishment would then be ratified on Bolingbroke's behalf as a great offense to the realm. But, Bolingbroke finds himself here, at the moment of the consummation of the military victory, piled on with one delay after another. He must pretend to come only for the restoration of his rights, and we see the characteristic elongation of the speeches that conceal this pretension as he addresses Northumberland with a message for Richard:

Henry Bolingbroke  
 On both his knees doth kiss King Richard's hand  
 And sends allegiance and true faith of heart  
 To his most royal person, hither come  
 Even at his feet to lay my arms and power  
 Provided that my banishment repealed  
 And lands restored again be freely granted. (*R.II.* 3.3 35-41)

Here, we can see a certain logic in the courtly manner of speaking. The nobleman sees himself reflected in the dignity given to the monarch, and in that reflection, also sees his place with respect to the many. All of this, of course, only occurs in a space of writing. As Bolingbroke configures an official message to send to Richard, he rehearses the sense of reverence that he has set about to subvert and overthrow. As he returns into the speech of the moment, his speech decays into his personal enmity for Richard, as Bolingbroke balances these formal pleasantries with an equally hyperbolic threat and his own conscience appears to slip momentarily:

If not, I'll use the advantage of my power  
 And lay the summer's dust with showers of blood  
 Rained from the wounds of slaughtered Englishmen —  
 The which how far off from the mind of Bolingbroke



It is such crimson tempest should bedrench  
 The fresh green lap of fair King Richard's land  
 My stooping duty tenderly shall show. (*RII*. 3.3 42-48)

The apparent gesture of mildness, the poetic representation of his own puissance, and the articulated breach of the pellicular fabric, all of this signifies the moment as a consummate expression of Bolingbroke's chivalry. However, the poetry begins to falter as he must admit the violence of his intention, issuing it as a warning even as he discursively, *fictionally*, kneels before Richard. He needs to appear, as is implied by the repetition of his surname which asserts himself again into the nomenclature of the law, that his intention is not to wage war. Yet he must make mention of the fact of the military presence in order to substantiate his violation of Richard's authority. All of the clamoring of actual swords merely calls attention to Richard's attempt to appropriate the Lancastrian estate to his own ends through the legal *occupatio*. The problem is that Bolingbroke himself is considering war only in reference to himself and this conflict with Richard, in all the spectacle of the moment and in all the ambiguity of its origins. The slip of rhetorical countenance speaks forward into the consequences, which are indeed far from Bolingbroke's mind, but not because he truly comes in peace. Rather, they are far from his mind because the actual consequences, which Richard will call "The purple testament of bleeding war" (*RII*. 3.3 94) in his speech from atop the ramparts in the same scene, are concealed within this fantasy of overcoming Richard. But as the consummation comes closer to hand, Bolingbroke begins to appear ridiculous, as the grounding of the conflict in the delay becomes more evident since he cannot simply kill Richard. The implicit basis in the actual here shows itself as displaced in the moment of victory, and becomes merely the object of fantasy for the conquering Bolingbroke. The *occupatio* of the whole movement against Richard resonates in this speech.

Bolingbroke is, in a way, talking to himself. He goes to lengths in this description to evoke the military victory, even though he is only giving Northumberland instructions to give to Richard on the conduction of this anticlimactic resolution, and, furthermore, Bolingbroke seems to be enjoying the fantasy of saying things to Richard that he cannot otherwise say.

As Northumberland departs, Bolingbroke gives an order to march outside the castle, and then continues with this rare moment of self-indulgence:

Methinks King Richard and myself should meet  
 With no less terror than the elements  
 Of fire and water, when their thund'ring shock  
 At meeting tears the cloudy cheeks of heaven.  
 Be he the fire, I'll be the yielding water;  
 The rage be his, whilst on the earth I rain  
 My waters — on the earth and not on him. (*RII*. 3.3 54-60)

The sentiment here becomes petulant, as Bolingbroke pretends deference but implies the transition of power in the pun between “rain” and “reign.” Bolingbroke, then sounds at least a little like Richard himself as he mocks Richard as he appears atop the castle walls:

See, see, King Richard doth himself appear,  
 As doth the blushing discontented sun  
 From out the fiery portal of the east,  
 When he perceives the envious clouds are bent  
 To dim his glory and to stain the track  
 Of his bright passage to the Occident. (*RII*. 3.3 62-67)

The mocking tone of “See, see,” seems to reflect Richard’s tone in the deposition scene when he taunts Bolingbroke with the crown, “Here cousin, seize the crown. Here cousin,” (*RII*. 4.1 182) suggesting that perhaps Richard has overheard Bolingbroke’s speech here. The drama then moves toward an encounter that can never take place because the schema of the two primary characters is determined according to the fundamental relations of difference of being, substance/

accidens, that underlies the monarchical system as a whole. The *occupatio* is deployed to represent this system fundamentally as a system of deferral away from the middle term, which becomes evident in Bolingbroke's eloquence as he hypothetically bends the knee to Richard and then reverts to his aggression. The moment is humorous because, like Richard in this situation, the *occupatio* actually occurs within Bolingbroke's own mind as he slips in his own thoughts, showing how, in this conflation and binding-up of language and military technicity, Bolingbroke is somehow thrown ahead of himself. His consummate expression of the chivalric code can only occur at a distance. It can never complete itself because it is based already on a principle of deferral. If Bolingbroke were to violate those principles, it would form a counter-thrust to his goal, swaying the sentiment against his kingship. Thus, while pushing Bolingbroke further in his ambition, his desire, the delay at the same time constantly defers that consummation.

As he reaches this pinnacle of his chivalry, that code of chivalry becomes visible as a technique of his masculinity, and also a technicity of the state itself, which is signified in this double remove of Bolingbroke outside the castle, where, following the speech, Bolingbroke parades his military advantage in front of the entrapped king. The filtering of his violence through the system of checks and communiques remains self-concealed within Bolingbroke's speech itself. The ontological difference resonates through the poetry, and through these technical relationships of the monarchical system, and it reveals to us here the displacement that is central to Bolingbroke's trajectory: even as he approaches thus closely to the kingship, his rhetoric must conceal, *even from itself*, the moment of its transgression.

This scene of excess and lawlessness, at last betrayed by Bolingbroke at the pinnacle of his success, foregrounds Richard's return address given to Northumberland. Northumberland

himself becomes the terms by which the military occupation is translated into the *nomos*. Richard begins with an allusion to this sense of decay when he addresses Northumberland by referencing his un-bended knee, “how dare thy joints forget / To pay their awful duty to our presence?” (*RII*. 3.3 75-76). The implication here is precisely to the reduction of the *polis* to such political maneuvering. The knee, the body, has been reduced to its structural elements (its *joints*), reflecting both Bolingbroke’s inhumanity to Richard, and the reduction of the monarchy to its technicity in this internal rebellion. By contrast, Richard models the majesty of the crown, and himself now descants on the nature of the law and its relationship to *parousia*, reflecting what has already become evident in the poetry regarding his displacement into this terrain of the relationship between the deity and the law which he elaborates here into the prophecy of a coming war, when, “Ten thousand bloody crowns of mothers’ sons / Shall ill become the flower of England’s face” (96-97).

But, as Richard returns to his mode of lament in addressing his loyalists, the implications of what has happened immediately reappear. Richard can’t escape the structural collapse. He is that collapse. Thus, he formulates the problem:

...O, that I were as great  
 As is my grief, or lesser than my name!  
 Or that I could forget what I have been,  
 Or not remember what I must be now! (*RII*. 3.3 136-139)

As we pass through yet another phase of Bolingbroke’s dilation, each one progressing nearer to the actual end by first pre-possessing that end but also pressing it further away, Shakespeare represents a balance between the *occupatio* of Bolingbroke’s occupation and Richard’s internal struggle. Within this confusion of death’s delay, Richard finds something surprising:

“Swell’st thou, proud heart?” (*RII*. 3.3 139). Richard neither abdicates his identity, nor rushes into a hopelessness or mere acquiescence. He resists the compulsion to prop himself up as Adair might suggest (49). Rather, it is now that Shakespeare breathes life into the puppet king: “I’ll give thee scope to beat” (3.3 140). Richard is listening for something, if not a hope, perhaps a reason to continue on. As Northumberland returns with more instructions, commands from Bolingbroke, Richard mocks what may have been his weakness or his strength, reflecting the passivity in this ontic-eternal basis of rule:

What must the King do now? Must he submit?  
 The King shall do it. Must he be deposed?  
 The King shall be contented. Must he lose  
 The name of King? I’God’s name, let it go. (*RII*. 3.3 143-146)

Here we can see Richard needing to fortify his language, as delay, too, will occupy his speech. The repetition of “The King” indicates that intellectually he rejects the association with his own identity, or with the meaning of that word as it is now being imposed, while at the same time he readies himself to perform what is necessary, to go through the motions, so to speak, of this public performance.

The ambivalence of the earlier speeches as he arrives back to England and passes through cycles of hope and despair here continues to form the structure of Richard’s formal speech according to the ambivalence of his self-reference, the sense in which the two bodies now are opposed within himself. Again, Richard formulates his kingship in this ontic construction of being where the monarch is a *consecration* of the ontic definition of man, defined not in reference to a personal identity or a specific relation to beings, but to eternal form, the one who speaks, the one who has hands, the one who is subject to suffering man’s condition. Richard demonstrates this

sensibility as an *a priori* mode of apprehension. Just as Bolingbroke's consummate chivalry is exposed in the self-concealment of its determination as a technique of masculine violence, Richard here is also exposed in the sense that his sense of his own sanctity determines him in a passive stance which becomes reflected as a linguistic habit. This notion of the onticality of the king is not merely the king as a subject, but it is a way in which subjectivity itself belongs to the monarch *a priori* in the fundamental relation to the universal condition of man. But, like Bolingbroke whose determination on the actual finds a basis in self-concealment, Richard's substance also is shown to have a blind spot. If we trace Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard all the way back to the opening scene, we can see a sense in which Richard is *already* subject to Bolingbroke. His habit, his way of approaching his duty, owing perhaps to his inheritance of the kingship in particular as a child, but apparently also a certain indoctrination, is fundamentally passive, and this passive disposition then surfaces in his sense of humor as he expresses the anxiety of all this impending and deferred action. In this sense, Richard becomes Bolingbroke's subject from the first moment of Bolingbroke's suit against Mowbray, if not lacking an understanding or a capability in the actual, then perhaps it is an over-insistence on the sanctity of this ontic ground that prevents him from countering the duo of Gaunt and Bolingbroke together. Instead, in response to their aggression Richard immediately begins relying on this default sensibility, of doing "what one does," of relying on the external domain of Platonic substance, as he performs the faulty oath at the end of the second trial scene, to restore through mere evocation the unity that becomes fractured there.

This is not however to suggest a mere subjectivity in the sense of structural ambiguity of King Richard being subjugated to his subject Bolingbroke's. Rather Richard's interpretation of

the role of the kingship, its mode of interpreting the relationship between the one and the many, the structure within the delay, involves the dual ground in this counter-turning. The monarch must already understand the subjectivity of the subject precisely in his towering above the subject. This becomes visible then as Richard continues here, decrying his willingness to do what “one must do,” deepening his identification with the many as he is now motivated by the prospect of seeing even more friends’ heads mounted on Lancastrian spikes to take the action of allowing himself to be peacefully deposed. Though sorrowful, Richard deepens his understanding of the ontic condition as he feels a common longing to dwell in the land, to die a natural death, to be still, turning his speech to the weeping Aumerle:

Or shall we play the wantons with our woes  
And make some pretty match with shedding tears,  
As thus, to drop them still upon one place  
Till they have fretted us a pair of graves  
Within the earth; (*RII*. 3.3 165-168)

#### Part 6: Transition and Event

Shakespeare has therefore set the stage for the deposition scene by demonstrating both the strengths and weaknesses of the two primary characters as well as the relationship to difference that marks their limit with respect to one another. The substance/accidens opposition has guided this development.

Bolingbroke, whose decisive action in the trial scene displaces the ground of Richard’s *parousial* authority, is shown to be lacking any consciousness of the consequences of this action. Though Richard is rendered powerless within the political sphere, his interpretation of the king-

ship nonetheless overstands Bolingbroke's action, in terms of having a view of it as *accidens* through this "towering over and forfeiting." In his understanding of the difference between substance and accidens, eternal and actual. Richard's prophecy asserts that Bolingbroke and his supporters fail to understand the necessity of the delay that constructs the metaphysical relations between the one and the many. He can already recognize the fact that Bolingbroke, having attacked Richard's sense of divine authority, will, in becoming king, have to manage the conflict that its subversion will perpetuate within the body politic.

In approaching the deposition scene, we arrive at an intersection between current criticism of the play and this thesis of the substance/accidens difference as its primary thematic pathway. This pathway will continue to open up the question of the event.

Two aspects of the deposition scene have been of particular interest to critics. The deposition scene poses a difficulty to critics because it was mysteriously omitted from printings of the play until the publication of the fourth quarto in 1608, after Elizabeth's death and under the rule of King James VI (Hammer 2). On this account, Adair is prompted to think of the play as a mere instance of *jouissance* within the interstices of Elizabethan posts and postal effects. The scene also encounters historical accounts of Richard II's actual historical deposition, as Shakespeare makes a dramatic choice not to have Richard read the account of his "crimes" against the state, while the historical Richard, according to Holinshed, did indeed perform this duty requested by the parliament to ease tensions in the public sphere (Goldberg 190).

These two critical concerns converge under the heading of authorial intention. Shakespeare expresses the deposition in terms of transubstantiation, or in phenomenological sense, what we have already here referred to as ontological transition.



This transition, or transubstantiation, is expressed in the deposition scene under the pressure imposed by Northumberland for Richard to read this list of crimes and acts committed against the English state. Shakespeare's dramatic choice to have Richard refuse corresponds with the likely historical reason that the deposition scene did not appear until after the end of Elizabeth's reign. In the *Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion*, containing the fundamental doctrines of the Church of England, Elizabeth decreed the Catholic interpretation of the Eucharist, based on the doctrine of transubstantiation that had been developed in medieval Europe (Toner 222-228) to be against the scripture in 1570 (Church of England 66). While the precise reasons for the censure of the deposition scene, or whether its omission was in fact the result of a censorship are unknown (Clegg 433-434), it seems likely that Elizabeth's council would have recognized the representation of the metaphysical relations of transubstantiation in the deposition scene as a covert representation of a Eucharistic ceremony. Certainly, the conspiracy that is hatched between Aumerle, Carlisle, and the Abbot at the end of the scene, contains language that is suggestive of such a covert intention:

ABBOT

My lord,  
 Before I freely speak my mind herein,  
 You shall not only take the sacrament  
 To bury mine intents, but also to effect  
 Whatever I shall happen to devise. (*RII*. 4.1 326-330)

Here, the Abbot's language appears in the role of a chorus, referring back to the content of the deposition scene, and echoing its sense of a covert sacrament as well as Shakespeare's intention to elaborate on the meaning of the trans-substantiation.

The conspiracy that hatches here will eventuate the conflict mentioned earlier between York and Aumerle, his son, in which Aumerle, having been found out by his father, must speed to Bolingbroke's office, arriving before York to beg for mercy. The scene becomes comic when his mother, Duchess of York, performs her own kind of *occupatio*. In pleading for Henry to spare her son's life, she refuses to rise from her chair until he has pronounced the word of "pardon" (*R.II.* 5.2 111) upon Aumerle, which he eventually does. The subplot shows how, from the beginning and in the first place, the deferral that occurs in the rhetorical figures of *occupatio*, in as much as they are determined in the play by direct conflicts over control of land and land rights, begin to locate the tension over land rights within the delay itself. The counter-turning, commencement and return, that is oriented in the unity of the *polis* is interrupted and disoriented at the level of the signifier, in the psychology of the relationship between father and son. It is within this relationship that Richard's poetry directs his concern. A movement, a shift in the fundamental ground of the *polis*, is made perceptible through Richard's *occupatio*. Only Richard is capable of interrogating within the delay, within the location of the phenomenal event, the delay as that which lies in advance, and which then is capable of reproducing this event because, as a matter of the delay itself, it is an *a priori* condition.

Richard's performance of self-deposition takes on the structure of literary *occupatio* where the poet, addressing a master or a maiden of higher social standing, will claim his own unfitness for the task only to continue on with the poem, showing deference to the social hierarchy as he praises the virtue of the master in verse. Richard, as he is compelled into this performance, also expresses his unfitness for the task, although in an ironic sense:

...I hardly yet have learned

To insinuate, flatter, bow and bend my knee.  
 Give Sorrow leave awhile to tutor me  
 To this submission. Yet I will remember  
 The favours of these men. (*RII*. 4.1 164)

Being compelled into a task that, for multiple reasons, he does not want to accomplish, Richard resists the exercise of control over his speech at every moment. This resistance, however, is coupled with an underlying story, a concern, that Richard appears to tell through these “hyper-phenomenological” allusions. He provides a clue, for instance, when he asks, “Am I both priest and clerk” (*RII*. 4.1 174), which suggests that, in this structure of literary *occupatio*, Richard is both the poet and the master, both of the higher order and also the one who must descend in order to become the poet.

Richard will echo this sentiment in the dungeon soliloquy near the end of the play when he laments, in Biblical terms, how the event has set “the word itself against the word” (*RII*. 5.5 13-14). In his dual occupations here, Richard is opposed to himself. Dramatically, Richard also performs two parts, both the dramatic hero and the chorus, performing the heroic act of selflessness and reverence by allowing himself to be deposed, but also performing the role of interpreting the event for both the audience and this “sort of traitors” (4.1 246), the audience of nobles, who are constantly onlooking.

This differential relates to the tension in the body politic, no doubt it forms a barrier, a boarder of Richard’s subjectivity. But at the same time, it relates to this more fundamental or originary tension which structures the notion of the two bodies in the first place in terms of its relationship to the history of the west, articulated in *Antigone* as the condition of towering over and forfeiting the site, the dual poles of a fundamental counter-turning. Turned against himself

in such a manner, Richard imagines himself disappearing, “melt[ing] away in water-drops” (*RII*. 4.1 262). This, is a reference to himself, his personal longing to escape the situation, but I would suggest that it is also a reference to a different substance in that it reflects the opposition and the tension between the two substances and the disintegration of the transubstantial or *parousial* body. The *occupatio* in this sense has an elliptical and indirect, but at the same time fully determined and even inherently *overdetermined* relationship to the military and legal occupation that surrounds the sequence of events, that is imminent to every word and every relationship. In the political mythology of the king’s two bodies, the speech of the king, this middle voicing of the “royal” we, is an expression of the unity of the *polis* within this condition. In *Antigone*, we find the hearth at the center. Antigone has lost her place within the *polis* and is estranged from this distributed center from whence one sets forth and returns. But in the English monarchy of Shakespeare’s histories, it is the speech of the king that is established as this orientational ground, as the Aumerle episode illustrates. In *Richard II*, everything is determined on the basis of co-origins, a possibility that indeed defies the very *nomos*, and brings the nature of the event into question as a phenomenon. The deposition scene as a representation of the Eucharist intersects this “hyperphenomenology” as Adair calls it, in Richard’s resistance to this imposed speech. The well-documented problem of oaths that concerned the faithful on both sides of The Reformation question is here re-cast in opposition to the censuring of the Eucharistic ceremony, prompting Shakespeare’s covert representation of the centrality of transubstantiation to the monarchy itself. The threat to its expression motivates Richard’s poetry down this pathway of transubstantiation, toward the phenomena of the event.

Richard's task is to place himself, and the kingship, in the proper position for an audience that has become simply a cast of "unruly jades" (*RII*. 3.3 179). He elegizes himself, but not as such. Rather, referring to himself in this dual manner, as priest and clerk, hero and chorus, Richard expresses the deep ambiguity of the situation and follows the pathway of this ambiguity toward the construction of a trans-subjective and trans-historical dialectic of the kingship.

With everyone hanging on his every word in expectation of his formal deposition, Richard takes the crown and taunts Bolingbroke with it, "Here cousin, seize the crown. Here cousin" (*RII*. 4.1 182). This provocation identifies the crown as an object of desire, and also a mere accident that only conceals the true form. Richard plays on the dramatic situation in which Bolingbroke and the surrounding nobles want only this one thing, where the crown has been diminished and is only a reflection of their desire. With the crown then held between the two of them, Richard paints the picture of its true substance for Bolingbroke, figuring its eternity in the broken image of a water wheel, as the Arden editor notes, an almost universal technological symbol of medieval English life that is here fractured in its very rendering as such a symbol.

Now is this golden crown like a deep well  
That owes two buckets filling one another  
The emptier ever dancing in the air;  
The other down, unseen and full of water.  
That bucket down and full of tears am I,  
Drinking my griefs whilst you mount up on high. (*RII*. 4.1 184-189)

As the wheel moves, one bucket fills the other with grief, creating a perpetual but downward motion of sorrow. Richard here is repeating the prophecy of war, the "purple testament" that he expects to inevitably sweep across the land as a consequence of the deposition. What is curious, however, is that what Richard is actually describing is both the history and the future of the realm as it devolves into civil war. Bolingbroke is "mounted up on high," but he is also the

empty bucket “ever dancing” in the air, without substance. The metaphor becomes mixed because Richard cannot be emptied of his griefs: “Your cares set up do not pluck my cares down” (*RII*. 4.1 195). In other words, the conditions of the usurpation or deposition in which the crown appears as interchangeable like the water wheel also and at the same time displace the equilibrium of the water wheel. The crown *becomes* “like a deep well” in which the image of the water wheel references a balance. But the balance itself refers outside itself, to a set of relations in which the crown itself is subject to this interchangeability with a grief that is “unseen” (187). Richard here speaks not of himself as such, the mere *accidens* of Richard and Bolingbroke in opposition to one another. Rather, he speaks of himself in the obvious position of his sorrow, but also as a signifier of a set of relations that extend beyond himself in the body politic, the other lords and houses, Aumerle being the primary representative, who will suffer losses in the transition of power. His point to Bolingbroke, then, is not merely that one of them will win and the other will lose, but that the system of the monarchy itself will now be a fractured metaphor, that, as in the Reformation itself, his action of seizing the crown will have consequences that are unseen, that it will cause griefs that will remain hidden and outside the interchangeability of the system that the water wheel signifies.

Bolingbroke, again wishing to come to the point, asks Richard directly, “Are you contented to resign the crown” (*RII*. 4.1 200). The question again imposes a binary response upon Richard’s speech. It demands a language that represents itself as a full presence capable of entering into this technical *nomos* of the law, while at the same time causing its imbalance, compelling an answer that would fall in line superficially with its metaphysics in all that it conceals regarding Bolingbroke’s aggression. Once again, the choice is imposed upon Richard either to

oppose and be killed, in what history would receive as shameful and ill-spirited gesture, or to accept and thus negate his own history, his own interpretation of the monarchy and himself, and thus to join in among what he himself calls this “sort of traitors” (4.1 246).

The language of logocentrism then disintegrates. It *must* disintegrate. It becomes indeed *more* Derridean in the sense that Richard’s response, perhaps even before Richard himself is aware of it, reflects the necessity of mitigating the relationship between presence and absence beyond what such an objectification of language as a mere “yes” or “no” answer would allow.

Richard’s circumlocution, “Aye no. No aye. For I must nothing be,” thus reflects— at the same time as it resists—the technology that underlies the monarchical system as an interchangeable inter-relationship of care. The ambiguity reflects the very trace edge of the play’s dominant rhetorical structure of *occupatio*, the exact convergence between the opposed origins of Bolingbroke’s singular action and Richard’s overseeing of the manifold.

The words evoke an array of interpretive meaning, the notion of Richard’s personal body and the body politic turned against one another, the deep ambivalence of his position. In pursuit of the broadest theme of the play, the idea of an event within the eternal definition of the kingship, however, the statement also suggests an inter-subjectivity between Richard and Bolingbroke, a notion perhaps first introduced in the faulty oath taken and broken at the end of the second trial scene, but more aggressively employed by Gaunt in his final encounter with Richard where the inter-subjectivity becomes threatening: “Ill in myself to see, and in thee, seeing ill” (*RII*. 2.1 94). It is against Gaunt’s meaning in this exchange, and the implicit consent to Bolingbroke’s rebellion, that Richard has constructed this counter argument on the basis of Platonic doctrine. In the moment of his deposition, Richard is intent on returning this intersubjectivity

rhetorically on Bolingbroke, turning his conscience in order to restore the idea of the monarchy to its essential meaning as a relationship to eternal substance.

As Bolingbroke and essentially the entire state apparatus imposes its will on Richard's speech in this scene, allowing Bolingbroke to be silent here, Richard's response is to demonstrate for Bolingbroke the interchangeability of their perspectives. The performance is again a variation on the question asked of Creon by Antigone: "Why delay?" (Sophocles 548). Bolingbroke's silence reflects already the ambiguity of the position. Everything has gone to his advantage, but even though his military occupation has succeeded, he must now enter into this territory that is controlled in all ways by the delay. As Richard begins by holding up the crown and taunting Bolingbroke, "Here cousin, seize the crown, here cousin," he piques Bolingbroke's desire for an immediate conciliation, for an end to the delay. But in this precise moment, the delay stands forth as the actual ground of the monarchy as Richard unfolds the metaphor. Bolingbroke, as he will later realize, has now laid claim to the very terrain that he initially violated, occupying the very condition, the necessity of the delay, which his rhetoric insulted and turned against Richard.

Further agitated by Northumberland's request to read the list of offenses against the state, Richard will drive the point home using the mirror. As he holds the mirror up, it becomes both a prop and the symbol for this Platonic view. Richard recounts his travails, "Is this the face that faced so many follies, / That was at last outfaced by Bolingbroke" (*RII*. 4.1 285-286)? Then, reflecting the Platonic formulation wherein the real stands outside the actual in this dimension of eternal forms, Richard smashes the glass: "A brittle glory shineth in this face — / As brittle is the glory is the face! [Shatters glass.]" (4.1 287-289).



With this bit of performance, Richard lays claim to Bolingbroke's silence, demonstrating that it is this same sense of emplacement within the traditions and conventions of the kingship that Bolingbroke has violated that gives him this silent confidence. Bolingbroke then pretends to understand, offering a flat and disingenuous rejoinder: "The shadow of your sorrow hath destroyed / The shadow of your face" (*RII*. 4.1 293), pretending here that Richard's anxiety, the theme of this delay, is merely a fleeting worry, that Richard really has nothing to fear in this transition of power. This, of course, is only a half-hearted attempt to call an end to the delay, but it is easy fodder for Richard, who uses its dullness to further drive home his theme:

'Tis very true, my grief lies all within;  
 And these external manners of laments  
 Are merely shadows to the unseen grief  
 That swells with silence in the tortured soul.  
 There lies the substance. (*RII*. 4.1 295-299)

These lines re-cast in simpler terms the theme of Richard's water wheel imagery. The plainness of the language makes sport of Bolingbroke's naiveté as Richard instructs him here on the nature of the crown he is usurping. Richard's grief that, "lies within," belongs to the crown itself. Richard's performance is merely a shadow, but the "tortured soul" is again not merely Richard himself, but in the kingship itself, a part of the condition of the state that is now Bolingbroke himself. The tortured soul *is* Bolingbroke, the grief that swells in silence is something that Richard can perceive in the crown as it is being usurped, a deeper and more distributed anxiety or incongruity of which Bolingbroke is yet to become aware. The grief now belongs to the plight of the state itself.

Richard's performance in the deposition scene in its use of the Platonic notion of ideal forms reflects an understanding of the monarch as a transubstantiated being, one that views the

state from what Heidegger will call a *transitional* perspective (Heidegger, *Contributions* 7). In this view, which transcends the actuality of the subject, passion and action take on a different mode of relating to one another as *techné* and spirit become visible in the withdrawal of being. This transitional perspective involves the Platonic transition, the negation of the reality of the actual that sublates the real into a realm of ideas. In transitioning into this perspective, encountering Richard's representation of transubstantiation, Bolingbroke is prepared to understand the error in his action and also to become more merciful in his rule.

In his final soliloquy given in the dungeon just before he is executed, Richard seems to draw some solace from this success when he remarks that his "time runs posting on in Bolingbroke's proud joy" (R.II. 5.5 59). Shakespeare closes the play with a sense that things have been set aright, if not for himself, then for the state to which Richard has devoted his life. At the end, as Richard searches for a sense of the destiny of his soul; there is even a sense that Richard himself has experienced a transition, as a note of grace is struck in the conversation with the groomsmen. Here, at last, the language between the two men is both grounded and enlivened as they discuss such an everyday matter as Richard's horse. Shakespeare seems to grant Richard here a moment of communion with a man who served him with dignity and whom he is able to dignify with this simple conversation. In the deposition scene, as Richard lambastes his audience of noblemen, he refers to them at one point as a set of "unruly jades." *Jade* refers to worn-out horses. In the conversation with the groomsmen, Richard must reconcile himself to the fact that his favorite horse performed well and strode proudly under Bolingbroke whom he has referred to

in this way. In the moment, Richard has to prove out his own argument, as tall an order as it may be under the circumstances, to let be, to forgive.

In this respect, Richard fulfills the role of the dramatic hero as it is set out in Sophocles' *Antigone*. In becoming the most alienated from the *polis*, Richard, in his reverence, becomes the most "homely," the most grounded, and this small instance of common language seems to reassure Richard in his concern about the destiny of his soul.

But what of the destiny of the people? What finally does Richard have to say about what has transpired? How does the event then come into view in this transitional perspective?

In the soliloquy that precedes this moment, Richard seems again to be ambivalent. The ambivalence that demarcated his relationship to the state in the deposition scene, now inhabits the images of his thoughts as he attempts to come to some conclusion. The only real solace comes when the groomsman interrupts him. The matter is just as well let go in its entirety. But, with nothing else to occupy his mind, he sallies forth as the poet once again, beginning in another *occupatio*:

I have been studying how I may compare  
 this dungeon where I live unto the world  
 And but for the world is populous and here  
 is not a creature but myself, I cannot do it. (*RII*. 5.5 1-5)

Here, it is the world itself that is in the position of idealization, itself the unreachable master that Richard must relinquish even as he poeticizes, the structural opposite and object of his transubstantiated view. Richard then lists to himself the patterns of thought, fantasies of escape and perhaps an ultimate victory, the realizations of his own failures, and the ultimate destiny of his soul, resolving again on the transitional view:

...But whate'er I be,  
 Nor I nor any man that but man is  
 With nothing shall be pleased till he be eased  
 With being nothing. (5.5 38-41)  
 As the music begins to play, here, Richard turns to the theme of time:  
 For now Time hath made me his numbering clock.  
 My thoughts are minutes, and with sighs they jar  
 Their watches on unto mine eyes, the outward watch. (*RII. 5.5 50-52*)

This appears to be only a reminiscence on some error of Richard's past. But as he continues with the thought, he returns to the fractured metaphors of his earlier speeches, particularly those concerned with this "model." Here, perhaps leading in to the moment later in the soliloquy when he addresses an enigmatic "sir" (*RII. 5.5 55*), he appears to be pondering again on this notion of the eternal king. In his present circumstances, Richard is clearly subject to Bolingbroke's "watches," waiting for the next meal, for some ray of hope, or for his executioner. In this sense, Richard is subject to Bolingbroke's time. But, in referring to his own thoughts as such watches, the line also seems to recall the way the rhetoric of Bolingbroke and Gaunt shaped Richard's view of the event as it transpired, indeed, creating an ambivalence to his own action, and trapping him within what he then saw as a necessary response to a Bolingbroke's rebelliousness. The action indeed turned his own thoughts into a mere ticking of the clock, the same sense described by Gaunt in which he became "bondslave to the law." Richard here confronts the overdetermination of his own subjectivity in the phenomenal sense, seeing his own perceptions now as the product of these minutes. Time is rendered in a dual image, both the clock and the sun dial are fundamental technologies that structure medieval life and human life in general. Richard's image of the finger that is still pointing references back to this transitional idea of the king, to his denial of self, the "Ay, no. No Ay," read as "I know no I." Richard here remains

fixed on this idea of the role of the monarch as supplementing the technicities of the state, “cleansing them from tears.”

The change, however, as Richard suggests to this future king, the un-referenced “Sir,” has only earned him an end that is timed to the will of Bollingbroke, who is here still only an “unruly jade,” the mere accidens. Richard cannot bear this thought. He interrupts himself, complaining of the distempered music that has been accompanying this musing. But, as he ends the reflection, there is a sense of things having been inverted. Like the music, Richard’s ontic wisdom, while able to supplement life, is overcome in its passivity by the “clamoring” of a collective desire that instead has made him mad, caused him to err. However, setting aside Richard’s personal missteps, this idea of the state as having experienced an inversion in which the king, rather than standing over and supplementing the patterns of human life, is now himself overcome.

The true event, then, may be the simple appropriation of language that becomes possible when the groomsmen rescues Richard momentarily from his own thoughts. Gone here are the fractured metaphors and images of sorrow, but instead a lively conversation that affirms the dignity between noble and common, the very spirit of transitional thinking.

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