

Little, Little Graves: Shakespeare's Photographs of Richard II

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[T]he dead / Are but as pictures.
—*Macbeth*, 2.2.51–52¹

IN THE CLIMACTIC MOMENTS OF THE DEPOSITION SCENE IN ACT 4 OF *RICHARD II*, Northumberland presses Richard to sign articles declaring himself guilty of “grievous crimes . . . against the state” (4.1.223, 225).² In response, Richard initiates a pause in the transactional business of the scene to stage an interlude of self-reflection. He declines to turn his tearful eyes upon the proffered articles and instead asks to see a looking glass, proposing to “read” his sins in the image of his unkinged face (l. 273). What he sees in the mirror, however, is neither a document of sin nor the face he expects, one “bankrupt of his majesty” (l. 267). Rather, Richard discovers the face he had when he was king:

Was this face the face
That every day under his household roof
Did keep ten thousand men? Was this the face
That like the sun did make beholders wink?
Was this the face which faced so many follies,
That was at last outfaced by Bolingbroke?
(ll. 281–86)³

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¹ *Macbeth*, in *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, gen ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986). All quotations from Shakespeare's works except those from *Richard II* derive from this edition of the *Oxford Shakespeare* and are cited parenthetically.

² Unless otherwise noted, all quotations of *Richard II* are from *The Tragedy of Richard the Second*, ed. Charles R. Forker (London: Arden, 2002), cited parenthetically.

³ I here follow the 1608 quarto, which repeats “Was this the face” in all three iterations, in contrast to Q1 and F's “Is this the face” in the third iteration. See *The tragedie of King Richard the second As it hath been publikely acted by the Right Honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his seruantes*. By William Shake-speare (London, 1608), sig. H3.

In the famous speech from Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* echoed here—in which Faustus admiringly wonders, “Was this the face that launched a thousand ships”—Faustus's verb tense consigns the face of Helen of Troy to the past, even as he seeks immortality by kissing it.⁴ Shakespeare repeats and amplifies this past tense verb and, through it, conjures for Richard a particular form of immortality. Looking at himself in the mirror, Richard the speaker describes the image of a bygone face—a face, marked by the past tense “Was,” that registers a temporal discrepancy between the reflected Richard and the reflecting Richard. As a face fixed in a prior time, the image declares its archaic relationship to the speaker's present tense, documenting its own obsolescence. By simultaneously figuring himself as a thing past and as someone presently looking at that past thing—as the imaged face that “Was” and the speaking face that is—Richard multiplies himself to populate different moments in time. He pauses the action of the scene to generate a picture of his past self that encodes a Richard who postdates his own demise.

Shakespeare's mirror scene indexes at least four Richards: the speaking character; the past King Richard he sees in the mirror; the dead, has-been, or ex-king presaged by the image and eventually produced by the assassination in Act 5; and the historical corpse of Richard II that antecedes the play. These Richards do not legibly correspond to those described by the medieval political theology of the king's two bodies, which has been indelibly linked with *Richard II* since Ernst Kantorowicz's 1957 reading of the play. In Kantorowicz's account, the precept of the king's two bodies explains how the disruptive potential of a king's physical death is offset by reference to the abstract, immortal institution of kingship, which persists intact from one mortal king's reign to the next. Appropriated from theological distinctions between Christ's mortal human body (*proprium et verum corpus*) and the church (*corpus mysticum*), the juridical construct of the king's two bodies establishes a fiction of continuity to negate the material fact of human mortality.⁵ Kantorowicz's influential reading of *Richard II* describes the mirror scene as a pivotal moment in the play's representation of this concept, one that dramatizes the

⁴ A-Text of *Doctor Faustus: A Two-Text Edition*, ed. David Scott Kastan (New York: Norton, 2005), 5.1.90. On the relationship between *Richard II* and Marlowe, see Paul Menzer, “cf., Marlowe,” in *Richard II: New Critical Essays*, ed. Jeremy Lopez (New York: Routledge, 2012), 117–34.

⁵ Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1957), 194–96. On the idiosyncrasies of Kantorowicz's concept of the king's two bodies, particularly in relation to one of his principal sources, Henri de Lubac's 1944 *Corpus Mysticum*, see Jennifer R. Rust, *The Body in Mystery: The Political Theology of the “Corpus Mysticum” in the Literature of Reformation England* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 2014).

catastrophic splitting of Richard's body politic from his body natural. Because Richard lacks a legitimate heir to inherit the immutable properties of kingship, his royal soul ascends to be enthroned in heaven "Whilst [his] gross flesh sinks downward here to die" (5.5.112).

The historicist project of contextualizing *Richard II* in Ricardian and Elizabethan England has been heavily indebted to Kantorowicz, who declares the king's two bodies "not only the symbol but indeed the very substance and essence" of the play.⁶ This thesis summarizes how medieval political theology serves in his reading as a historical context, a hermeneutics, a metaphysics, and an aesthetics. "For Kantorowicz," Victoria Kahn observes, "a legal fiction is distinguished from a literary fiction only by its institutional home," a summation that could double as a precept of New Historicism.⁷ As this brief look into the mirror moment suggests, however, our historicized understanding of the precept of the king's two bodies cannot accommodate the Richards constructed by his temporally staggered moment of self-reflection. The critical convention of reading *Richard II* as the literary illustration of a historically localized legal-theological concept artificially limits our appreciation of such moments' temporal aesthetics. The teleological relationship between mortality and immortality described by medieval Christian metaphysics is complicated not only by the temporal dislocation Richard observes in moments such as the mirror scene but also, more broadly, by the genre of historical drama itself, in which the lively, speaking king is always bound to his deadened, inert negative, and vice versa.

I want to propose an alternative conceptual framework for describing the aesthetic and temporal effects of such moments, one suggested not by Ricardian or Elizabethan political theology but by the photographic theory of Roland Barthes. In his influential and enigmatic final book, *Camera Lucida* (1980), Barthes traces his response to a childhood photograph of his deceased mother. From this and a series of other old photos, he theorizes the effects of the photographic medium. One image of interest to him is a famous portrait of Lewis Payne, who was hanged in 1865 in connection with the Lincoln assassination conspiracy (figure 1). The portrait was taken by Alexander Gardner aboard the USS *Saugus* as the condemned man awaited execution. Barthes's fascination with the photo lies in its temporal effects, which he observes to be

⁶ Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, 26.

⁷ Victoria Kahn, "Political Theology and Fiction in *The King's Two Bodies*," *Representations* 106.1 (2009): 77–101, esp. 87. In the same issue of *Representations*, which assesses the legacy of Kantorowicz, Richard Halpern observes that the book's conversation between the concept of the king's two bodies and the aesthetics of *Richard II* works in both directions: *Richard II* provides "a compendium of intellectual strategies" for Kantorowicz's "poetic" yet "bureaucratic tome." See "The King's Two Buckets: Kantorowicz, *Richard II*, and Fiscal *Trauerspiel*," *Representations* 106.1 (2009): 67–76, esp. 74.

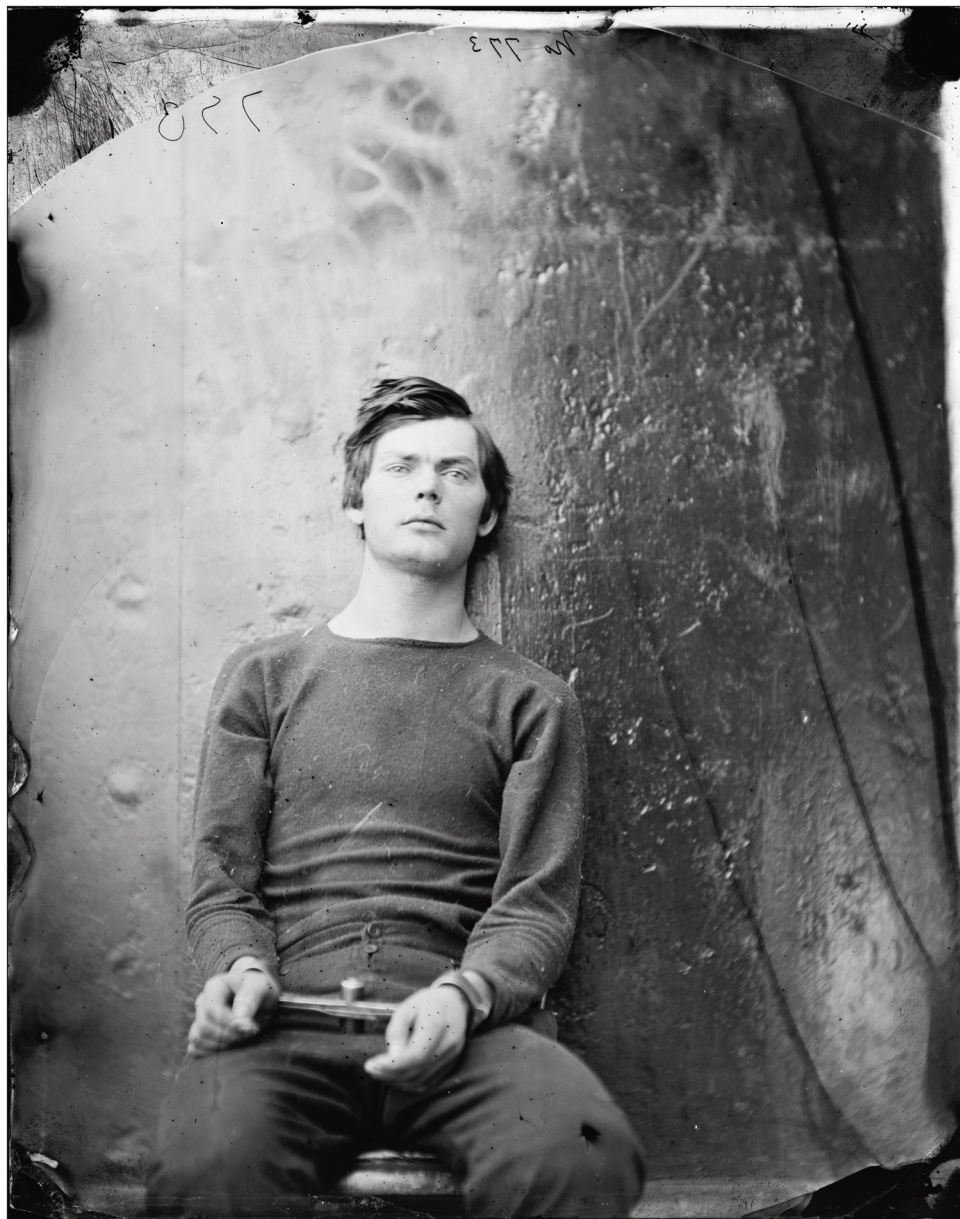


Figure 1. Washington Navy Yard, D. C. Lewis Payne, in sweater, seated and manacled. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Civil War Photographs, LC-DIG-cwpb-04208 (digital file from original neg.), LC-B8171-7773 (b&w film neg.).

“vividly legible in historical photographs: there is always a defeat of Time in them: *that* is dead and *that* is going to die.” The photo captures a moment when Payne was still living while addressing itself to a viewer who is necessarily looking from a future that succeeds both the photographed moment and the subject’s death. In the viewer’s consciousness, the photograph pictures multiple temporal dimensions organized around the delimiting horizon of death, figuring “an anterior future of which death is the stake.”⁸

In his moment of reflection in the mirror, Richard inhabits all the subject and object positions mapped by Barthes, including Barthes’s own. Richard is at once the photographed Lewis Payne, Payne’s photographer, and Payne’s viewer: he is the man facing inevitable death, the documentarian whose image technology makes this moment available for an afterlife of future viewing, and the timeless viewer beyond the grave to whom death appears as already completed. Richard is dead and Richard is going to die. In distinction from *Camera Lucida*’s meditation on Payne, however, the immediate viewer for whom Richard is both dead and going to die is not a separate consciousness like that of Barthes or of the audience or reader of the play. More locally, that viewer is Richard himself, a Richard both identical to and temporally discrete from the face reflected in the image. In one sense, then, the mirror moment illustrates the technological feats of historical drama, a form in which a theatrically live dead king can reflect on a mirror image of his own past face in a moment that both anticipates and recalls the corpse he will be in the play’s final scenes. But this moment also accomplishes something particular to *Richard II* that photographic theory illuminates: it pauses the play’s forward action to generate still pictures of Richard that come into view from a future perspective. This arrested past is defined by an end that has both already and not yet come, an end in which he is “at last outfaced by Bolingbroke” (4.1.286) and murdered by the assassin Exton, Richard’s own Lewis Payne.

Camera Lucida famously analogizes photography to theater, arguing that both are arts of death—that they are kindred technologies for reproducing and looking at dead things:

If Photography seems to me closer to the Theater [than to painting], it is by way of a singular intermediary (and perhaps I am the only one who sees it): by way of Death. We know the original relation of the theater and the cult of the Dead: the first actors separated themselves from the community by playing the role of the Dead: to make oneself up was to designate oneself as a body simultaneously living and dead. . . . Now it is this same relation which I find in the Photograph; however “lifelike” we strive to make it . . . , Photography

⁸ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980), 95–96.

is a kind of primitive theater, a kind of *Tableau Vivant*, a figuration of the motionless and made-up face beneath which we see the dead.⁹

For Barthes, early drama theatricalized the past by staging “bod[ies] simultaneously living and dead” in a representational form analogous to the photo of Payne. Barthes’s observation has been of significant interest to performance studies for the way it theorizes dramatic stagings of dead figures through live bodies. What neither Barthes nor performance studies takes up—and what this essay considers at length—are the temporal effects of embedding stilled, inert images of the past within dramatic action unfolding in the present, whether onstage or in text. Implied but not explicitly theorized in Barthes’s account of both the dramatic and photographic mediums are the present viewers for whom the subject appears alive and dead—the “we” in the final phrase of this passage. Because both photography and drama address themselves to viewers, it is “we [who] see” in the play or photo the superimposition of alive and dead. Static images such as Richard’s mirrored face embed a spectator who occupies a temporal dimension beyond the past represented in the picture.

In order to describe the discrete image aesthetics that organize moments such as the mirror scene, this essay experiments with a posthistoricist mode of reading that brackets both the body logic of medieval political Christology and the orthodoxies of historicist criticism. In place of these conventional paradigms for reading *Richard II*, I suggest that the photographic phenomenology described by theorists such as Barthes and Susan Sontag articulates a temporality specific to the image that can help us conceptualize these moments in *Richard II* as sites of aesthetic objectification and scopophilic anticipation. Although the play’s many composed or even Mannerist moments have invited comparison to iconography, pageantry, and painted portraiture, these forms of visual representation—while strictly contemporary to the play—operate by a different phenomenology from the one that organizes its static images of Richard.¹⁰ The hermeneutic shift afforded by photography exposes a Ricardian

⁹ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 31–32.

¹⁰ Seminal studies of Shakespeare and the iconographic tradition include John Doeblér, *Shakespeare’s Speaking Pictures: Studies in Iconic Imagery* (Albuquerque: New Mexico UP, 1974); M. H. Fleischer, *The Iconography of the English History Play* (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1974); and James Siemon, *Shakespearean Iconoclasm* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1985). Pertinent criticism on *Richard II* and the visual arts includes Ernest B. Gilman on painting in “*Richard II* and the Perspectives of History,” *Renaissance Drama* 17 (1976): 85–115, esp. 105–10; Phyllis Rackin on temporality and pageantry in *Stages of History: Shakespeare’s English Chronicles* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1990), 119–20; and Carol Banks and Graham Holderness, “Mine Eye Hath Play’d the Painter,” in “Shakespeare and the Visual Arts,” ed. Holger Michael Klein and James L. Harner, *Shakespeare Yearbook* 11, (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen P, 2000): 454–73. For a recent discussion of static tableaux in

remainder that eludes not only historicized notions of visual art but also, more broadly, what Jonathan Gil Harris has critiqued as historicism's "national sovereignty model of temporality."¹¹

In positing photography as a hermeneutic for *Richard II*, this essay does not seek merely to substitute a postmodern, secular, Barthes-inflected model of historical representation for Kantorowicz's medieval, Christological model of corporeal transcendence. It invokes photography to rethink the very assumptions of linear developmental temporality that underwrite the theses of secularism and historicism. In other words, I turn here to the secular aesthetic principles articulated by photographic theory to critique the secular model of temporality that presents the king and Christ as its transcendent exceptions. Our readings of the play often foreground *saecula*, defined periods with real or imagined end points: Richard's reign, England's period of divine-right kingship, the Eden before the usurpation, the Middle Ages, the Elizabethan era. The representational aesthetics of *Richard II*, by contrast, demonstrate how the play's embedded images perpetually reproduce multiple, simultaneous temporal dimensions, some with no fixed period. The play's production of images of a dead Richard, especially in its pivotal middle scenes, constitutes time in terms that are not fully compatible with the Christologic of the king's two bodies or the logic of the *saeculum* or period. Like photographs, these pictures do not merely figure the past; they present what Rebecca Schneider has called "the future that subsists" in the image, a future "that necessarily contains" subsequent "moment[s] of

historical drama and its implications for theories of history, see Philip Lorenz, "In the Course and Process of Time': Rupture, Reflection and Repetition in *Henry VIII*," in *Temporality, Genre and Experience in the Age of Shakespeare: Forms of Time*, ed. Lauren Shohet (London: Arden, 2018), 57–76. For an account of stage productions that have represented Richard iconographically, see Jeremy Lopez's introduction to *Richard II: New Critical Essays*, 1–50, esp. 7–11. The BBC's *Richard II* episode of *The Hollow Crown* (written and directed by Rupert Goold; aired 20 September 2013) draws sustained visual parallels between Richard's tragedy and iconography of the Crucifixion and St. Sebastian.

¹¹ Jonathan Gil Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 2. A number of temporal models current in early modern studies suggest a material or physically overlapped layering of time that the temporality of the image profitably resists. These include Harris's palimpsest (*Untimely Matter*, 1–19); David Scott Kastan's shapes in *Shakespeare and the Shapes of Time* (Hanover: UP of New Hampshire, 1982), 1–33; Matthew D. Wagner's rough, thick, embodied time (after Husserl) in *Shakespeare, Theatre, and Time* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 1–11, 34–67; Gilles Deleuze's pleat or fold in *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1993), 3–13; and Michel Serres's crumpled handkerchief in Michel Serres with Bruno Latour, *Conversations on Science, Culture, and Time*, trans. Roxanne Lapidus (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1995), 60. Mark Netzloff invokes Serres's and Latour's theories of time in "Insurgent Time: *Richard II* and the Periodization of Sovereignty," in *Richard II: New Critical Essays*, 202–22.

looking.”¹² Even Richard’s tragic death functions as a site for producing his ongoing presence—his open-ended future as a viewer at his own grave.

Contextualizing *Richard II* more broadly than post-Kantorowicz criticism has done productively exposes the play’s aesthetic affinity with other trans-historical visual arts by which humans create and look at effigies of a dead past. To think in such terms, I argue, does not necessitate reproducing the logic of periodization by plotting a longer developmental history of camera technology, for example, or by suggesting that Shakespeare, not Daguerre, invented the daguerreotype. Rather, I propose that the play constructs static Richard images according to a logic of visually aided retrospection and anticipation that the camera would realize, not invent. If photography and historical drama bind the live to its dead double, then so too do these representational forms continually construct the live beholding the dead—Barthes beholding Payne, Richard beholding Richard. Although *Richard II* spectacularly reconsigns the king to his coffin with each iteration, its many static, deathly stills of the king develop across the play into an essential component of Richard’s perpetually anticipatory image aesthetics. These still images—the play’s little, little graves—host at once the stilled past and a future of beholding still.

I. BECOMING A SPECTER

Before Barthes introduces the photographs of his mother and Lewis Payne in part 2 of *Camera Lucida*, he reflects in part 1 on photographs of himself, lamenting that they capture only his “pose” and not his experience of consciousness. “In the process of ‘posing,’” he writes, “I instantaneously make another body for myself, I transform myself in advance into an image.”¹³ This transformation creates awareness for Barthes of the objectification inherent in the photographer’s work. The experience of being photographed is one in which he is “neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object: I then experience a micro-version of death (or parenthesis): I am truly becoming a specter.”¹⁴ While photography “produce[s] effects that are ‘lifelike,’” the image it generates is “another body”—an “effigy” that “embalm[s]” the subject as an object or dead thing.¹⁵ Photographers’ efforts to introduce liveliness—“they make me pose in front of my paintbrushes, they take me outdoors (more ‘alive’ than indoors), put me in front of a staircase because a group of children is playing behind me”—are comically ineffectual, “as if the (terrified) Photog-

¹² Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Reenactment* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 161.

¹³ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 10–12, esp. 10.

¹⁴ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 14.

¹⁵ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 12, 14.

rapher must exert himself to the utmost to keep the Photograph from becoming Death. But I—already an object, I do not struggle.”¹⁶ For Barthes, the photograph’s failure to register consciousness effects a translation from subject into object—a death.

A complex, abstract form of this death appears in the Queen’s exchange with Bushy in Act 2, scene 2 of *Richard II*, where an extended metaphor of childbirth expresses foreboding of Richard’s already completed ruin. The metaphor describes the heir she would ideally be birthing—the living copy of Richard who would extend the king’s patrilineage into the future. But this future is negated as it is engendered, both by the Queen’s description of it as “unborn sorrow” and by her reference to “Fortune’s womb” (l. 10), a birthplace of cycles and vicissitudes rather than straight lines of genealogical or teleological succession. In a passage from Samuel Daniel’s verse chronicle that is Shakespeare’s likely source for the pregnancy metaphor, Daniel imagines the sorrow-child supplanting the would-be royal heir in the womb: the royal couple are

bigge with sorrow, and both great with woe
In labour with what was not to be borne:
This mightie burthen wherewithall they goe
Dies undelivered, perishes unborne.¹⁷

In Daniel’s metaphor, sorrow is a royal baby its parents can neither bear nor be delivered of—the tragic fruit of their marriage that precludes its own future by dying in utero. The elaboration of the birthing conceit across Shakespeare’s scene similarly enwombs and entombs the future-looking outcome of procreative succession with its own spectral twin, death. The effects are uncanny, resequencing birth and death to proleptically posit Richard’s end as the royal couple’s child.

Even before the Queen births the “prodigy” of Richard’s usurper, the metaphors she exchanges with Bushy objectify her figurative offspring in a way that renders it static, inert, and stillborn (l. 64). The Queen describes fortune’s progeny as at once the feeling of “sorrow” (l. 10) and a material object, a “something” (l. 12). In an exceptionally intricate reply, Bushy further objectifies her grief by transforming it into an image:

Each substance of a grief hath twenty shadows,
Which shows like grief itself, but is not so;
For Sorrow’s eyes, glazed with blinding tears,
Divides one thing entire to many objects,

¹⁶ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 14.

¹⁷ Samuel Daniel, *The First Four Books of the Civil Wars between the Two Houses of Lancaster and York* (1595), quoted in Forker’s edition of *Richard II*, 281n.

Like perspectives, which, rightly gazed upon,
 Show nothing but confusion; eyed awry,
 Distinguish form. So your sweet majesty,
 Looking awry upon your lord's departure,
 Find shapes of grief more than himself to wail,
 Which, looked on as it is, is naught but shadows
 Of what it is not. Then, thrice-gracious Queen,
 More than your lord's departure weep not. More is not seen,
 Or if it be, 'tis with false Sorrow's eye,
 Which for things true weeps things imaginary.

(ll. 14–27)

Just as the photograph transforms Barthes from a conscious subject into an object of the gaze, Bushy's imagery translates the Queen's figurative progeny into an objectified "it" by foregrounding the role of the gaze in discerning the "substances" or "forms" of grief from its false, skewed, and over-replicated copies. Bushy attempts to tutor the Queen in distinguishing between the "substance of a grief" and its "twenty shadows," "perspectives," and "shapes" through a conventional Platonic lesson on the difference between the original and its replicas. But his language does not distinguish clearly between the two, emphasizing how grief is apprehended through sight, already an image of itself—a stilled visual object whose original is no less inert than its copies. The Queen's metaphorical progeny is not a conscious being in Bushy's formulation but an object that can be duplicated or viewed from different angles, like the multiplied images produced by a prism (here, a tear) or a distorted anamorphic picture that becomes legible only when viewed askance.

As Scott McMillin has noted, Bushy's lecture on how to see correctly is internally incoherent, suggesting at once that the truth can be viewed only from an oblique angle and that looking at it "awry" creates distortion.¹⁸ As the news of the rebellion arrives later in the scene, Bushy's "perspectives" metaphor proves itself not only incoherent but also largely beside the point: the problem for the Queen is neither the angle from which to view the "something" coming toward her nor the difficulty of discerning false images from real ones. She struggles to name a future that arrives ahead of its time but appears as something already past. The Queen's understanding of the dreaded object's situatedness in time is much closer to the phenomenology of the photographic image than it is to that of anamorphic painting.¹⁹ If she could clearly say what she

¹⁸ Scott McMillin, "Shakespeare's *Richard II*: Eyes of Sorrow, Eyes of Desire," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 35.1 (1984): 40–52, esp. 41–42.

¹⁹ Bushy's reference to "perspectives" has attracted significant critical commentary, much of it contextualizing his remarks within sixteenth-century developments in optics and painting, particularly the exemplary anamorphic skull in Hans Holbein's *Ambassadors*. See, for example,

clearly knows, it would sound something like, “Richard is dead and Richard is going to die.”

Although Bushy bungles the contemporary representational technology of the perspective picture, his analogy does suggest the appropriateness of the image as a figure for describing the Queen’s sorrow. In particular, it exposes how images can host two temporal points of view at once. His references to images as “shadows” anticipate early theorists of photography who conceptualized the photographic negative as a shadow vestige of what had passed live in front of the camera. In 1835, William Henry Fox described the process through which he created his first photographic negative as “skiagraphy,” a term meaning “writing in shadow.”²⁰ In a staged 1857 photograph titled *The First Negative* (figure 2), Oscar Gustav Rejlander literalized this idea by imagining photography as an “art of fixing shadows,” a process that translates the living subject into a static image from which future replicas might be made.²¹ As with Bushy’s references to shadows, these early attempts at theorizing photography represent the image as always already distanced from the original in space and therefore time—a belated shape or negative of that which is definitionally past, even as it reproduces future copies. In Barthes’s terms, Bushy constitutes the Queen’s shadow progeny as a “this-has-been”; as such, “it is already dead.”²²

In its anticipation of the death-effects of the photographic image, the Queen’s figurative pregnancy—both proleptic and retrospective of Richard’s end—disrupts not only the ideal of unbroken linear succession but also the underlying fiction of linear time. Her exchange with Bushy offers a compressed meditation on the terms by which both historical drama and photography reproduce the figures of the past—terms that are markedly different from those mapped by the king’s two bodies, in which an anthropomorphized divine kingship is regenerated, undisrupted, through the temporal sequence of conception, pregnancy, and delivery of an heir. Kantorowicz describes how “the dying king and the new king became one with regard to the invisible and per-

Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare After All* (New York: Pantheon, 2004), 266–67; Gilman, “Perspectives of History,” 93–105; Christopher Pye, *The Regnal Phantasm: Shakespeare and the Politics of Spectacle* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 89–91; and Wagner, *Shakespeare, Theatre, and Time*, 40–43.

²⁰ Curator notes for Oscar Gustav Rejlander, *The First Negative*, Musée d’Orsay, http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/works-in-focus/photography/commentaire_id/the-first-negative-23333.html?tx_commentaire_pi1%5BpidLi%5D=847&tx_commentaire_pi1%5Bfrom%5D=844&cHash=0908fda4e9.

²¹ Ibid. See also Lori Pauli, ed., *Acting the Part: Photography as Theatre* (New York: Merrell, 2006), 26.

²² Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 79.



Figure 2. Rejlander, Oscar Gustave (1813–75). *The First Negative*. 1857. Salted paper print, 22.4 x 15 centimeters. Inv. PHO2011-13. Photo: Patrice Schmidt. Musée D'Orsay © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY.

petual Crown which represented the substance of the inheritance. . . . It was an old conceptual property of juristic thought to personify the inheritance; that is, to treat the estate, as it passed from the testator to the heir, as a person."²³ By contrast, the Queen's heir is a non-person—an image that reverses anthropomorphism by creating “something” or “nothing” and confounding the sequential relationship between progenitor and progeny (ll. 12, 32). She puns on Bushy's “'Tis nothing but conceit” to observe the normal sequence of conception in which the progeny of sorrow would be “still derived / From some forefather grief” (ll. 33–35). However, the sorrow she has conceived has no discernible origin; it permutates the temporal sequence of parent and successor:

For nothing hath begot my something grief,
Or something hath the nothing that I grieve.
'Tis in reversion that I do possess—
But what it is, that is not yet known what,
I cannot name. 'Tis nameless woe, I wot.

(ll. 36–40)

The Queen is not pregnant through a linear procreative process but through a retroactive one—through “reversion,” a legal process in which someone already in possession comes into ownership through the prior owner's death. As Christopher Pye has observed, “Her unborn sorrow is also a returning sorrow”; it is “something that comes toward her from an already established futurity.”²⁴ Instead of descending from a progenitor, the Queen's offspring derives from a postgenitor, a postcreation through death, like a photograph or a history play. The representation of the royal couple's future as dead is thus not merely a prophetic anticipation of later events in the play. The exchange between Bushy and the Queen registers the temporal effects of both a photograph of and an Elizabethan play about Richard II, who is dead before the play begins and dead again at its end. In the liveness between these two deaths, Bushy and the Queen figure Richard's future as nonetheless bound to the inert condition of a still-born image.

Looking at the photo of Payne, Barthes writes, “I read at the same time, *This will be* and *this has been*; I observe with horror an anterior future of which death is the stake. By giving me the absolute past of the pose (aorist), the photograph tells me death in the future. What *pricks* me is the discovery of this equivalence.”²⁵ The exchange between Bushy and the Queen registers precisely this equivalence—this *punctum*, as Barthes calls it. The heir to Richard is its own

²³ Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, 338.

²⁴ Pye, *Regnal Phantasm*, 93.

²⁵ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 96.

objectified, unnamed image. For the Queen, this equivalence is experienced as the *punctum*—a piercing recognition, Freud’s uncanny, “that class of the terrifying that leads back to something long known to us.”²⁶ She is “heavy-sad” with “heavy nothing”—pregnant with an image, a shadow, a future death regenerating itself as a dead picture in her womb (ll. 30, 32).

II. GRAVED IN THE HOLLOW GROUND

From this abstract, “nameless” image of Richard’s end, the play progressively gives name and distinct shape to representations of his death, many generated by Richard himself. The news that his favorites are “graved in the hollow ground” (3.2.140) initiates an extended meditation on death that will ultimately be materialized in the play’s final spectacle of Richard’s coffin. Editors have identified in Richard’s morbid resignation a fatalism bordering on causality. Charles R. Forker writes, “Characteristically, Richard anticipates and, in a sense, invites the worst before it actually happens,” and Andrew Gurr remarks on Richard’s “responsibility for his fall.”²⁷ What critics observe as Richard’s death wish or prophesy is the suicidal effect of his self-objectification, especially the figuring of himself as a corpse. He is not only a subject becoming an object, as Barthes puts it, but also the documentarian or photographer who “knows . . . very well, and himself fears . . . this death in which his gesture will embalm [him].”²⁸

But Richard’s self-embalming gesture also creates several temporal effects that compete with his apparent fatalism:

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 deposèd bodies to the ground?
 Our lands, our lives and all are Bolingbroke’s,
 And nothing can we call our own but death,
 And that small model of the barren earth
 Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.
 (ll. 145–54)

Initially provoked by the image of his decapitated favorites, Richard seems to identify with the worm-eaten, luridly inert “deposèd body” he describes. He

²⁶ Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny,” in *On Creativity and the Unconscious*, trans. Alix Strachey (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), 122–61, esp. 123–24.

²⁷ Forker’s edition of *Richard II*, 3.2.150n; and Andrew Gurr, ed., *King Richard II* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 3.2.155n.

²⁸ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 14.

imagines himself as skin filled with bones—a corpse pie with a coffin crust. Simultaneously, however, he figures himself and his men in preparation for a future after death. Specifically, he invites them to write documents that will outlast their deaths, such as the epitaph and will. Although engaged in morbid anticipation of the grave, Richard suggests that his voice will linger as text after his body has been buried. Like his meditation on his mirror image, Richard's proposal to "talk of graves, of worms, of epitaphs" multiplies him across several temporal dimensions through a present speaking voice, a future dead body, and a set of artifacts that will extend his voice into a postmortem future.

Richard's monologue develops from this multitemporal preparation for death into a meditative interlude on dead kingship:

For God's sake let us sit upon the ground
 And tell sad stories of the death of kings—
 How some have been deposed, some slain in war,
 Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed,
 Some poisoned by their wives, some sleeping killed—
 All murdered.

(ll. 155–60)

The past tense of Richard's story of the deposed, murdered king illustrates the passivity that tends to be read as Richard's participation in his own death. He takes his ruin as a foregone conclusion—as something that has already happened in conformity with a genre of tragic-king stories into which he inscribes the events of his own life. As in the preceding reference to writing his will and epitaph, however, Richard's invitation to storytelling posits a role for him apart from that of the dead. He is the historiographer whose stories persist beyond the grave—whose point of view, anchored in the future, allows him to reflect back on his own past death. While it narrates him into the grave, Richard's storytelling role again multiplies him—into subject and storyteller, chronicled king and king's chronicler.

As Richard foresees, his death will be the end result of the still-unfolding usurpation, but, from the broader perspective of historical drama, it is also merely a function of time. Salisbury describes the source of Richard's ruin as time itself. He laments:

One day too late, I fear me, noble lord,
 Hath clouded all thy happy days on earth.
 O, call back yesterday, bid Time return
 And thou shalt have twelve thousand fighting men!
 Today, today, unhappy day too late,
 O'erthrows thy joys, friends, fortune, and thy state.

(ll. 67–72)

The forward march of time from yesterday to today creates a “late” day and a “late” Richard whose only hope of avoiding doom is the reversal of time.²⁹ Death is not simply a function of the plot but of the temporal progression that fixes Richard as a subject (and object) of a completed period and makes him available to the dramatist of history as a character absorbed in postmortem self-reflection. Time itself is Richard’s antagonist; “Time hath set a blot upon my pride,” he laments (l. 81). It is futile to try to change the course of events because “Death will have his day” (l. 103)—and, indeed, death already has. As the play advances from scene to scene in the unfolding time of reading or performance, the day of death that has already passed grows nearer in the future.

For Barthes, the *punctum* of the historical photograph is time. Time pierces with a death that has been and will be. Like the photograph of Payne, the play represents the figure of Richard in a form that both depends on his being already dead and presents him on the precipice of death. The play’s representation of Richard at once repeats scenes of his liveness and punctures liveness with its own temporal progress, restoring Richard to his grave. Richard observes this very *punctum*:

For 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,
Allowing him a breath, a little scene,
To monarchize, be feared and kill with looks,
Infusing him with self and vain conceit,
As if this flesh which walls about our life
Were brass impregnable; and humored thus,
Comes at the last and with a little pin
Bores through his castle wall, and farewell, king!
(ll. 160–70)

The crown frames a static icon of power that the king imagines to be made “of brass impregnable.” Though more elastic than this rigid image, the theatrical king enjoying his pompous “little scene” at court likewise entertains a fantasy of changelessness: the scripted performance of the generic role of “a king.” This figure is pierced by the “little pin” of Death, the true ruler who renders the “hollow crown” a grave, a verbal and imagistic echo of “graved in the hollow ground.” Encircled in the grave of the crown, the mortal body or “flesh which walls about our life” is a grave within a grave. Just as the *punctum* of time reveals Lewis Payne as a “that-has-been,” the pin of death discloses the king’s mortality, piercing him with what Barthes calls the “lacerating emphasis” of his pastness.³⁰

²⁹ See Pye, *Regnal Phantasm*, 94, 100.

³⁰ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 96.

Even as he observes the effects of time—the death that, like Bolingbroke’s usurpation, comes “at last”—Richard is again improvising its subversion. The scene that takes place inside the hollow crown is decidedly theatrical, as though the crown were a miniaturized precursor to *Henry V*’s “wooden O” in which “Are now confined two mighty monarchies,” the court of “antic” Death and the lesser court of the king (Prologue ll. 13, 20). The theatricality of antic Death complements the references to “breath,” “scene,” and “pomp” in the passage, all of which describe the king’s courtliness as a dramatic show of power—a performance of “monarchiz[ing]” that is more spectacle than substance. As in the earlier references to storytelling and epitaphing, Richard’s extended metaphor reverberates with an authorial voice—as many critics have observed—the voice of a playwright scripting a drama that unfolds in the circumscribed temporal dimension within the hollow crown.³¹ This dramatist’s voice, I suggest, represents another form of Richard’s postmortem consciousness, one analogous to his function as epitapher and viewer of self-generated images of his death. The king’s court is organized by a linear time that terminates in death. By contrast, Richard’s authorial metaphor-construction happens in the perpetual present. In positing himself as corpse, chronicler, epitapher, and playwright, Richard both reproduces and supersedes the deathly *punctum* of time.

III. THERE LIES

Richard will remain alive until the final sixty lines of Act 5, but the play has already created several graves for him—still images that translate him from conscious being into unconscious object. Act 3, scene 3 offers several more invitations to imagine Richard already dead. The opening argument between Northumberland and York—over whether omitting Richard’s title symbolically decapitates the king—sets particular conditions for the entrance of Percy a few lines later. When Percy announces that Flint Castle is “royally manned,” Bolingbroke corrects him: “Why? It contains no king” (ll. 21, 24). Percy’s reply does not entirely resolve the question whether the castle is royally manned: “Yes, my good lord, / It doth contain a king. King Richard lies / Within the limits of yon lime and stone” (ll. 24–26). Percy models his syntax after Bolingbroke’s, making Richard the object rather than the subject of the declaration that Flint “doth contain a king”: syntactically, the king is immobilized in the container of the castle. The suspension of the epitaphic “King Richard lies” at the end of the line builds on the opening image of a decapitated king by suggesting that he lies dead. The reference to “the limits of yon lime and stone” amplifies this sense, figuring Richard lying in a stone

³¹ On Richard’s role as a dramatist, see McMillin, “Eyes of Sorrow.”

tomb sprinkled with quicklime, used to prevent the putrefaction of dead bodies.

Richard's subsequent appearance on the battlements at Flint presents quite a different image of him, but it is no less objectifying than these veiled references to his corpse. He is again described as an image: "mark King Richard how he looks," says Bolingbroke, "See, see" (ll. 61–62). York's response—"Yet looks he like a king" (l. 68)—registers the difference between the visible effigy of Ricardian kingship and the political and military power concentrated in Bolingbroke. As he draws the rebels' eyes to Richard's eye, York observes how power is concentrated in the gaze: "Behold, his eye, / As bright as is the eagle's, lightens forth / Controlling majesty" (ll. 68–70). But as in Bushy's metaphors of the perspective picture, Richard has become the beheld rather than the beholder: his gaze is merely a spectacle—"so fair a show" (l. 71). Once the organ of Richard's controlling gaze, his eye has instead become the picturesque object of the rebels' beholding.³²

Richard's explicit meditation on his own grave later in the scene and on his imagined burial in the common street extends this visual objectification into a sustained meditation on the dead object of the king. His image of "a little grave, / A little, little grave, an obscure grave" that is "hourly trample[d] on" by his former subjects leads Aumerle to cry and Richard to exclaim:

Aumerle, thou weep'st, my tender-hearted cousin!
 We'll make foul weather with despised tears;
 Our sighs and they shall lodge the summer corn
 And make a dearth in this revolting land.
 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; and, therein laid, there lies
 Two kinsmen digged their graves with weeping eyes?
 (ll. 153–54, 157, 160–69)

In Richard's elaborate conceit, he and Aumerle are reproduced several times over: they are a pair of weeping graveside mourners, the dead men laid in the grave, the subjects of a conventional "there lies" epitaph, and their own epitaphers. In Richard's production of his dead image, his eye's camera—a word

³² On Richard's development into an object of the gaze, see Richard Ashby, "Pierced to the soul: The Politics of the Gaze in *Richard II*," *Shakespeare* 11.2 (2015): 201–13. Ashby's discussion hinges on a Lacanian difference between the eye and the gaze, especially Lacan's suggestion that the gaze translates subjects into objects. See Jacques Lacan, "Of the Gaze as *Objet Petit a*," in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1979), 67–119.

derived from the Latin word for “chamber”—entombs him in a picture of its own making, punctuating his translation from weeping subject into object of the gaze.³³ His eye thus makes two graves for him: the grave dug by weeping and the grave of his self-objectification as a corpse “within the earth.” The image translates Richard from weeping subject into object of the grave and gaze. Crucially, the gaze is Richard’s own. While other characters—the Queen, Northumberland, Percy, York—construct indirect, “awry,” or figurative images of a dead Richard, he asserts the authority of representing himself as explicitly dead (2.2.21, 23). He anticipates the phenomenon of the selfie, the process and product of optical self-objectification that enshrines him as an image for his own morbid, scopic, future gratification.³⁴ By inventing and reading his epitaph, Richard captions this dead image, asserting pictorial as well as textual authority to project his perspective beyond the grave.³⁵

The epitaphic utterance with which Richard concludes his conceit entails him in a perpetually deictic postmortem gesture toward his own corpse.³⁶ As Scott Newstok recounts in his study of epitaphs, Queen Elizabeth was reported to have made a similarly epitaphic remark in an early speech to Parliament: “when I have expired my last breath, this may be inscribed upon my Tombe: Here lyes interr’d ELIZABETH / A virgin pure untill her death.”³⁷ Elizabeth sets an intention to reign unmarried and dictates her own epitaph to that effect, suggesting what “may be inscribed” on it by others after her death. Newstok rightly observes in such remarks a tension between suicidal self-erasure and what he calls “self-projection.”³⁸ Richard’s epitaphic utterance is sim-

³³ OED Online (Oxford: Oxford UP, July 2018), s. v. “camera, n.”

³⁴ In reading Richard’s image as a selfie, I seek to complicate the claim that he wants to disappear, advanced by McMillin, “Eyes of Sorrow,” 49; Lopez, introduction to *Richard II: New Critical Essays*, 14, 16, and 35; and Donovan Sherman, “‘What More Remains?’: Messianic Performance in *Richard II*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 65.1 (2014): 22–48. The selfie has been described in media studies as at once a camera, a stage, a text, and a mirror. See, for example, Katie Warfield, “Digital Subjectivities and Selfies: The Model, the Self-Conscious Thespian, and the #realme,” *International Journal of the Image* 6.2 (2015): 1–16. On the motif of mirror images within the tradition of photographic self-portraiture, see Alec Mackenzie, “The Age of the Selfie,” *Royal Photographic Society (RPS) Journal* 154.5 (2014): 288–93, especially his mention of the recent *Invisible* series by Laura Williams (293).

³⁵ On the authority of photographic captioning, see Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 1973), 107–10.

³⁶ On the significance of epitaphs’ deictic gesture, see Scott L. Newstok, *Quoting Death in Early Modern England: The Poetics of Epitaphs beyond the Tomb* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), 33–58. For a discussion of the history plays’ epitaphic gestures, broadly conceived, see Emily Shortstef, “Acting as an Epitaph: Performing Commemoration in the Shakespearean History Play,” *Critical Survey* 22.2 (2010): 11–24.

³⁷ William Camden, *Annales* (1625), 1:26, quoted in Newstok, *Quoting Death*, 66.

³⁸ Newstok, *Quoting Death*, 63.

ilarly self-deadening or suicidal, but, in its construction of him as both the corpse and the epitaph's reader, it is even more audaciously self-projecting. Unlike the future dictated by Elizabeth, in which the interred corpse and epitaph will occupy the same space "here" at her tomb, Richard gestures "there," reading his epitaph from a temporal and spatial distance beyond the corpse. By relegating himself to the grave and then reading his own epitaph over it, Richard exercises his exclusive prerogative to imagine the death of the king. When Percy and Bolingbroke flirt with the question whether "the king lies" in Flint Castle, the doubleness of their language betrays their nascent treason.³⁹ In openly describing himself in a grave indexed by his own "There lies," Richard constructs a truly exceptional royal exceptionalism—his unique privilege to kill off the king and survive to point at the dead body "there."⁴⁰ As the only character in the play who can frankly contemplate the king's corpse, Richard is the only character who can use that corpse generatively to constitute the future time after his death. The future belongs to him, notwithstanding his usurpation and murder.

In its expression of both finality and anticipation, Richard's grave image foresees the mechanisms of *Camera Lucida*, whose authorial voice similarly testifies to the futurity implicit in images of the dead. As in Richard's account of his grave, *Camera Lucida* inscribes the consciousness of Barthes as the beholder of the book's photos. Indeed, the photograph of Barthes's mother that catalyzes his meditation is not even reproduced in the book. It is effaced by the voice of Barthes, a voice captured in perpetual reflection on the superseded image of his mother. The open-ended future of looking represented by Barthes's authorial voice is built into photographs, which necessarily "address a futured viewer," in Schneider's words.⁴¹ The image that remains when the photograph is taken inscribes both a past moment and future ones. These "crosse[d] temporal registers" of already and not-yet, Schneider argues, are embedded in the word "remains," which denotes both what has been left behind and what "remain[s] before' . . . as both *ahead of* and *prior to*."⁴² Richard's meditation on his tear-fretted grave multiplies this already multiple

³⁹ On the crime of imagining the king's death, see Karen Cunningham, *Imaginary Betrayals: Subjectivity and the Discourses of Treason in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2002), 1–22; and Rebecca Lemon, *Treason by Words: Literature, Law, and Rebellion in Shakespeare's England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2006), 1–10.

⁴⁰ I thus disagree with H. Austin Whitver's recent assertion that Richard's imagined tomb "becomes an icon of monarchical insufficiency" and that by picturing his own death he "create[s] a static identity." See "Materiality of Memory in Shakespeare's Second Tetralogy," *SEL* 56.2 (2016): 285–306, esp. 289, 291.

⁴¹ Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 162.

⁴² Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 22.

sense of “remains,” creating an image of mortal remains that he remains to behold as well as a textual remainder that he remains to read. These remains, in turn, are produced within the inexhaustibly re-readable, re-performable medium of historical drama, which represents an “encounter,” Schneider writes, between the past and “the *still*, or *ongoing*, or *live* mode of return.”⁴³

In anticipating his death, inscription, reading, and performance, Richard generates what performance theorist Daniel Sack, after Giorgio Agamben, calls “potentiality,” or “a present moment’s outlook toward the future.”⁴⁴ Whereas “stillness and silence often read as negation,” Sack writes, Richard demonstrates the productivity of his own dead body, or what Sack calls the “live potentiality the still-posed image casts into the future.”⁴⁵ This potentiality underwrites the generativity of both *Camera Lucida* and *Richard II*. While Barthes fears that being photographed translates him from subject to object, the act of authorial reflection on images of himself instantiates him in the continuous act of beholding, an act anticipated by the photographic image itself. By inventing, representing, and captioning his own grave, Richard is a precursor to Barthes, the photographic-epitaphic subject, object, creator, mediator, and viewer. Although it represents him as dead, Richard’s self-authored grave scene inscribes him as its authoritative beholder in a scripted, anticipatory, perpetually potential gesture. Richard’s image engraves his future.

IV. WAS THIS THE FACE?

The range of effects created by Richard’s anticipatory self-objectification are fully realized in the mirror scene at the end of Act 4, scene 1. As the opening of this essay suggests, the mirror image functions in the play as one of Richard’s graves, temporally demarcating the living speaker from his dead effigy. Although portrait painting would seem to offer the most historically specific analogue for this framed, truncated, static-image-within-the-play, the mirror moment produces several effects that are unlike those of painting. As Sontag points out, painting makes no claim to having captured a real moment in time, let alone to being created through a process that transfers light from one object onto another, as photography does. She writes, “A photograph is not only an image (as a painting is an image), an interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stenciled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask. . . . A photograph is never less than the registering of an emanation (light waves reflected by objects)—a material vestige of its subject in a way that no painting

⁴³ Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 162.

⁴⁴ Daniel Sack, *After Live: Possibility, Potentiality, and the Future of Performance* (Ann Arbor, U of Michigan P, 2015), 6.

⁴⁵ Sack, *After Live*, 18, 81.

can be."⁴⁶ Barthes makes a similar point, though in slightly different terms: "Painting can feign reality without having seen it. . . . Contrary to these imitations, in Photography I can never deny that *the thing has been there*." He continues, "In Photography, the presence of the thing (at a certain past moment) is never metaphoric."⁴⁷ Barthes and Sontag articulate what Rejlander pictured in *The First Negative*, where the photograph is imagined to derive from the shadow cast by a material object. What Sontag, Barthes, and Rejlander observe about the photograph and its real physical referent is equally true of the mirror image: it certifies through the effects of light the presence of what is imaged.

Because it represents something that was present but is already past, Richard's mirror image works more like a photograph than either a conventional mirror image or a painting.⁴⁸ As in a photographic portrait, the mirror image of the erstwhile King Richard testifies that he was the non-metaphorical king—a lord who kept ten thousand men, not "a mockery king of snow" (l. 260). Given its belatedness, however, the figure he sees in the mirror is a death mask of his kingship—an image of what was there that is "stenciled off the real," like the shadowy outline depicted in Rejlander's *First Negative*. Richard observes in his image what Barthes observes in photography: what is pictured "has been absolutely, irrefutably present, and yet [it is] already deferred." As Barthes writes, "There is a superimposition here: of reality and of the past."⁴⁹ Richard's call for the mirror and his reading of its flattened, static image as an effigy of his belated kingship thus function as another expression of his royal rights, including his exceptional authority—dramatized across the scene—to declare his kingship a thing of the past. Like the epitaph of the previous scene, this still, replica-Richard is inherently a deadened object but one that points reflexively to where kingship was: in the man who (still) holds the looking glass.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Sontag, *On Photography*, 154.

⁴⁷ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 76, 78.

⁴⁸ Debora Shuger notes that "the mirrors pictured in Renaissance texts are, in fact, often paintings. The concepts frequently seem interchangeable." Her survey of how mirrors are imagined in texts from the period concludes that mirroring is rarely "used as a paradigm for reflexive self-consciousness," noting Richard's use as an exception. See Shuger, "The 'I' of the Beholder: Renaissance Mirrors and the Reflexive Mind," in *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday*, ed. Patricia Fumerton and Simon Hunt (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1999), 21–41, esp. 30, 31. On Renaissance mirror technologies, see also Rayna Kalas, *Frame, Glass, Verse: The Technology of Poetic Invention in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2007), 106–32.

⁴⁹ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 77, 76.

⁵⁰ In his study of literary uses of the mirror, Herbert Grabes notes that mirror images are often associated with "a personified Death, who may also appear in the mirror." See Grabes, *The Mutable Glass: Mirror-imagery in Titles and Texts of the Middle Ages and English Renaissance*, trans. Gordon Collier (New York: Cambridge UP, 1982), 119. The linings of some mirrors, called *miroirs de mort*, were painted with a death's head.

Thinking about the mirror image as a kind of proto-photo helps us to see how Richard creates nostalgic longing by gesturing toward an objectified, bygone king. The mirror vision of his spent kingship does not make an explicit political argument for divine right. Rather, it simply figures him as a king who once was, thereby presenting what Sontag calls “an invitation to sentimentality” and “an object of tender regard.”⁵¹ In her analysis of the role photographs play in spurring or dulling political action, Sontag argues that, “while [photography] can goad conscience, it can finally, never, be ethical or political knowledge. The knowledge gained through still photographs will always be some kind of sentimentalism.”⁵² In Richard’s case, however, sentimentalism functions *as* political knowledge by certifying his bygone kingship and therefore the crime of his deposing. Describing his mirror image as contemporary with his current face would not achieve the same effects: the sentimental, romantic, and political truth claims of the moment depend on the image as a representation of pastness. Although the reflected face is produced simultaneously with Richard’s description of it, his temporal staggering of the two faces anticipates what Sontag describes as the photographic “enterprise of antiquing reality” by which Richard “offers instant romanticism about the present” and renders himself an “instant antique.”⁵³ Through Richard’s eyes—as through the photographer’s—“the now becomes the past.”⁵⁴ Richard generates nostalgia for himself not simply to lament his loss but to create an unkillable self who survives that loss—a postmortem Richard capable of nostalgia.

The impermanence of Richard’s image is built into the mirror, a symbol of transience.⁵⁵ Appropriating the destructive forces of time that make images “brittle,” Richard shatters the glass himself, drawing an analogy between the transience of his kingship and the transience of its two-dimensional effigy: “A brittle glory shineth in this face— / As brittle as the glory is the face! / For there it is, cracked in an hundred shivers” (ll. 287–89). Like the earlier epitaph moment, Richard’s act is at once destructive and reproductive, proliferating the still image of a past Richard into a hundred photographic copies. In his cutting response to Richard’s action, “The shadow of your sorrow hath destroyed / The shadow of your face” (ll. 292–93), Bolingbroke highlights the image’s status as copy, pointing out the gesture’s histrionic and artificial qualities. He identifies both the face and the conceit of its brittleness—integral to

⁵¹ Sontag, *On Photography*, 71.

⁵² Sontag, *On Photography*, 24. Sontag reassesses some of her conclusions about photography dulling ethical action in *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador, 2003), 105.

⁵³ Sontag, *On Photography*, 80, 67, 80.

⁵⁴ Berenice Abbott, quoted in Sontag, *On Photography*, 67.

⁵⁵ Grabes, *Mutable Glass*, 111.

Richard's project of objectifying and sentimentalizing a lost past—as synthetically generated replicas.

Bolingbroke's depreciation of Richard's gesture recalls Bushy's earlier distinction between "each substance of a grief" and its "twenty shadows." Richard quickly adapts the moment to this Platonic model, generating a new conceit that relocates loss from the visible image of the mirror to an invisible, internal object:

'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.

(ll. 295–99)

Moving beyond his initial suggestion of the mirror's doubled faces, one revealing the past and another the present, Richard appropriates the language of substance and shadow into an alternative, yet related, model of the doubled self: the expressive, visible body and the mute, invisible soul. By claiming "There lies the substance" in a gesture toward the "unseen" soul, Richard creates another epitaph that points to his interior self as a grave. If Bolingbroke has declared Richard's visual representation of ruined kingship inauthentic—too figurative to denote a real death—Richard responds by epitaphing his own soul, excavating inward to the "substance" and finding it, too, lying dead. He shares the Queen's funereally pregnant condition, bearing within a teeming death—a "grief / That swells with silence" (ll. 297–98) or what he will call in his final soliloquy "A generation of still-breeding thoughts" (5.5.8). Through this rhetorical gesture toward an entombed interior self, Richard invents a new memorial to objectify the nostalgic pathos of his lost kingship.⁵⁶ In the process, he again asserts himself as its only reader, creating through this, his most morbid self-representation, a future beyond his grave.

Given Richard's skillful production of future selves even at the height of morbid self-objectification, is it any wonder that the play must finally produce him in his coffin, as gratuitous as this spectacle may seem after his lurid onstage murder?⁵⁷ Might we not otherwise expect him to upstage the final scene with an epitaph over his own corpse? (Cue David Tennant [figure 3].)

⁵⁶ Reading the play in the context of influential Senecan notions of selfhood, Jonathan P. Lamb likewise concludes, contra Kantorowicz, that Richard's rhetorical division into multiple selves signals self-possession rather than fragmentation. See Lamb, "The Stylistic Self in *Richard II*," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 28 (2015): 123–51.

⁵⁷ On the display of Richard in his coffin in Shakespeare's play and Holinshed's *Chronicles*, see Jeremy Lopez, "Eating Richard II," *Shakespeare Studies* 36 (2008): 207–28, esp. 214–15.



Figure 3. *Richard II*, dir. Gregory Doran, RSC at the Barbican, 2016. Ref: 182188. Photo by Keith Pattison © RSC.

Richard's image aesthetics create a perpetual perspective for him, one that becomes legible when we expand the play's conceptual range to include the phenomenology of the photograph. These image aesthetics are particular to the character of Richard; in Shakespeare's body of work, their closest analogue may be the little container of the sonnet, in which the subject is fixed for perpetual viewing by a speakerly voice that strategically anticipates the eye of the reader. In Sonnet 55, for example, the speaker describes the addressee persisting beyond both the natural span of a life and the time-bound edifices of the grave and monument. But the nameless young man has, in fact, been lost to history, while the speaker of the poem is suspended in the perpetual present, inscribing his own postmortem survival by generating both a textual afterlife and an audience of "eyes" (l. 11) trained on his lines till doomsday. By capturing himself in poses of morbid fixity, Richard likewise recalls his own future stillness and enacts his aesthetic afterlife, an afterlife ensured by his perspective on his grave just as by every sonnet's, play's, or photograph's implicit beholder. Reading the play's inset, still images of Richard as gravesites where the future is constituted through the past can help us accommodate the notion of a double or multiple king to the play's local, embedded representational technologies. Viewed in these terms, the corporeal-temporal paradox of "The king is dead; long live the king" neatly articulates the mutually constitutive mechanisms of finality and futurity in Shakespeare's photographs of Richard II.