

Sydney Theatre Company and Sydney Festival in association with Perth International Festival  
present the STC Actors Company in

# The War of the Roses by William Shakespeare



## Teacher's Resource Kit

### Part One

written and compiled by Jeffrey Dawson

#### **Acknowledgements**

Thank you to the following for their invaluable material for these Teachers' Notes: Laura Scrivano, Publications Manager, STC; Tom Wright, Associate Director, STC

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***The War of the Roses***

by William Shakespeare

**Cast Act One**

King Richard II **Cate Blanchett**  
Henry Bolingbroke, later King Henry IV  
**Robert Menzies**  
John of Gaunt, uncle of King Richard II;  
father of Bolingbroke **John Gaden**  
Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk **Steve  
Le Marquand**  
Duchess of Gloucester, sister-in-law to  
Gaunt **Pamela Rabe**  
Earl of Northumberland **Peter Carroll**  
Queen Isabella, wife of King Richard II  
**Hayley McElhinney**  
Edmund, Duke of York, brother of Gaunt  
**John Gaden**  
An Attendant **Marta Dusseldorp**  
An Attendant **Amber McMahon**  
Exton **Brandon Burke**  
A Gardener **Peter Carroll**

**Cast Act Two**

King Henry IV **Robert Menzies**  
Prince Henry, later Henry V **Ewen Leslie**  
Falstaff **John Gaden**  
Earl of Northumberland **Peter Carroll**  
Henry Percy, known as Hotspur, **Luke  
Mullins**  
Son of Northumberland Prince Henry's  
Brother **Eden Falk**  
A Killer **Brandon Burke**  
A Killer **Steve Le Marquand**  
Katherine of France, later Henry V's  
Queen **Luke Mullins**  
Chorus 1 **Peter Carroll**  
Chorus 2 **John Gaden**  
Chorus 3 **Robert Menzies**

**Production Team**

**Director:** Benedict Andrews  
**Set Designer:** Robert Cousins  
**Costume Designer:** Alice Babidge  
**Lighting Designer:** Nick Schlieper  
**Composer and Sound Designer:** Max Lyandvert  
**Musician & Original Music** Stefan Gregory  
**Music Design, Act Two, Part One** Max  
Lyandvert, Benedict Andrews  
**Assistant Director** Tanya Goldberg  
**Assistant Lighting Designer** Chris Twyman  
**Voice and Text Coach** Charmian Gradwell  
**Crown by** Lisa Cooper (The Butcher's Daughter)  
**Production Manager** Simon Khamara  
**Stage Manager** Georgia Gilbert  
**Deputy Stage Manager** Phoebe Collier  
**Assistant Stage Manager** Jamie Twist  
**Assistant Stage Manager** Edwina Guinness  
**Hair, Makeup & Wardrobe Supervisor** Lauren  
A. Proietti  
**Wardrobe Assistant** Justine Haselton  
**Head Electrician** Graham Henstock  
**Sound System Designer and Mix Engineer** Adam  
Luston  
**Microphone Technician** Hazel Simpson  
**Production Photographer** Tania Kelley  
**Rehearsal Photographer** Brett Boardman

**FOR SYDNEY THEATRE**  
**Technical Manager** Kevin Sigley  
**Head Electrician** Andrew Tompkins  
**Head Mechanist** Steve Mason  
**Show Mechanist** Terence Hulme  
**Head Sound** Kevin White  
**Head Flyman** Will Perez Ronderos  
**Deputy Head Fly Operator** Jemima Flett  
**Theatre Technician/Operator** Sophie  
Kurylowicz

## Background Information on the Production

### Production & Plot Synopsis

To familiarise yourself with the story, read through the play synopsis below. Write down your initial response to the story, which you can reflect back on, after you have seen the play.

The War of the Roses was a series of civil wars fought in medieval England from 1455 to 1487 between the House of Lancaster and the House of York.

Shakespeare explores the events of these bloody wars across eight history plays: *Richard II*; *Henry IV, Part 1*; *Henry IV, Part 2*; *Henry V*; *Henry VI, Part 1*; *Henry VI, Part 2*; *Henry VI, Part 3*; and *Richard III*

***The War of the Roses*** is created as two discrete but cohesive parts which may be seen independently or together. It is recommended viewing Part 1 and Part 2 either on consecutive nights or on the same day. This landmark production is condensed to four distinct acts, performed in two parts.

Distilled down to seven hours of theatre by Tom Wright and Benedict Andrews, the eight plays that span the turbulent years of ***The War of the Roses*** are presented as a unique cycle by the STC Actors Company.

As Jo Litson informs us (*Sunday Telegraph*, Dec 28, 2008), “The production starts in an idyllic, golden realm ruled by weak celebrity King Richard II and moves inexorably to the charred country left after the brutal reign of the diabolical hunchback Richard III as England tears itself apart... Shakespeare’s eight history plays span a hundred years of turbulent English history.”

The audience experiences the splendour and melancholy of *Richard II* through to the barbarity and catastrophe of *Richard III*, via some of Shakespeare’s most startling and inspired creations: Richard II, Richard III, Hotspur, Falstaff and Henry V all fall into place in this vast cycle of plays.

***The War of the Roses*** examines what it means to rule, to enact war, to take power and to lose power. It is the story of the failure of a civilisation and its replacement with a new world order.

## **PART ONE, ACT ONE - corresponds to *Richard II*.**

### **Backstory**

King Edward III had four sons who are important to this saga. In order of birth they are: Edward, the Black Prince (heir to the throne); Lionel, the Duke of Clarence; John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster and Edmund, the Duke of York.

Prince Edward dies in battle, and Edward III dies shortly afterward causing the prince's son, Richard II, to become king, even though he's still a small child. His uncles, John of Gaunt (Lancaster) and later Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, run things until Richard II comes of age.

### **Synopsis**

Richard II rules England. His cousin Henry Bolingbroke is in dispute with Mowbray and they have brought their grievances before the King. Bolingbroke believes Mowbray has wasted the gold meant for paying the King's army. Mowbray is also implicated in the recent murder of the King's Uncle, the Duke of Gloucester. Mowbray denies all charges. With the assistance of his uncle (and Bolingbroke's father) John of Gaunt,

Richard attempts to calm the men, but they insist on a duel, to be held at a later date. The widow of the dead Gloucester upbraids Gaunt for not defending her husband. With formality the ritual of the tournament begins. But before the fighting can begin, Richard intervenes and sentences both men to banishment. Mowbray is expelled forever, Bolingbroke for six years. John of Gaunt dies, foreseeing the bankruptcy of England, and Richard seizes his property and wealth.

This angers Northumberland, who condemns the King for his wastefulness and tyranny. The exiled Bolingbroke is transformed by his father's death, and despite the entreaties of the Duke of York (another brother of Gaunt), he prepares to return to England, determined to claim what the King has stolen. In the face of invasion, rebellion and desertion, the King must face the shattering of his vision of what Kingliness is. He is eventually cornered and forced to abdicate. Bolingbroke not only claims his inheritance, but claims the throne as King Henry IV. Richard is imprisoned. After hearing King Henry's "living fear", one of his supporters, Exton, murders Richard. King Henry is mortified by the crime and vows to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to cleanse himself of his part in Richard's death.

## **PART ONE, ACT TWO corresponds to *Henry IV, Parts One and Two***

### **Backstory:**

Since Richard II died without any children, the legal line of succession should have gone to Lionel, the Duke of Clarence, who was the second son of Edward III. Lionel is already dead, but his grandchildren realise that they have a more rightful claim to the throne than Henry IV does. They also have powerful allies like Glendower and Hotspur, so they raise an army and go to war against Henry IV. Various other groups also rebel, but, with the help of his son, Prince Hal, Henry IV wins all the wars. He then dies of natural causes, and Prince Hal becomes King Henry V.

### **Synopsis**

Henry IV's reign is disturbed. His hope that a pilgrimage to Jerusalem would quell his unease over the circumstances whereby he gained the throne is thwarted by continuing warfare in Wales and Scotland.

Much of the heroism in these skirmishes is being displayed by Henry Percy, known as Hotspur, the son of Northumberland. Hotspur has captured several important Scots; the King wants him to hand them over. Hotspur however first wants the King to release Hotspur's uncle, Mortimer, who has been taken prisoner in Wales for rebellion. Henry is furious and refuses. He has made an enemy of Northumberland and Hotspur, who foment rebellion. In contrast to Hotspur's resolution, Henry's son, Prince Hal, is leading a dissolute life. He has taken up with Falstaff, an old soldier. The revolt brings him face to face with Hotspur, whom he fatally wounds. The crisis averted, Hal seems to return to his shady other life, and the King sickens and collapses. Hal comes to his unconscious father and believes himself to now be King. He takes the crown.

When the King wakes he thinks Hal cares only for power and has no love for his father. Hal returns and persuades the King otherwise. The King tells Hal to earn Kingship by focusing England on 'foreign quarrels'. Reconciled, Henry IV dies. Now King Henry V, Hal turns his back on his old friend Falstaff. He invades France, where he overwhelms the enemy and achieves greatness (marked by his command of language and heights of rhetoric). Having triumphed, he attempts to court the French Princess, using marriage as an act of reconciliation. There seems hope that England's ructions are likewise healed. But the Chorus informs the audience that Henry V will die young, and leave his infant son to be the new King.

See link: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,2478695315089,00.html> for Peter Craven's article, **"Sydney Theatre Company brings Shakespeare to life, writing history in the Bard's own words,"** in *The Australian*, December 12, 2008

## NOTES FROM THE REHEARSAL ROOM

*“So, when I spit the blood, should it be like a sudden spurt or should this one be like a splatter?”*

Rehearsal rooms are strange places; they can be banal, workmanlike and filled with repetition. Actors wander through scenes over and over under fluorescent lights. The rooms can get close, airless, and strangely oppressive. But they are also extraordinarily fascinating, particularly when the moments of banality come up against something weird and unearthly.

The rehearsals for *The War of the Roses* went for two months. Such is the scale of the project that sometimes scenes can only be rehearsed once a fortnight; the concentration required of cast, stage management, designers to remember and note their work is prodigious. But this is the STC Actors Company so they are seasoned at works of scale and the needs of rooms like this. I’m in a privileged position; I can come into this room and watch them work. They arrive and all change into crappy old clothes, for good reason; by the end of a session’s work most of their bodies are like a Pollock canvas, drenched in blood, dripping water, dusted in flour.

*“This is a very very very very simple murder. The knife should just slide into his ear. Slowly. No emotion.”*

The room has an enormous blackboard on one wall. On it Pamela Rabe (who’s playing Richard III) has drawn an elaborate family tree of the kings, queens, dukes, earls who make up this sprawling epic. Every character on stage over the eight hours is a cousin, wife, brother, aunt of someone else. The diagram is so complicated it folds in on itself, like a collapsing spider web. The plays are about history, but actually they feel like a vast family, a tribe, tearing itself apart, from the inside out.

The characters lie to each other, kill each other, and love each other, often soaring into some impossible poetic height. Then, the spell pops like a bubble, the rehearsal stops. There’s a problem over where a veil should be left. Or someone can’t see because the blood’s clogged their eyes. Or director Benedict Andrews wants a change, from something that seemed perfect already to some other form of perfection.

*“No, don’t recite it. Tell us. Make eye contact. Describe it.”*

And a speech that was a rarefied, exquisite wisp changes in an actors’ mouth into a report, a testimony. But it has lost none of its grandeur, none of its poetry.

*“..and just look at the crown. As if you’re seeing it for the first time: ‘What on earth is this band of gold?’”*

No-one can describe the whole of this production at the moment; the saga is too big. But it can be sensed. This isn’t an easy version of these plays. The truncated edit makes it hard work, but it also liberates it from, well, feeling like Shakespeare you’ve seen countless times before. It’s now a condensed quartet of poems about power and death. And at the end of a day’s work, actors shower and rinse the flour and viscera from their hair, and mull on their odd dreamlike other selves over a beer. And the Stage Managers scrub the blood and flour from the boards, so the whole bizarre rite can begin again tomorrow.

Actor Cate Blanchett, who is playing Richard II, has said of rehearsals for this production, "They're really great. It's a challenge because if you did Shakespeare's *War of the Roses* in its entirety, it'd be 40, 50 hours, and we've truncated it down to eight."

Written by Tom Wright

## SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORY PLAYS AS A GENRE

Traditionally, the plays of William Shakespeare have been grouped into three categories: tragedies, comedies, and histories. Some critics have argued for a fourth category, the romance. History plays are normally described as those based on the lives of English kings. The plays that depict older historical figures such as *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre*, *Julius Caesar*, and the legendary *King Lear* are not usually included in the classification. *Macbeth*, which is based on a Scottish king, is also normally regarded as a tragedy, not a history.

### Sources

The source for most of these plays is the well known Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicle of English History*. Shakespeare's plays focus on only a small part of the characters' lives and frequently omit significant events for dramatic purposes.

### Politics

Shakespeare was living under the reign of Elizabeth I, the last monarch of the house of Tudor, and his history plays are often regarded as Tudor propaganda because they show the dangers of civil war and celebrate the founders of the Tudor dynasty. In particular, *Richard III* depicts the last member of the rival house of York as an evil monster ("that bottled spider, that foul bunchback'd toad"), a depiction disputed by many modern historians, while portraying his usurper, Henry VII in glowing terms. Political bias is also clear in *Henry VIII*, which ends with an effusive celebration of the birth of Elizabeth. However, Shakespeare's celebration of Tudor order is less important in these plays than the spectacular decline of the medieval world. Moreover, some of Shakespeare's histories -- and notably *Richard III* - point out that this medieval world came to its end when opportunism and machiavelism [the supposed principles of Machiavelli, or practice in conformity to them; political artifice, intended to favor arbitrary power,] infiltrated its politics. By nostalgically evoking the late Middle Ages, these plays described the political and social evolution that had led to the actual methods of Tudor rule, so that it is possible to consider history plays as a biased criticism of their own society.

As co-adaptor Tom Wright points out about this production of *The War of the Roses* "shoe-horning eight Shakespeare plays into less than eight hours of theatre means that it is more accurate to speak of it as a piece of theatre that draws upon, quotes from, and comments upon, the plays, rather than anything even close to comprehensive!"

Students may wish to research the history of the performances of first teratology, second teratology and when the first cycle was performed in its entirety



Reference: "Women in Drama and Performance" in W.B. Worthen (ed.), *The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama*, Berkeley, California: Thomson Wadsworth 2004

p.213 Boy actors played a significant part in the experience of English theatre, for they played the parts of women and girls onstage, including major roles like Lady Macbeth, Ophelia and Cleopatra. Much as they did in classical Athens, "women" emerged onstage in Renaissance London only as a side-effect of masculine attitudes and performances.

In the English theatre, this cross-dressing came into special prominence, though, because the romantic, sexual and political intrigue so popular in Renaissance plays, was often focused on female characters and therefore on the performance of the boy actors. Indeed, the drama frequently uses cross-dressing as a way of interrogating the power and perquisites [something demanded or due as a particular privilege] of gender, in ways that sometimes confirm and sometimes question the role of gender in English society, which was an overtly hierarchical one, and despite the power of Elizabeth I, the "Virgin Queen," women had little access to education, most could not hold property, and that were generally subject to discrimination of many kinds.

In this social economy, and in a theatre in which Puritan opposition to the stage frequently criticised the theatre's "effeminacy," the absence of women from the stage became a powerful sign of their absence from other scenes of power. Much as sumptuary [designed to regulate extravagant expenditures or habits especially on moral or religious grounds] laws prevented individuals from wearing jewels and clothing above their social station, so too was cross-dressing a legal offense in sixteenth-century England, punishable by whipping and a prison sentence. The license of the theatre, the freedom to create magical new worlds on the stage, was, like other forms of power in the period, the prerogative of men, and the images that men created for the stage are in important ways imprinted with the signs of a specifically masculine imagination. As with all stage conventions, cross-dressing was deeply implicated in the values of the culture outside the theatre, so much so that when women did perform onstage in England – a French company used actresses at Blackfriars in 1629 – they met with hostility, ridicule and rejection.

Nonetheless, women not only attended the theatre, but a few aristocratic women, who often patronised poets and other artists, also wrote plays and sometimes performed in them at court. Queen Elizabeth is thought to have translated a passage from Seneca's *Hercules on Mount Oeta*, and other women similarly adapted or wrote plays.

Reference: Lenny Ann Low, "Bard to the bone" in *Spectrum* in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19-21 December 2008.

Andrews likens his stripping back [of 8 Shakespeare plays] approach to an archaeological dig. "In the beginning of the process you've got all these bones of this massive thing. They're spread out over a field and you're going through them and trying to identify them. 'O.K. this is the skull of this weird creature, this is the arm.' You're dusting them off and trying to get the crap off them, because there's a lot of crap on them. You want to keep them as bones but then you want the uranium inside the bones to start to radiate." *The War of the Roses* has many bones to radiate."

Its first act begins at the end of a golden age with Cate Blanchett playing the flawed beautiful poet king Richard II as he falls apart. At the end in a world that has become a killing field, waits the opposite. Richard III – a monster, a criminal and a king of death – played by Pamela Rabe.

"In two sittings of theatre, in one theatrical event, we see the development of a culture. A culture that begins in a kind of paradise and, through various kings, through the passage of a crown and four radically different notions of a bare stage, we see what it means to have power, what it means to try and return to a notion of paradise and what it means to feel an acceleration of violence into a total state of death."

Bareness, Andrews says, is the key to revealing these states. Bareness in the relationship between the actor, the director, the text and the audience. And bareness in staging....There are no elaborate sets, no elaborate military costumes or suits or false beards and wigs. There is a contemporary look to the production and the stage is stripped to its bare walls.

"It's a sparse beauty. That's how theatre can get you very, very close to an actor. On a bare stage a reality is made..." says director Andrews. "As Richard II, Blanchett is the king who has one of the greatest moments in Western theatre, the birth of an interiority in Western theatre. He demands a mirror on stage and looks in it and regards his face and the act is important. This is a very famous face, so there is a resonance between it. It's not why you do it but, of course, there's a resonance."

Reference: Benedict Andrews [BA] & Tom Wright [TW] at the **Subscriber Briefing** for this production, Monday Dec 22, 2008 at Wharf 2.

BA – Our production is a reading of the 8 plays, from various stages of Shakespeare’s career, representing their essences. We have tried to make a claim on them with an act of subtraction and condensation. *The War of the Roses* is four distinct poems or movements. It is an X-ray of the plays, a distilled poem. We want to make the bones [of the plays] radiate again. The production interrogates history – what sovereignty means. It has a new pitch and tone, a clean new trajectory.... They are a framed study of violence in a garden of death set in separate microcosms.

TW - *The War of the Roses* is a reduction of time and history. We see England, and Boswell Field in particular, as a dystopic garden, a fecund tub, like T.S. Eliot’s *Four Quartets*. It is about nature and dying.

Benedict and I have reduced 25 hours of Shakespeare’s history plays down to 8. It is a distillation that takes liberties. We have plotted a journey for the actors. The three Henry VI plays [Part 2, Act Three] were clearly written by a young Shakespeare, while the Henry IV plays [Part 1, Act Two] were written when he was a mature writer, and have a worldly wisdom about them. It’s all clearly Shakespeare but in different moods. Taken together, the plays form a sweeping, timeless, but harrowing examination of power, politics and violence.

BA – It is more than a narrative epic. There is no narrator. Shakespeare says, “Work, work your thoughts.”

TW – The casting of Cate Blanchett and Pamela Rabe as the two Richards isn’t making a political point about gender. It’s just finding the best actor for the best role.

The production deals with political power, ambition and failure. It shows a society which fails to look after itself and accommodate its own darkness.

## Reviews

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24917901-15089,00.html>

(John McCallum, “Blood flows freely in Bard history lesson,” in *The Australian*, Friday January 16, 2009)

See also Bryce Hallett’s review, “In the garden of gore and evil,”

[www.smh.com.au/news/entertainment/arts/arts-reviews/in-the-garden-of-gore-and-evil/2009/01/16/1231608939416.html](http://www.smh.com.au/news/entertainment/arts/arts-reviews/in-the-garden-of-gore-and-evil/2009/01/16/1231608939416.html) in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Friday January 16, 2009

Jason Blake’s review, “Epic does smell as sweet,” in *The Sun- Herald*, January 18, 2009

On-line reviews: Jack Teiwes on <[www.australianstage.com.au](http://www.australianstage.com.au)>

Diana Simmonds: <[www.stagenoise.com/reviewsdisplay.php?id=295](http://www.stagenoise.com/reviewsdisplay.php?id=295)>

The Set Design – Robert Cousins – four sets with the addition of various elements/motifs.

Director Benedict Andrews comments that the design of the production “strips the piece back to a bare stage, where an element is added for each act. This aids a process of sound, material and ideas.... There are 4 sets which are 4 distinct ways of staging violence.”

In this vast space, director Benedict Andrew's simple outward-facing groupings are easy to decipher. The audience sees gold - such a beautiful, evocative, mesmerising, cinematic effect - then blood, with flowers and ash to follow in subsequent acts. This fabulous use of motif perfectly supports the Director's concept of *The War of the Roses* as "an epic poem in 4 movements."

Part 1 – “*Richard II* represents a golden age, the end of an age of excess and decadence. It is set in an endemic garden, a kind of gilded landscape. Look at *The Wilton Diptych* portrait of Richard II which includes a gold section.” See Visual Arts question below. [Regarding the 'golden age, tells us at the outset of the play, Bolingbroke informs us “Many years of happy days befall

*Henry IV & Henry V* represent a world of men. The latter presents horrific slaughter in France.

*Richard III* represents a landscape of death, covered in ash. It is a hollow world – an end of an era. There is the union of the two houses at the end of the play.

The Costume Design – Alice Babidge – generic costumes

The actors wear basically the same, modern costume through the cycle, giving the production a cohesive look. Blood remains. This gives a focus and a pressure on the act of language, for, as critic Jason Blake has pointed out, “The costuming is mainly 21st-century suburban drab. This is human history written in blood and spit on the bodies of its victims.” (*The Sun-Herald*, 18/1/09) There is generally a limited, muted colour palette in the costumes which adds to the bleak world of the play. There is also a limited use of emblems in the play besides the “hollow” crown.

Actor Marta Dusseldorp says that, although the costumes are generic, “there are symbolic signposts such as crowns, tiaras and daggers to help the audience decipher the characters.” In contrast, Richard II appears particularly regal in white shirt and pants and shoes.

Diana Simmonds points out, “The Andrews-Wright adaptation of the plays takes us, in historical terms, through the century-and-a-bit of the deadly dynastic wrangles between the white rose of York and the red rose of Lancaster, with signifying buttonholes being replaced and ripped from breasts throughout. In Shakespearean terms, “real” history is put aside in favour of characters and dramatic licence.”

The Sound Design – Max Lyandvert – includes loud music, feedback and silence!

Andrews tells us the production is amplified. Some language is radically exposed with reverb provided by the acoustics of Sydney Theatre. It is like voices in a vast empty cathedral or cavern. This is particularly effective in Act One. In Act Two electric guitarist Stefan Gregory uses feedback to underscore the action in Harfleur. It acts as a pulse through most of the act. In the second installment, “the music whips the viciousness up into a partying lather,” according to *S.M.H.*'s theatre critic, Bryce Hallett.

Diana Simmonds accurately analyses the sound design by Max Lyandvert and Benedict Andrews in Act Two thus:

“The chief protagonist of the conflict is not the usual fight director or fencing instructor, but a guitarist! Stefan Gregory is at the rear of the stage, back to the audience, as he fiddles with a wah-wah pedal, a control box and otherwise communes mainly with a large amplifier. Muted incidental sounds and chords fill in a background wash of aural colour to the otherwise bare stage as the story unfolds to where battle commences. Then, the combatants slowly assemble, long knives drawn, circling in a stately if ominous dance as the guitar and feedback building to a roaring, screaming crescendo: yet another brilliant idea and spectacle.”

**Before seeing the production, explore these questions:**

1. Read the following extract from T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* entitled *Little Gidding*

I

(. . .)

If you came at night like a broken king,  
If you came by day not knowing what you came for,  
It would be the same, when you leave the rough  
road

And turn behind the pig-sty to the dull facade  
And the tombstone. And what you thought you  
came for

Is only a shell, a husk of meaning  
From which the purpose breaks only when it is  
fulfilled

If at all. Either you had no purpose  
Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured  
And is altered in fulfilment. There are other places  
Which also are the world's end, some at the sea  
jaws,

Or over a dark lake, in a desert or a city –  
But this is the nearest, in place and time,  
Now and in England.

If you came this way,  
Taking any route, starting from anywhere,  
At any time or at any season,  
It would always be the same: you would have to  
put off

Sense and notion. You are not here to verify,  
Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity  
Or carry report. You are here to kneel  
Where prayer has been valid. And prayer is more  
Than an order of words, the conscious occupation  
Of the praying mind, or the sound of the voice  
praying.

And what the dead had no speech for, when living,  
They can tell you, being dead: the communication  
Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the  
language  
of the living.

Here, the intersection of the timeless moment  
Is England and nowhere. Never and always.

III

(. . .)

This is the use of memory:  
For liberation—not less of love but expanding  
Of love beyond desire, and so liberation  
From the future as well as the past. Thus, love of a  
country  
Begins as attachment to our own field of action  
And comes to find that action of little importance  
Though never indifferent. History may be servitude,  
History may be freedom. See, now they vanish,  
The faces and places, with the self which, as it could,  
loved them,  
To become renewed, transfigured, in another  
pattern.

Sin is Behovely, but

All shall be well, and

All manner of thing shall be well.

If I think, again, of this place,  
And of people, not wholly commendable,

Of no immediate kin or kindness,

But of some peculiar genius,

All touched by a common genius,

United in the strife which divided them;

If I think of a king at nightfall,

Of three men, and more, on the scaffold

And a few who died forgotten

In other places, here and abroad,

And of one who died blind and quiet

Why should we celebrate

These dead men more than the dying?

It is not to ring the bell backward

Nor is it an incantation

To summon the spectre of a Rose.

We cannot revive old factions

We cannot restore old policies

Or follow an antique drum.

II

Ash on an old man's sleeve

Is all the ash the burnt roses leave.

Dust in the air suspended

Marks the place where a story ended.

Dust inbreathed was a house –

The walls, the wainscot and the mouse,

The death of hope and despair,

This is the death of air.

There are flood and drouth

Over the eyes and in the mouth,

Dead water and dead sand

Contending for the upper hand.

The parched eviscerate soil

Gapes at the vanity of toil,

Laughs without mirth.

This is the death of earth.

Water and fire succeed

The town, the pasture and the weed.

Water and fire deride

The sacrifice that we denied.

Water and fire shall rot

The marred foundations we forgot,

Of sanctuary and choir.

This is the death of water and fire.

(. . .)

These men, and those who opposed them

And those whom they opposed

Accept the constitution of silence

And are folded in a single party.

Whatever we inherit from the fortunate

We have taken from the defeated

What they had to leave us – a symbol:  
 A symbol perfected in death.  
 And all shall be well and  
 All manner of thing shall be well  
 By the purification of the motive  
 In the ground of our beseeching.  
 (. . . .)  
**V**  
 We shall not cease from exploration  
 And the end of all our exploring  
 Will be to arrive where we started  
 And know the place for the first time.  
 Through the unknown, unremembered gate  
 When the last of earth left to discover  
 Is that which was the beginning;

At the source of the longest river  
 The voice of the hidden waterfall  
 And the children in the apple-tree  
 Not known, because not looked for  
 But heard, half-heard, in the stillness  
 Between two waves of the sea.  
 Quick now, here, now, always –  
 A condition of complete simplicity  
 (Costing not less than everything)  
 And all shall be well and  
 All manner of thing shall be well  
 When the tongues of flame are in-folded  
 Into the crowned knot of fire  
 And the fire and the rose are one.

**Comment on the poem’s representation of power. Select quotes to support your views.**

**2. Research and Compare the attitudes toward women in the Elizabethan age – 400 years ago – and the way they are represented today.**

**3. Four portraits of Richard II [Cate Blanchett wearing a paper crown], a blood-splattered Prince Henry [Ewen Leslie], ash-covered Richmond [Luke Mullins] and a kohl-eyed Elizabeth [Amber McMahon] feature in the publicity campaign for the play. What can you tell about *The War of the Roses* from this STC poster image of four characters from the plays, emblazoned with a golden regal font?**

**5. Boy actors played female roles in Shakespeare’s time. What do you think of the director of this production’s decision to have Richard II and Richard III, played by female actors? And Katherine of France played by a male actor, Luke Mullins In *The War of the Roses*. and several smaller parts played by women.**

[See article by Elissa Blake, “Richard III, thy name is woman,” in *summer herald* in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Monday January 5, 2009]

**Extension Activities for students who are studying the plays/**

1. What does the title *The War of the Roses* tell you about the play?

Write a journal entry in which you reflect on your impressions of Richard II and the attitudes to war and the vanity of power and privilege you have seen in the text. (250 words)

What expectations do you have for Shakespeare’s history plays in production now you have read scenes from this adaptation?

2. Read the following extract by Foucault as it represents the context for this production. [Michel Foucault *Society Must Be Saved*– an analysis of power; deals with the history of the understanding of society and politics in regard to the model of warfare. 1976 lectures translated into English in 2003.]

If we look beneath peace, order, wealth and authority, beneath the calm order of subordinations, beneath the State and State apparatuses, beneath the laws and so on, will we hear and discover a sort of primitive and permanent war?...

When, how, and why did someone come up with the idea that it is a sort of uninterrupted battle that shapes peace, and that the civil order – its basis, its essence, its essential mechanisms – is basically an order of battle?

Who came up with the idea that the civil order is an order of battle [...] Who saw war just beneath the surface of peace; who sought in the noise and confusion of war, in the mud of battles, the principal that allows us to understand order, the State, its instructions, and its history?...

Who, basically, had the idea of inverting the Clausewitz's principle, and who thought of saying: "It is quite possible that war is the continuation of politics by other means, but isn't politics itself a continuation of war by other means?..."

No matter what philosophico-juridical theory may say, political power does not begin when war ends. The organisation and juridical structure of power, of States, monarchies and societies, does not emerge when the clash of arms ceases. War has not been averted. War obviously presided over the birth of States: right, peace, and laws were born in the blood and mud of battles. This should not be taken to mean the ideal battles and rivalries dreamed up by philosophers or jurists: we are not talking about some theoretical savagery. The law is not born of nature, and it was not born near the fountains that the first shepherds frequented: the law is born of real battles, victories, massacres, and conquests which can be dated and which have their horrific heroes; the law was born in burning towns and ravaged fields. It was born together with the famous innocents who died at break of day. Law is not pacification, for beneath the law, war continues to rage in all the mechanisms of power, even in the most regular. War is the motor behind institutions and order. In the smallest of its cogs, peace is waging a secret war. To put it another way, we have to interpret the war that is going on beneath peace; peace itself is a coded war. We are therefore at war with one another; a battlefield that puts us all on one side or the other. There is no such thing as a neutral subject. We are all inevitably someone's adversary...

There are two groups, two categories of individuals or two armies, and they are opposed to each other. And beneath the lapses of memory, the illusions, and the lies that would have us believe that there is a ternary order, a pyramid of subordinations, beneath the lies that would have us believe that the social body is governed by either natural necessities or functional demands, we must rediscover the war that is still going on, war with all its accidents and incidents. Why do we have to rediscover war? Well, because this ancient war is a [...] permanent war. We really do have to become experts on battles, because the war has not ended, because preparations are still being made for the decisive battles, and because we have to win the decisive battle...

So what is the principle that explains history?

First a series of brute facts, which might already be described as physico-biological facts: physical strength, force, energy, the proliferation of one race, the weakness of the other, and so on. A series of accidents, or at least contingencies: defeats, victories, the failure or success of rebellions, the failure or success of conspiracies of alliances; and finally, a bundle of psychological and moral elements (courage, fear, scorn, hatred, forgetfulness, etcetera). Intertwining bodies, passions and accidents: according to this discourse, that is what constitutes the permanent web of histories and societies. And something fragile and superficial will be built on top of this web of bodies, accidents, and passions, this seething mass which is sometimes murky and sometimes bloody: a growing rationality. The rationality



of calculations, strategies, and ruses; the rationality of technical procedures that are used to perpetuate the victory, to silence, or so it would seem, the war, and to preserve or invert the relationship of force. This is, then, a rationality which, as we move upward and as it develops, will basically be more and more abstract, more and more bound up with the cunning and wickedness of those who have won a temporary victory...

We have an axis based upon a fundamental and permanent irrationality, a crude and naked irrationality, but which proclaims the truth; and, higher up, we have a fragile rationality, a transitory rationality which is always compromised and bound up with illusion and wickedness. Reason is on the side of wild dreams, cunning, and the wicked. At the opposite end of the axis, you have an elementary brutality: a collection of deeds, acts, and passions, and cynical rage in all its nudity. Truth is therefore on the side of unreason and brutality: reason, on the other hand, is on the side of wild dreams and wickedness...

History is the discourse of power, the discourse of the obligations power uses to subjugate; it is also the dazzling discourse that power uses to fascinate, terrorise, and immobilise. In a word, power both binds and immobilises, and is both the founder and guarantor of order; and history is precisely the discourse that intensifies and makes more efficacious the twin functions that guarantee order. In general terms, we can therefore say that until a very late stage in our society, history was the history of sovereignty, or a history that was deployed in the dimension and function of sovereignty...

The role of history will, then be to show that laws deceive, that kings wear masks, that power creates illusions and that historians tell lies.

This will not, then, be a history of continuity, but a history of deciphering, the detection of the secret, the outwitting of the ruse, and the reappropriation of a knowledge that has been distorted or buried. It will decipher a truth that has been sealed...

**Shakespeare's "historical" tragedies are tragedies about right and the king, and they are essentially centred on the problem of the usurper and dethronement, of the murder of kings and the birth of the new being who is constituted by the coronation of a king. How can an individual use violence, intrigue, murder, and war to acquire a public might that can bring about the reign of peace, justice, order and happiness? How can illegitimacy produce law?**

**At a time when the theory and history of right are trying to weave the unbroken continuity of public might, Shakespearean tragedy, in contrast, dwells on the wound, on the repeated injury that is inflicted on the body of the kingdom when kings die violent deaths and when illegitimate sovereigns come to the throne. I think that Shakespearean tragedy is, at least in terms of one of its axes, a sort of ceremony, a sort of rememorialisation of the problems of public right...**

The court's essential function is to constitute, to organise, a space for the daily and permanent display of royal power in all its splendor. The court is basically a kind of permanent ritual operation that begins again every day and requalifies a man who gets up, goes for a walk, eats, has his loves and his passions, and who is at the same time – thanks to all that, because of all that, and because none of all that is eliminated – a sovereign, The specific operation of court ritual and court ceremonial is to make his love affairs sovereign, to make his food sovereign, to make his levee and his going-to-bed ritual sovereign. And while the court constantly requalifies his daily routine as sovereign in the person of a monarch who is the very substance of monarchy, tragedy does the same thing in reverse; tragedy undoes and, if you like, recomposes what court ritual establishes each day...

...The point of classical tragedy...is to constitute the underside of ceremony, to show the ceremony in shreds, the moment when the sovereign, the possessor of public might, is gradually broken down into a man of passion, a man of anger, a man of vengeance, a man of love, incest, and so on. In tragedy the problem is whether or not starting from this decomposition of the sovereign into a man of passion, the sovereign king can be reborn and recomposed: the death and resurrection of the body of the king in the heart of the monarch.

...In the classical theory of sovereignty, the right of life and death was one of the sovereignty's basic attributes. Now the right of life and death is a strange right. What does having the right of life and death actually mean?

In one sense, to say that the sovereign has a right of life and death means that he can, basically, either have people put to death or let them live, or in any case that life and death are not natural or immediate phenomena which are primary or radical, and which fall outside the field of power. If we take the argument a little further, or to the point where it becomes paradoxical, it means that in terms of his relationship with the sovereign, the subject is, by rights, neither dead nor alive. From the point of view of life and death, the subject is neutral, and it is thanks to the sovereign that the subject has the right to be alive or, possibly, the right to be dead. In any case, the lives and deaths of subjects become rights only as a result of the will of the sovereign.

What does the right to life and death actually mean?

Obviously not that the sovereign can grant life in the same way he can inflict death. The right of life and death is always exercised in an unbalanced way: the balance is always tipped in favour of death. Sovereign power's effect on life is exercised only when the sovereign can kill. The very essence of the right of life and death is actually the right to kill: it is at the moment when the sovereign can kill that he exercises his right over life. It is essentially the right of the sword. So there is no real symmetry in the right over life and death. It is not the right to put people to death or to grant them life. Nor is it the right to allow people to live or to leave them to die. It is the right to take life or let live. And this obviously introduces a startling dissymmetry.

And I think that one of the greatest transformations political right underwent in the nineteenth century was precisely that, I wouldn't say exactly that sovereignty's old right – to take life or let live – was replaced, but it came to be complemented by a new right which does not erase the old right but which does penetrate it, permeate it. This is the right, or rather precisely the opposite right. It is the power to "make" live and "let" die. The right of sovereignty was the right to take life or let live. And then this new right is established: the right to make live and to let die.

After the anatomo-politics of the human body established in the course of the eighteenth century, we have, at the end of that century, the emergence of something that is no longer an anatomo-politics of the human body, but what I would call a "biopolitics" of the human race."

3. Look over some of the Elizabethan language in the plays and look up their meanings before you see ***The War of the Roses***.

4. ***The War of the Roses*** condenses eight of Shakespeare's history plays. With a partner, write a brief summary of the plot (story line). You may choose to use bullet points for this if you wish. Do not use more than 1 page for this.

Discuss the following questions about Part 1:

- a. How would you describe Richard II's character at the beginning of the play?
- b. How would you describe his character at the end of the play [i.e. end of Act One]?

For each question find a quotation to support your point.

- c. What is your opinion of Bolingbroke?
- d. What do you think was Shakespeare's attitude to war, according to his characterisation of Prince Hal/Henry V?

5. Read the following text by Karl Marx, the father of Socialism, and apply it to what you know of Shakespeare's history plays: *The Eighteenth Brumaire Of Louis Bonaparte*, 1852.

**Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please, they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. And just as they seem to be occupied with revolutionizing themselves and things, creating something that did not exist before, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service, borrowing from them names, battle slogans, and costumes in order to present this new scene in world history in time-honoured disguise and borrowed language.** Thus Luther put on the mask of the Apostle Paul, the Revolution of 1789–1814 draped itself alternately in the guise of the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire, and the Revolution of 1848 knew nothing better to do than to parody, now 1789, now the revolutionary tradition of 1793–95. In like manner, the beginner who has learned a new language always translates it back into his mother tongue, but he assimilates the spirit of the new language and expresses himself freely in it only when he moves in it without recalling the old and when he forgets his native tongues... Thus the awakening of the dead in those revolutions served the purpose of glorifying the new struggles, not of parodying the old, of magnifying the given task in the imagination, not recoiling from its solution in reality, of finding once more the spirit of revolution, not making its ghost walk again.

**After seeing the production, explore these questions:**

**Questions for students who hadn't read the plays**

1. Represent what you consider to be the main theme of the play in any form/medium you wish. Some possibilities: the nature of leadership and political power, the abdication of responsibility, ambition, failure and as critic Bryce Hallett points out, "lessons being perilously ignored."
2. *Direction* – What do you think was the vision of the director and his interpretation of the plays? (The role of the director of a theatrical production not only includes finding the best actors for the play, creating truthful and believable performances, and building an effective ensemble, but also defining a particular vision for the text.)
3. *Set Design* - What mood does the set evoke from the out-set of the play? How does this alter at different times in the production?
4. *Lighting Design* - How does lighting contribute to the mood of the scenes? What effect do these lighting states achieve? List some that were used.
5. *Sound Design* How do music and other sound design elements, such as the use of feedback in Act Two, contribute to the production?

**Activity**

1. Select a monologue to be memorised and performed for the class. Read through it very carefully. Seek clarification on any parts of the speech you do not understand.

Rewrite your monologue in modern language.

Create a mind map about your character. Show what you know about your character's personality, background, beliefs and attitudes, appearance etc.

Design a costume for your character. Label your diagram clearly and provide explanations for your choices. Provide a swatch of fabric for your costume and attach it to your design.

Rehearse your monologue. Decide how you are going to move, use the space, incorporate body language, voice, props etc.

Perform the monologue for the class.

2. Discuss the impact the actor doublings/triplings had on the audience's experience of the play.

## Activity

Act One, p.14 onwards

Look at John of Gaunt's speech following. What does it say about England under Richard II's reign?

JOHN OF GAUNT

Methinks I am a prophet new inspired  
And thus expiring do foretell of him:  
His rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last,  
For violent fires soon burn out themselves;  
Small showers last long, but sudden storms are short;  
He tires betimes that spurs too fast betimes;  
With eager feeding food doth choke the feeder:  
Light vanity, insatiate cormorant,  
Consuming means, soon preys upon itself.  
This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,  
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,  
This other Eden, demi-paradise,  
This fortress built by Nature for herself  
Against infection and the hand of war,  
This happy breed of men, this little world,  
This precious stone set in the silver sea,  
Which serves it in the office of a wall,  
Or as a moat defensive to a house,  
Against the envy of less happier lands,  
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,  
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,  
Fear'd by their breed and famous by their birth,  
Renowned for their deeds as far from home,  
For Christian service and true chivalry,  
As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry,  
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's Son,  
This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,  
Dear for her reputation through the world,  
Is now leased out, I die pronouncing it,  
Like to a tenement or pelting farm:  
England, bound in with the triumphant sea  
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege  
Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,  
With inky blots and rotten parchment bonds:  
That England, that was wont to conquer others,  
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.  
Ah, would the scandal vanish with my life,  
How happy then were my ensuing death!"

KING RICHARD II

What comfort, man? how is't with aged Gaunt?

JOHN OF GAUNT

O how that name befits my composition!  
Old Gaunt indeed, and gaunt in being old:

Within me grief hath kept a tedious fast;  
And who abstains from meat that is not gaunt?  
For sleeping England long time have I watch'd;  
Watching breeds leanness, leanness is all gaunt:  
The pleasure that some fathers feed upon,  
Is my strict fast; I mean, my children's looks;  
And therein fasting, hast thou made me gaunt:  
Gaunt am I for the grave, gaunt as a grave,  
Whose hollow womb inherits nought but bones.

KING RICHARD II

Can sick men play so nicely with their names?

JOHN OF GAUNT

No, misery makes sport to mock itself:  
Since thou dost seek to kill my name in me,  
I mock my name, great king, to flatter thee.

KING RICHARD II

Should dying men flatter with those that live?

JOHN OF GAUNT

No, no, men living flatter those that die.

KING RICHARD II

Thou, now a-dying, say'st thou flatterest me.

JOHN OF GAUNT

O, no! thou diest, though I the sicker be.

KING RICHARD II

I am in health, I breathe, and see thee ill.

JOHN OF GAUNT

Now He that made me knows I see thee ill;  
Ill in myself to see, and in thee seeing ill.  
Thy death-bed is no lesser than thy land  
Wherein thou liest in reputation sick;  
And thou, too careless patient as thou art,  
Commit'st thy anointed body to the cure  
Of those physicians that first wounded thee:  
A thousand flatterers sit within thy crown,  
Whose compass is no bigger than thy head;  
And yet, incaged in so small a verge,  
The waste is no whit lesser than thy land.  
O, had thy grandsire with a prophet's eye  
Seen how his son's son should destroy his sons,  
From forth thy reach he would have laid thy shame,  
Deposing thee before thou wert possess'd,  
Which art possess'd now to depose thyself.  
Why, cousin, wert thou regent of the world,  
It were a shame to let this land by lease;  
But for thy world enjoying but this land,

Is it not more than shame to shame it so?  
Landlord of England art thou now, not king:  
Thy state of law is bondsman to the law; And thou--  
KING RICHARD II  
A lunatic lean-witted fool,  
Presuming on an ague's privilege,  
Darest with thy frozen admonition  
Make pale our cheek, chasing the royal blood  
With fury from his native residence.  
Now, by my seat's right royal majesty,  
Wert thou not brother to great Edward's son,  
This tongue that runs so roundly in thy head  
Should run thy head from thy unreverent shoulders.

JOHN OF GAUNT  
O, spare me not, my brother Edward's son,  
For that I was his father Edward's son;  
That blood already, like the pelican,  
Hast thou tapp'd out and drunkenly caroused:  
My brother Gloucester, plain well-meaning soul,  
Whom fair befal in heaven 'mongst happy souls!  
May be a precedent and witness good  
That thou respect'st not spilling Edward's blood:  
Join with the present sickness that I have;  
And thy unkindness be like crooked age,  
To crop at once a too long wither'd flower.  
Live in thy shame, but die not shame with thee!  
These words hereafter thy tormentors be!

KING RICHARD II  
The ripest fruit first falls, and so doth he;  
His time is spent, our pilgrimage must be.  
So much for that.  
Towards our assistance we do seize to us  
The plate, corn, revenues and moveables,  
Whereof our uncle Gaunt did stand possess'd.  
Think what you will, we seize into our hands  
His plate, his goods, his money and his lands.

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Individually write in the stage directions (non-existent in Shakespeare's day) for Richard's and Gaunt's actions here. We next learn that Northumberland then dies here and his son Bolingbroke is now duke.

As a group, decide whose stage directions work best and prepare a presentation for the class.

## TEXT

Benedict Andrews & Tom Wright, *The War of the Roses unpublished*

For excellent contextual information on Shakespeare's plays, see the following articles in the STC program for this production, edited by Laura Scrivano – Foucault; T.S. Eliot's "Little Gidding" from *Four Quartets*; "The Eighteenth Brumaire Of Louis Bonaparte" by Karl Marx, 1852 and Huw Griffiths on "Wars without End".

T S Eliot's *Four Quartets* (especially "Little Gidding") acts as a concomitant text in many ways. See the theatre program for the production.

Marilyn French, *Shakespeare's Division of Experience* Abacus, London 1981 – see p.p. 327-328 about Shakespeare's examination of power, authority, justice and particularly about the legitimacy of leadership.

Germaine Greer *Shakespeare's Wife*

E. M. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays*, Middlesex: Penguin Shakespeare Library, 1969 edition – includes Cosmic Background, Historical Context, Literary Background, The First and Second Tetralogy

### ***The Elizabethan World Picture***

The book that was most instrumental in regards to this production (particularly R2) was *The King's Two Bodies – A Study in Medieval Political Theology* by Ernst Kantorowicz.

This text, published

in 1957, has been the guide for generations of scholars through the arcane mysteries of medieval political theology. In *The King's Two Bodies*, Kantorowicz traces the historical problem posed by the "King's two bodies"--the body politic and the body natural - back to the Middle Ages and demonstrates, by placing the concept in its proper setting of medieval thought and political theory, how the early-modern Western monarchies gradually began to develop a "political theology."

The king's natural body has physical attributes, suffers, and dies, naturally, as do all humans; but the king's other body, the spiritual body, transcends the earthly and serves as a symbol of his office as majesty with the divine right to rule. The notion of the two bodies allowed for the continuity of monarchy even when the monarch died, as summed up in the formulation "The king is dead. Long live the king."

Bringing together liturgical works, images, and polemical material, *The King's Two Bodies* explores the long Christian past behind this "political theology." It provides a subtle history of how commonwealths developed symbolic means for establishing their sovereignty and, with such means, began to establish early forms of the nation-state.

Kantorowicz fled Nazi Germany in 1938, after refusing to sign a Nazi loyalty oath, and settled in the United States. While teaching at the University of California, Berkeley, he once again refused to sign an oath of allegiance, this one designed to identify Communist Party sympathizers. He resigned as a result of the controversy and moved to the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, where he remained for the rest of his life, and where he wrote *The King's Two Bodies*.



Hans-Thies Lehmann's ***Post-Dramatic Theory*** (2006) is a good survey of the sort of field from which productions like this emerge. Lehmann's groundbreaking study of the new theatre forms that have developed since the late 1960s, has become a key reference point in international discussions of contemporary theatre. "Post-dramatic Theatre" refers to theatre after drama. Despite their diversity, the new forms and aesthetics that have evolved have one essential quality in common: they no longer focus on the dramatic text.

Lehmann offers a historical survey combined with a unique theoretical approach, illustrated by a wealth of practical examples, to guide the reader through this new theatre landscape. He considers these developments in relation to dramatic theory and theatre history, and as an inventive response to the emergence of new technologies and a historical shift from a text-based culture to a new media age of image and sound. Engaging with theoreticians of "drama" from Aristotle and Brecht to Derrida and Schechner, the book analyses the work of recent experimental theatre practitioners such as Robert Wilson, Tadeusz Kantor, Heiner Müller, the Wooster Group, Forced Entertainment, Theatre de Complicite and Societas Raffaello Sanzio.

Michel Foucault ***Society Must Be Saved*** – an analysis of power; deals with the history of the understanding of society and politics in regard to the model of warfare. 1976 lectures translated into English in 2003.

### **Filmography**

Co-adaptor Tom Wright says the following about films which provide a context for this production of ***The War of the Roses***:

Obliquely, films such as Lars von Trier's *Dogville* (2003), the flamenco films of Carlos Saura (for the creation of a room – see *Flamenco* or *Carmen* ), Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker* (for the relationship of architecture to the body and private rituals), David Lynch films (for the acting style – *Mulholland Drive*, *Blue Velvet*), Derek Jarman's *Edward II* (for the setting) all could be seen to comment on this production.

Regarding *Dogville* - set in an American town in the Rocky Mountains in the 1930s. Lars von Trier re-explores the concept of goodness. *Dogville* is shot exclusively in studio with a minimum of props allowing the actors' maximum freedom and full exposure inspired by televised theatre of the 70s. In this film, featuring Nicole Kidman, von Trier works extensively with light and sound to obtain and heighten dramatic atmosphere. Sets are mapped out theatrically in chalk, like a rehearsal room.

Regarding *Stalker* (1979): Near a grey and unnamed city is the Zone, an alien place guarded by barbed wire and soldiers. Over his wife's numerous objections, a man rises in the dead of night: he's a stalker, one of a handful who have the mental gifts (and who risk imprisonment) to lead people into the Zone to the Room, a place where one's secret hopes come true. That night, he takes two people into the Zone: a popular writer who is burned out, cynical, and questioning his genius; and a quiet scientist more concerned about his knapsack than the journey. In the deserted Zone, the approach to the Room must be indirect. As they draw near, the rules seem to change and the stalker faces a crisis.

Regarding Jarman's film version (1991) of Christopher Marlowe's Elizabethan drama in modern costumes and settings, Plantagenet king Edward II hands the power-craving nobility the perfect excuse by taking as lover besides his diplomatic wife, the French princess Isabel,

not an acceptable lady at court but the ambitious Piers Gaveston, who uses his favour in bed even to wield political influence - the stage is set for a palace revolt which sends the gay pair from the throne to a terminal torture dungeon.

**Films which this production might be seen to be reacting against** include any of the Branagh Shakespeares [*Henry V* (1989), *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Much Ado About Nothing* etc.] or Richard Loncraine's *Richard III* (1995) - This film adaptation is set into a hypothetical 1930's Europe. As sneering, leering Richard of Gloucester's ruthless machinations bring him ever nearer to the throne of England, royal blood is mercilessly spilt. Finally, only one foe remains to challenge his grasping claim - valiant Richmond! Will he prevail? Heavy Nazi-like pageantry and iconography colour this modern adaptation, featuring Ian McKellen in the title role.

### **Web Sites**

<<[www.sydneytheatre.com.au](http://www.sydneytheatre.com.au)>> - Sydney Theatre Company

You can also send us your feedback on the productions you have seen, e-mail our archivist for specific information you may be searching for or check the date and time of a performance.

<< [www.geocities.com/yvain.geo/shakhist.html](http://www.geocities.com/yvain.geo/shakhist.html) >> - Family Tree for Shakespeare's History Plays - consists of a color-coded family tree for the characters in Shakespeare's nine history plays. Shows the family relationships between the Yorks, Lancasters etc.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION – about **Part Two** which is not part of the Schoolsday but can be seen separately

## **PART TWO, ACT ONE**

### *House of Lancaster*

King Henry VI, son of Henry V **Eden Falk**

Margaret of Anjou, later Queen **Marta Dusseldorp**

Edward, Prince of Wales, son of Henry VI and Margaret **Louis Hunter**

Suffolk **Steve Le Marquand**

Clifford **Luke Mullins**

### *House of York*

Richard, Duke of York, grandson of Edmund, Duke of York **John Gaden**

Edward, son of York, later Edward IV **Brandon Burke**

Richard of Gloucester, son of York **Pamela Rabe**

George of Clarence, son of York **Ewen Leslie**

Edmund of Rutland, son of York **Hayley McElhinney**

Elizabeth, later Edward IV's Queen **Amber McMahon**

Gloucester the Protector, brother of Henry V **Peter Carroll**

Earl of Warwick **Emily Russell**

A Father Who Killed His Son **Robert Menzies**

A Son Who Killed His Father **Luke Mullins**

With the early death of Henry V, his baby son becomes King Henry VI. Henry V's brother the Duke of Gloucester, is appointed Protector, but he cannot prevent the Kingdom being disrupted by the rivalry of two factions of the royal family; the followers of the Duke of York and the supporters of the infant King. The two sides meet in a garden, where they declare their loyalties by plucking roses; red for Lancaster, white for York.

An ambitious member of the Lancastrian faction, the Earl of Suffolk, captures a French Princess, Margaret of Anjou. He pressures the young King into marrying her, so he can wield power. Gloucester the Protector is enraged by the marriage; it diminishes his power. The new Queen rapidly establishes herself as the real power, and she and Suffolk conspire with the Yorkists to depose and murder the Protector. Meanwhile the Yorkists' leader, Richard, Duke of York, claims the throne based on complicated genealogical arguments. The Queen cannot protect Suffolk and he is banished, then subsequently assassinated by York's agents. York also stirs up a wild army officer, Jack Cade, who raises a popular revolt and marches on London. Margaret's forces subdue the uprising, supported by a Lancastrian, Clifford, who hates York for the murder of his father. York arms himself against the King, supported by his four sons: Edward, (later Edward IV), George of Clarence, Richard of Gloucester (later Richard III) and the Earl of Rutland. All-out civil war erupts. York corners Henry VI, who tries to deal his way out of the crisis by offering to make York his heir. This infuriates his wife, his (now disinherited) young son the Prince of Wales, and his supporters, and they refuse to condone the deal. More internecine struggles erupt, and Margaret's side begins to prevail. Clifford traps and kills York's youngest child, Rutland. York himself is caught and taunted before being murdered. Clifford is in turn killed. In the confusion Edward proclaims himself King Edward IV. The kingdom has two Kings. Edward presses on and defeats Margaret at Tewkesbury. The young Prince of Wales is killed by the Sons of York. Richard takes it upon himself to murder Henry VI, who has been imprisoned. Margaret is banished. Edward IV and his 'painted queen' Elizabeth begin their reign; the Yorkists have prevailed.

## **PART TWO, ACT TWO**

Richard of Gloucester, later Richard III **Pamela Rabe**

Lady Anne, widow of Edward Prince of Wales **Cate Blanchett**

Duke of Buckingham, a kinsman of Richard III **Robert Menzies**

Queen Elizabeth **Amber McMahon**

George of Clarence, brother to Richard III **Ewen Leslie**

Margaret, former Queen **Marta Dusseldorp**

Duchess of York, mother to Richard III **Emily Russell**

Brakenbury **Peter Carroll**

Hastings **John Gaden**

A Murderer **Steve Le Marquand**

A Murderer **Brandon Burke**

Tyrell **Brandon Burke**

Earl of Richmond, kinsman to the late Henry VI **Luke Mullins**

Young Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV **Hayley McElhinney**

Young Margaret Plantagenet, daughter of George of Clarence **Holly Fraser**

Young Prince Edward, later Edward V, son of Edward IV **Billy Shaw-Voysey/**

**Narek Armaganian**

Young Richard of York, son of Edward IV **Leo Shaw-Voysey/**

**Michael Kilbane**

Ghost of Henry VI **Eden Falk**

Ghost of Edward Prince of Wales **Louis Hunter**

Richard reveals his ambition; despite the House of York's triumph he aspires to be King and will remove all impediments. He spreads rumours which lead to the arrest of his brother Clarence, and he woos Anne, the widow of the young Prince of Wales murdered in the previous Act. The king is clearly ailing, and Clarence has heirs, so Richard moves quickly, organising Clarence's murder. Queen Margaret returns in defiance of her expulsion and prophesises of the coming darkness. As a Lancastrian, she is ignored. Edward IV dies, leaving his little sons as his heirs. Richard becomes their Protector. He keeps them out of sight, and aided by his cousin Buckingham he assumes the throne. Anyone who speaks up against him is murdered. Buckingham spreads rumours that the two Princes are illegitimate, and Richard is proclaimed King. Newly crowned, Richard asks his friend to dispose of the boys, but Buckingham hesitates. Instead Richard pays Tyrell to organise the murder of the princes. Buckingham's failure, and his increasing demands, cause Richard to turn on him. Buckingham flees. Meanwhile Richard's wife Anne dies in despair. Increasingly paranoid, he tries to marry his niece but her mother prevents this; she has learned from Margaret how to resist his eloquence. His fears are proved correct when the kingdom falls into chaos again. Buckingham is captured and executed, but it is too late. Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, invades. Richard prepares for a final battle at Bosworth Field. On the eve of the confrontation, he is visited by the ghosts of his victims. The following day Richmond finds Richard and kills him. Richmond is a distant relative of the Lancastrians, the red rose has finally won. But he marries Edward IV's daughter, uniting the Houses. He becomes Henry VII.