

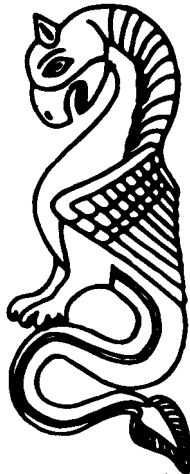
Leeds Studies in English

Article:

Charles Barber, "'You" and "Thou" in Shakespeare's Richard III',
Leeds Studies in English, n.s. 12 (1981), 273-89

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"YOU" AND "THOU" IN SHAKESPEARE'S *RICHARD III*

By CHARLES BARBER

In her study of the second-person pronouns in Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing* and *King Lear*, Joan Mulholland finds no evidence in those plays to support the common view that members of the lower classes use *thou* to one another in the singular.¹ This is not true of *Richard III*, in which the only obviously lower-class characters in the play, the two men who murder Clarence, regularly address one another as *thou*. It will therefore be convenient to begin by examining the scene of Clarence's murder (I.4). Besides considering *you* and *thou*, I shall take into account the variant *ye*, the oblique form *thee*, the possessive forms *yours* and *thine*, the intensive and reflexive pronouns *yourself* and *thysself*, and the determiners *your*, *thine*, and *thy*. The justification for this is that these forms all pattern in the same way: if, in a speech or extended passage, one character regularly addresses another as *thou*, he will normally also select *thee*, *thine*, *thy*, and *thysself*. For convenience, I shall use *You* and *Thou* (with upper-case initials) to denote entire groups of forms: when I say that, in a given speech, a character uses *Thou*, I shall mean that he uses one or more of *thou*, *thee*, *thine*, *thy*, and *thysself*. Similarly, *You* means one or more of *you*, *ye*, *yours*, *your*, and *yourself*.

In the scene of Clarence's murder, the characters are of widely disparate rank. Clarence is a royal duke, brother to the King. Brakenbury is a knight, and an important royal official (Lieutenant of the Tower); he is therefore of high status, but nevertheless of much lower rank than Clarence, since he is not even a member of the nobility. The Keeper is of indeterminate status; he is obviously of much lower rank than Clarence, but presumably at least a gentleman: the King's brother, even when in prison, would hardly have a plebeian as his custodian. In the First Quarto of 1597 (followed by Q2-Q8), the character of the Keeper does not exist: his lines are given to Brakenbury. Not until the First Folio of 1623 does the Keeper appear. The fact that the Keeper's lines can equally well be spoken by Brakenbury supports the assumption that he is of gentle status. The two Murderers are obviously plebeians; this can be seen from their own mode of speech, and also from the way in which others address them - *mates* (I.3.339), *lads* (I.3.353), *fellow* (I.4.85). In the standard Elizabethan four-class scheme, they belong to the bottom group (artisans and labourers);² since, despite their low status, they carry swords (I.4.155), the obvious way to play them is as common soldiers. It is notable that the Murderers are the only characters in the play to use prose: even the London citizens in II.3 speak in verse. Even the Murderers speak prose in only one

passage, from their entry in the middle of II.4 to the point where Clarence wakes up; when they engage in conversation with persons of exalted rank (Richard at the end of I.3, Clarence in the second half of I.4) they use verse. Their use of prose when they converse with one another is a mark of their low social status.

In the first part of I.4, Clarence tells the Keeper about his ominous dream. As can be expected in view of Clarence's exalted rank, the Keeper invariably uses *You* to him. It will be noticed, moreover, that the *You* collocates with respectful vocative expressions:³

What was *your* dream *my Lord*, I pray *you* tel me
(I.4.8)

No maruell *Lord*, though it affrighted *you*
(I.4.64)

I will *my Lord*, God giue *your Grace* good rest
(I.4.75)

Not until the end of this dream-passage does Clarence use a second-person pronoun to the Keeper, and then it is *Thou* (*F1 I prythee, Q1 I pray thee*) (I.4.73). Later in the scene, Clarence again uses *Thou* when he wakes and calls to the Keeper to bring him a cup of wine (I.4.161). This is the social use of *Thou*, the natural mode of address from a prince to somebody of much lower status. The only other examples of second-person pronouns in the opening part of the scene occur in Clarence's prayer, in which (in accordance with the invariable custom of the time) he addresses God as *Thou* (I.4.69-72).

There follows a bridge-passage in which Brakenbury meditates on the vanity of princely glory (thus giving Clarence time to go to sleep), and then the two Murderers enter. Brakenbury immediately addresses the First Murderer as *Thou*:

What would'st *thou Fellow*? And how camm'st *thou* hither.
(I.4.85)

The *Thou* collocates with the patronizing vocative *Fellow*: Brakenbury immediately places the Murderer socially, presumably because of his clothes and his accent.⁴ The First Murderer is cocky with Brakenbury, but nevertheless maintains the proprieties by addressing him as *You*, collocating with the polite vocative *sir* (I.4.98-99). After reading the Murderers' commission, Brakenbury says:

I am in this, commanded to deliuer
The Noble Duke of Clarence to *your* hands.
I will not reason what is meant heereby,
Because I will be guiltlesse from the meaning.
There lies the Duke asleepe, and there the Keyes.
Ile to the King, and signifie to him,
That thus I haue resign'd to *you* my charge.
(I.4.91-97)

The switch to *You* does not indicate any change in Brakenbury's attitude: it is simply that he is using the plural. The commission commands him to hand over Clarence to the two Murderers, and he will resign his charge to both of them. It has never been possible to use *Thou* as a plural; in the singular there is a choice between *You* and *Thou*, but in the plural *You* is compulsory.

Brakenbury goes off, and there follows a dialogue between the Murderers, in which they invariably address each other as *Thou*. This is an example of the use of *Thou* as the normal form of address between members of the lower classes. Between the exit of Brakenbury and the waking of Clarence, the Murderers use no less than twelve examples of *Thou* to one another (I.4.100-160), and no examples of *You* whatever.

Clarence wakes (I.4.161), and for a time usage is quite normal: he addresses a Murderer as *Thou*, and the Murderer replies with *You*:

Clar. Where art thou Keeper? Giue me a cup of wine.
 2 Mur. You shall haue Wine enough *my Lord* anon.
 Clar. In Gods name, what art *thou*?
 1 Mur. A man, as *you* are.
 Clar. But not as I am Royall.
 1 Mur. Nor you as we are, Loyall.
 Clar. *Thy* voice is Thunder, but *thy* looks are humble.
 (I.4.161-7)

Once again, *You* collocates with a respectful vocative, *my Lord*. Clarence continues to use *Thou* when he addresses one Murderer. It was perfectly possible to address a social inferior as *You*, and in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama there are many examples of scenes between a master and a servant in which the servant invariably says *You* while the master fluctuates between *You* and *Thou*. The social gulf between Clarence and the Murderers is so great, however, that he does not use singular *You*; even when he is wheedling one of them, he continues with *Thou*:

My Friend, I spy some pittie in *thy* lookes:
 O, if *thine* eye be not a Flatterer,
 Come *thou* on *my* side and intreate for mee.
 (I.4.263-5)

It is true that Clarence several times says *You*, but in such cases he is addressing both Murderers, and so necessarily using the plural *You*. In many cases the plurality is made quite explicit by the context:

You scarsely haue the hearts to tell me so
 (I.4.175)

Wherein my *Friends* haue I offended you?
 (I.4.177)

Haue *you* that holy feeling in *your* soules
 (I.4.250)

O sirs consider, they that set you on
(I.4.254)

In some cases, inevitably, Clarence uses *You* without there being an explicitly plural context, but there can be little doubt that these examples of *You* are to be interpreted as plurals; for, whenever there is an explicitly singular context, Clarence says *Thou*, and it is clear that his regular practice is to address two Murderers as *You*, and one Murderer as *Thou*.⁵

As for the Murderers, they begin quite conventionally, addressing Clarence as *You*, and using the respectful vocative *my lord* (I.4.162, 180). Then suddenly, at I.4.201, when Clarence is at the height of his eloquent appeal for life, both Murderers switch to *Thou*, and at the same time the respectful vocatives disappear. The comment on this switch by Sister St Geraldine Byrne is that *Thou* is used "in a spirit of equality".⁶ This perhaps involves an anachronistic view of Elizabethan social attitudes; but in any case the important thing, surely, is that the emotional temperature of the scene has risen sharply, and that the Murderers are extremely angry with Clarence, who has been fulminating against them on the wickedness of their proposed action. In a long harangue, Clarence condemns the intended killing as both illegal and irreligious (I.4.181-92), and as the climax of his speech threatens them with God's vengeance:

Erroneous Vassals, the great King of Kings
Hath in the Table of his Law commanded
That thou shalt do no murther. Will you then
Spurne at his Edict, and fulfill a Mans?
Take heed: for he holds Vengeance in his hand,
To hurle vpon their heads that breake his Law.
(I.4.195-200)

This denunciation goads the Murderers into angry counter-accusations:

2 Mur. And that same Vengeance doth he hurle on thee,
For false Forswearing, and for murther too:
Thou did'st receiue the Sacrament, to fight
In quarrell of the House of Lancaster.
1 Mur. And like a Traitor to the name of God,
Did'st breake that Vow, and with *thy* treacherous
blade,
Vnrip'st the Bowels of *thy* Sou'raignes Sonne.
(I.4.201-7)

The use of *Thou* is here a sign of extreme anger, hostility, loss of self-control. To the original audience, the use of *Thou* by a plebeian to a prince was presumably quite shocking, and brought out the emotional violence of the passage. As long as the slanging-match continues, the Murderers address Clarence as *Thou*; but the moment the heat goes out of the situation they revert to the conventional *You*, which they use to Clarence for the rest of the scene. The switch back to *You* occurs when Clarence asks the Murderers to go to Richard:

If you are hyr'd for meed, go backe againe,
 And I will send you to my Brother Gloucester:
 Who shall reward you better for my life,
 Then Edward will for tydings of my death.

(I.4.228-31)

Since it is Gloucester who has hired them to kill Clarence, the reaction of the Murderers to this speech can only be one of irreverent mirth, as in the First Murderer's leering *I so we will* (I.4.234); and their attitude to Clarence becomes one of patronizing contempt (the poor mug, he thinks his brother Gloucester loves him!). But as soon as they adopt this attitude, the heat goes out of the situation, and the accusations and counter-accusations stop. And at once the Murderers revert to *You*:

You are deceiu'd,
 Your Brother Gloucester hates you.

(I.4.232)

And so they continue; even when the First Murderer is actually killing Clarence he addresses him as *You* (I.4.270). At the same time, the respectful *my lord* reappears (I.4.249, 268) - though it is worth observing that it is only the Second Murderer who addresses Clarence thus, never the First.⁷

In the short passage after the murder, the two Murderers address one another as *Thou*, with one curious exception:

- 1 *Mur.* How now? what mean'st *thou* that *thou* help'st me not? By Heauen the Duke shall know how slacke *you* haue beene.
 2 *Mur.* I would he knew that I had sau'd his brother,
 Take *thou* the Fee, and tell him what I say,
 For I repent me that the Duke is slaine.

(I.4.274-8)

It is difficult to see any reason for the First Murderer's use of *you* here; apart from this one example, the two of them always use *Thou* to one another; and there is no obvious interpretation for this *you*. It might be a sarcastic suggestion that the Second Murderer is putting on upper-class airs; but this does not fit the context. Moreover, there is another oddity about this speech of the First Murderer's: it is printed by F1 as prose, whereas the entire remainder of the scene after the awaking of Clarence is in verse. The first half of the First Murderer's speech does indeed make a perfectly good line of early Shakespearean blank verse, but the second half does not (unless we emend *you haue* to *y'auē*). If however we turn to the First Quarto of 1597, we find that the passage reads as follows:

- 1 *Mur.* Why doest *thou* not helpe me,
 By heauens the Duke shall know how slacke *thou* art.
 2 *Mur.* I would he knew that I had sauēd his brother.
 Take *thou* the fee, and tell him what I say,
 For I repent me that the Duke is slaine.

There can surely be no reasonable doubt that the Fl reading is wrong, and that the correct reading for the second half of the First Murderer's speech is *By heauens the Duke shall know how slacke thou art*. This has the expected pronoun *thou*, and is also a perfectly good line of early Shakespearean blank verse. Curiously enough, editors of the play seem not to have noticed the point, and usually retain the First Folio reading.

Another scene in which there are significant switches between *You* and *Thou* is the one in which Richard woos Anne (I.2). The two central characters in the scene are both of royal status: Richard is brother to the King (Edward IV), and Anne is daughter-in-law to the previous king (Henry VI). The only other speaker is a Gentleman (with a mere two lines). The scene opens with the funeral-cortege of Henry VI, with Anne as mourner. It may be thought curious that, in her opening speech, Anne regularly addresses the dead king as *Thou*, since we might expect a respectful *You*: Henry, after all, had been both her king and her father-in-law. The explanation is that Anne is not addressing a king, but first a dead body and then a disembodied spirit:

Poore key-cold Figure of a holy King,
Pale Ashes of the House of Lancaster;
Thou bloodlesse Remnant of that Royall Blood,
Be it lawful that I inuocate *thy* Ghost
(I.2.5-8)

The clue is given by the word *inuocate*. Invocations or apostrophes to a supernatural being, or to an inanimate object, or to a personified abstraction, regularly make use of *Thou*. At the opening of Jonson's *Volpone*, Volpone addresses his gold as *Thou*; in *King Lear*, Edmund addresses the goddess Nature as *Thou*. In *Richard III* there are many such addresses: to the earth (I.2.63, IV.4.31-2), to outrage (II.4.64), to Pomfret Castle (III.3.9-12), to England (III.4.103-4), to the Duchess of York's womb (IV.1.53-4), to day (IV.4.401), to night (IV.4.401), to conscience (V.3.179); and in every case the speaker uses *Thou*. Anne, similarly, uses *Thou* because she is addressing an invocation to a *key-cold Figure* and *Ashes* (inanimate objects), and then to a *Ghost*. Later in the play, Buckingham too apostrophizes "Holy King Henry", and he also uses *Thou* (V.1.4). If a human being addresses a ghost as *Thou*, it is not surprising that the ghost reciprocates: in the great dream-scene in Act V, when the ghosts of Richard's victims come to denounce him and to encourage Richmond, every single ghost uses *Thou*, both to Richard and to Richmond (V.3.118-76).

Anne uses the plural *You* in instructing the bearers to proceed with the bier, and Richard, who now enters, likewise uses plural *You* in ordering them to stop. When, however, one gentleman resists his order, Richard immediately uses *Thou* to him:

Vnmanerd dog, stand *thou* when I command⁸
(I.2.39)

This is simultaneously the *Thou* of superior to inferior and the *Thou*

of anger and contempt, as is seen from the collocation with *Vnmanerd dog* (and, three lines later, *begger*).

Anne now launches into a bitter denunciation of Richard, in which she uses the angry and hostile *Thou*, beginning:

Auant *thou* dreadfull minister of Hell;
Thou had'st but power ouer his Mortall body,
 His Soule *thou* canst not haue: Therefore be gone.
 (I.2.46-8)

Richard in reply is conciliatory, and uses the polite or neutral *You*:

Rich. Lady, you know no Rules of Charity,
 Which renders good for bad, Blessings for Curses.
 Anne. Villaine, *thou* know'st nor law of God nor Man.
 (I.2.68-70)

They continue like this for 85 lines, Anne using the hostile *Thou* (34 examples), and Richard responding with the polite *You* (10 examples). In this passage there is just one example of *Thou* from Richard:

Fairer then tongue can name *thee*, let me haue
 Some patient leysure to excuse my selfe.
 (I.2.81-2)

Presumably Richard feels that, in this praise-utterance, he can try on the intimate or affectionate *Thou*, but Anne continues her violent attack on him, and he reverts to *You*. Then at line 132, there comes the first important switch; Richard changes over to *Thou*:

Anne. Blacke night ore-shade *thy* day, & death *thy* life.
 Rich. Curse not *thy* selfe faire Creature,
Thou art both.
 (I.2.131-2)

Richard obviously feels that he has by now made enough progress with Anne to change to the intimate or affectionate *Thou*. She, however, continues to attack him with the hostile *Thou*, and for over sixty lines we have the curious situation that both characters are using *Thou* - one to express affection and the other to express hostility. The crucial moment comes when Richard bares his breast and offers to kill himself, and Anne wavers:

Anne. I would I knew *thy* heart.
 Rich. 'Tis figur'd in my tongue.
 Anne. I feare me, both are false.
 Rich. Then neuer Man was true.
 Anne. Well, well, put vp your Sword.
 Rich. Say then my Peace is made.
 Anne. That shalt *thou* know heereafter.
 (I.2.192-8)

Anne's *thy* is ambiguous: she does not herself know what she thinks and feels at this moment. Clearly, however, she is no longer angry, and this is made explicit by her switch to the polite or neutral form in *your Sword*. This being so, her use of *thou* in the final line can only be the intimate one: she has surrendered, and in the lines that follow she permits Richard (who is still using *Thou*) to put a ring on her finger. For their final exchanges, however, they both change back to *You*, as in:

Rich. For diuers vnknowne Reasons, I beseech you,
Grant me this Boon.
Anne. With all my heart, and much it ioyes me too,
To see you are become so penitent.

(I.2.217-20)

Things are settled, the emotional upheavals and struggles have ended, and the two characters return to the everyday unemotional *You*.

Later in the play there is a parallel episode (IV.4.199-430) in which Richard (now King) tries to persuade Queen Elizabeth to woo her daughter for him. Here too the woman being persuaded uses the hostile and angry *Thou*, whereas Richard for the most part replies with *You*, though he occasionally switches to *Thou* (lines 249-56, 325-36, 405-7). Richard's position as King makes it particularly easy for him to fluctuate between *You* and *Thou*, since nobody can take offence when he says *Thou* to them; he uses *Thou* in what seems a quite neutral way, for example, to the Duke of Norfolk (V.3.53, 301). There is one place where Richard says *Thou* to Elizabeth in a passage where otherwise he is consistently addressing her as *You*:

The King that calles *your* beauteous Daughter Wife,
Familiarly shall call *thy* Dorset, Brother:
Agaïne shall *you* be Mother to a King

(IV.4.315-17)

Here it is perhaps the word *Familiarly* that evokes the *thy*: Richard is momentarily imagining himself on terms of intimacy with Elizabeth and her family. In contrast to Anne, Elizabeth continues to use the hostile *Thou* to Richard almost to the end of the episode, changing to *You* only in her final line (IV.4.429); this is because Elizabeth is not really persuaded, as Anne was, but is only pretending to be, as we discover later.

There are other switches in the play between *You* and *Thou*, and in most cases their motivation is clear. A switch may occur when a character is being hypocritical, and then reveals his true feelings in an aside or a soliloquy. In the opening scene of the play Richard uses *You* to Clarence. As soon as Clarence goes off, however, Richard switches in soliloquy to a sardonic and contemptuous *Thou*:

Go treade the path that *thou* shalt ne're return:
Simple plaine Clarence, I do loue *thee* so,
That I will shortly send *thy* Soule to Heauen,
If Heauen will take the present at our hands.

(I.1.117-20)

Buckingham, similarly, converses politely with Hastings, using *You*, but changes to *Thou* in an aside:

Buck. I shall returne before *your* Lordship, thence.
Hast. Nay like enough, for I stay Dinner there.
Buck. And Supper too, although *thou* know'st it not.
 Come, will *you* goe?

(III.2.120-23)

In some cases, the use of *Thou* is a sign of anger, or simulated anger. When Richard storms into the presence-chamber in I.3, accusing those present of maligning him, he points the finger of accusation at each in turn, using *Thou* (I.3.55-7); but in II.1, when he pretends to be reconciled to all his enemies, he again goes from person to person, but this time using *You* (II.1.63-8); it is one of those parallels-with-a-difference of which the play is full. In the council-scene in the Tower (III.4), Richard comes in all smiles and affability, and uses *You* (to Ely and then to Buckingham); but at his second entry, when he pretends to be a victim of witchcraft, Hastings walks straight into his trap, and Richard rounds on him in simulated fury:

Hast. If they haue done this deed, my Noble Lord.
Rich. If? *thou* Protector of this damned Strumpet,
 Talk'st *thou* to me of Ifs: *thou* art a Traytor,
 Off with his Head

(III.4.73-6)

In some cases the use of *You* is mock-polite or ironical, and may then be followed by a switch to a more normal *Thou*. In I.1, Brakenbury asks Richard and Clarence not to have any secret conversation, since the King has forbidden it. Richard replies with exaggerated politeness, which is followed by a complete change of tone:

Rich. Euen so, and please *your* Worship Brakenbury,
 You may partake of any thing we say:
 We speake no Treason man; We say the King
 Is wise and vertuous, and his Noble Queene
 Well strooke in yeares, faire, and not iealious
 We say, that Shores Wife hath a pretty Foot,
 A cherry Lip, a bonny Eye, a passing pleasing tongue:
 And that the Queenes Kindred are made gentle Folkes.
 How say *you* sir? can you deny all this?
Brak. With this (my Lord) my selfe haue nought to doo.
Rich. Naught to do with Mistress Shore?
 I tell *thee* Fellow, he that doth naught with her
 (Excepting one) were best to do it secretly alone.
Brak. What one, my Lord.
Rich. Her Husband Knaue, would'st *thou* betray me?

(I.1.88-102)

Richard's *You* collocates with the mock-polite vocatives *Worship* and *sir*. Then Brakenbury gives him the opening for his wicked pun on

naught ("nothing" and "wickedness, immoral act"), and Richard switches to *Thou*, which collocates with the patronizing vocatives *Fellow* and *Knaue*: the King's brother is putting this whippersnapper knight firmly in his place. A similar example is provided by Queen Margaret. In the singular, Margaret almost invariably uses *Thou*, whoever she may be speaking to. This is partly to assert the fact that she is the true Queen, and all her hearers are her subjects (as she claims at I.3.160-1, 170, 250-2), and partly because many of her speeches are curses or denunciations addressed to her enemies. In only one speech in the whole play does Margaret use singular *You*:

Dorset. Dispute not with her, shee is lunaticke.
 Q. Mar. Peace Master Marquesse, you are malapert,
 Your fire-new stampe of Honor is scarce currant.
 O that your yong Nobility could iudge
 What 'twere to lose it, and be miserable.
 (I.3.253-7)

Dorset is not only a parvenu, but is also rather young (he was Queen Elizabeth's eldest son by her first marriage): Margaret's *yong Nobility* refers to his youth as well as to the newness of his title. Hence the mock-polite vocative *Master Marquesse*. Margaret, too, is putting presumption in its place, by means of cutting politeness.

Some switches between *You* and *Thou*, however, seem to have no great significance. This is especially likely to be so when the addressee is of lower rank than the speaker, for then either *You* or *Thou* can be used without giving offence. It is true that, if the social gulf is very great, the speaker of higher rank will tend to say *Thou* (as Clarence does to each of the Murderers); so a menial will often be addressed as *Thou*. For example, *Thou* is used by speakers of royal or noble status to a messenger (II.4.41, III.2.19-33, IV.4.508), to a pursuivant (III.2.96-104), to a priest (IV.5.1-20); and if the menial uses a pronoun in reply, it is invariably *You*. But even with a large social gap, the speaker of higher rank may fluctuate: Hastings uses *Thou* and *You* in successive lines to a priest (III.2.109-10). And if the gap is smaller, as for example between a nobleman and a knight, the speaker of higher rank is quite likely to fluctuate (though the lower will not). Some of these fluctuations may be significant (as in the example between Richard and Brakenbury in I.1), but some appear not to be. Brakenbury is addressed as *You* by Queen Elizabeth (IV.1.13), and a few lines later as *Thou* by Anne (IV.1.24-25), with no very obvious change in tone or attitude. And Catesby, who is also a knight, is addressed by noblemen (Richard, Buckingham, Hastings) sometimes as *You*, sometimes as *Thou*. On the other hand, it is possible that these fluctuations carried nuances of meaning for the original audience, which we now find it difficult to detect. Elizabeth's polite *You* to Brakenbury is spoken before the ladies have been denied access to the young princes, whereas Anne's *Thou* is spoken after this denial, and may be an attempt to pull rank to get her own way. And when Hastings switches from *You* to *Thou* with Catesby (III.2.36-41), he may do so in order to suggest displeasure at the suggestion that Richard ought to be King.

Many of the usages, as can be expected, are routine and call for little comment. The King, as the highest-ranking person in the realm, often uses *Thou*: Edward IV says *You* to his wife and close relatives, but *Thou* to other people, including great noblemen such as Buckingham and Derby (Stanley). Richard, after he has become King, always uses *Thou* to anybody below the peerage (including knights like Tyrrel and Ratcliffe); but he makes extensive use of *You* to Queen Elizabeth, he invariably says *You* to his mother, and with Derby (Stanley) he fluctuates between *You* and *Thou* (e.g. IV.4.475-7). In the early part of the play, Queen Elizabeth (in strong contrast to Queen Margaret) nearly always uses *You*, even when uttering reproaches: it is part of her mild and conciliatory style. But after the death of the young princes, she most often uses *Thou*, especially in denunciations. A child addresses an adult as *You* (as in II.2.3-31), while an adult addresses a child as *Thou* (as in II.4.16-33). But Prince Edward, as the sovereign, is addressed as *You* despite his youth (III.1.1-30), and young York receives a *You* from his mother (and an angry one at that) (II.4.35) and is regularly addressed as *You* by Richard (III.1.109-22); in these cases high rank obviously outweighs youthfulness. The Duchess of York invariably addresses Richard (her son) as *Thou*, even after he has become King, and he equally invariably answers with *You*, even when she is denouncing and provoking him (IV.4.136-96). It is interesting that the three London citizens (II.3) use only *You* to one another; this is a sign of the extent to which, by Shakespeare's time, the use of *You* to a social equal had spread down the social scale.

One slightly ambiguous case is that of Stanley and Richmond. Stanley is Richmond's step-father, and so might well expect to be addressed with the respectful *You*. But Richmond is already talking as if he were King (he uses the royal plural at V.2.5 and V.3.81), and might equally well expect to be addressed as *You*. In fact, when they have their secret meeting, both use *Thou*:

Stan. Fortune, and Victory sit on thy Helme.
 Rich. All comfort that the darke night can afford,
 Be to thy Person, Noble Father in Law.
 Tell me, how fares our Noble Mother?
 Stan. I by Attourney, blesse thee from thy Mother,
 Who prayes continually for Richmonds good
 (V.3.79-84)

This may be the intimate and affectionate use of *Thou*; and certainly Stanley, a few lines later, refers to the two of them as *long sundred Friends*, and regrets that they have no time for the appropriate rites of *Loue* (V.3.100-101). On the other hand, there is a possibility that Shakespeare, tongue in cheek, is showing them as trying (however affectionately) to upstage one another, each standing on his status and using the *Thou* of social superiority. And certainly Richmond's rather pompous *how fares our Noble Mother?* fits better with the social than with the affectionate *Thou*. In the final scene of the play, when Stanley puts the crown on Richmond's head, he still addresses him as *Thou* (V.5.3-7); but in his next speech he switches to *You* (V.5.10-11), as if conscious that he is now addressing his sovereign.

In this last example, Stanley addresses Richmond as *Couragious Richmond* (V.5.3), which collocates with *Thou*, and then as *my lord* (V.5.10), which collocates with *You*. And throughout the play there is a clear correlation between the vocative expression used and the choice of pronoun. The play contains a large number of abusive vocatives - beggar, cacodemon, coward, dissembler, devil, dog, fool, hag, hedgehog, homicide, knave, slave, villain, witch - and these always collocate with *Thou*, never with *You*. On the other hand, respectful vocatives, especially ones containing the word *lord*, usually collocate with *You*. The following table shows the number of times in the play a vocative containing the word *lord* collocates closely with singular *You* on the one hand and with *Thou* on the other. In the vast majority of cases counted as collocations, the pronoun and the vocative expression occur in the same sentence, frequently in the same line; in the remainder, they occur in different sentences, but are very closely linked, and are spoken, as it were, in the same breath. The expression *my lord* is extremely common, and the figures for it are shown separately. The remaining expressions include such types as *lord*, *noble lord*, *my gracious lord*, *good my lord*, *Lord Hastings*, *my Lord Mayor*, *my Lord of Gloucester*, *my good Lord Chamberlain*, and *good my Lord of Derby*.

Collocating with:	<i>You</i>	<i>Thou</i>
<i>my lord</i>	42	0
Other vocatives with <i>lord</i>	27	1

Out of a total of seventy examples, all but one collocate with *You*. The sole exception occurs at I.3.210, where *Lord Hastings* collocates with *Thou*. The speaker is Queen Margaret, and, as we have seen, her normal mode of address is *Thou* to anybody, regardless of rank. Elsewhere, the vocative *Lord Hastings* occurs in collocation with *You* (III.1.58, III.4.13). In general, it seems that the use of *lord* in a vocative expression almost automatically entails the choice of *You* to collocate with it. Even the Lord Mayor of London, who obviously has to be called *Lord Mayor* or *my lord*, is addressed by Richard and Buckingham as *You*, despite his citizen background.

No other vocative expression is comparable in frequency to *my lord*. The figures for some of the commoner ones are given in the table below.

Collocating with:	<i>You</i>	<i>Thou</i>
<i>madam</i>	17	0
<i>sir</i>	4	0
<i>brother</i>	5	0
<i>cousin</i>	5	4
<i>lady</i>	3	3
<i>fellow</i>	0	4

It will be seen from the table that, in *Richard III*, the vocatives *madam*, *sir*, and *brother* collocate only with *You*, while *fellow* collocates only with *Thou*. In between are *cousin* and *lady*, which collocate with both. In most cases, however, the figures are too small to be considered reliable; those for *madam*, indeed, are reasonably substantial, but the remainder, while suggestive, do not permit any firm conclusions to be drawn. What we need, plainly, is statistical information on such collocations from a larger body of Shakespeare's plays.

We also need more evidence to supplement that of Mulholland on possible grammatical conditioning of the choice of *You* and *Thou*.⁹ Her material from *Much Ado* and *King Lear* does not on the whole support the view that the grammatical construction used has any considerable influence on the selection of *You* or *Thou*. There is one exception: her figures do suggest (though not at a statistically significant level) that, both in statements and in questions, a speaker is more likely to select *thou* as the subject of a closed-class verb, and *you* as the subject of a lexical verb.¹⁰ The evidence of *Richard III* supports this. Using the same categories as Mulholland, I find that the relevant statistics for the play are as follows:

	<i>Statements</i>	
	<i>you</i>	<i>thou</i>
Subject before closed verb	63 (46.3%)	73 (53.7%)
Subject before lexical verb	46 (56.8%)	35 (43.2%)

Questions

	you	thou
Subject after closed verb	15 (32.6%)	31 (67.4%)
Subject after lexical verb	19 (54.3%)	16 (45.7%)

In both statements and questions, it will be seen, *you* is more favoured with lexical verbs, and *thou* with closed verbs. The differences, however, are not statistically significant, being below the 90% confidence limit for statements, and below the 95% confidence limit for questions. If the figures for *Richard III* are added to Mulholland's figures for *King Lear* and *Much Ado*, the differences approach the significant level, being between 95% and 97.5% for both statements and questions.¹¹

A study of a larger body of material might indeed confirm, therefore, that in Shakespeare's plays a speaker is likely to show a greater preference for *you* as the subject of lexical verbs, and of *thou* as the subject of closed-class verbs. Such a correlation, however, would not prove that the grammatical construction determined the choice of pronoun. It might be the other way round: *you* or *thou* might be chosen on social or emotional grounds, and this choice might then influence the grammatical construction used. For example, when the speaker selected *thou* as subject, he might be more likely to insert auxiliary *do* in the verb phrase, and when he selected *you* he might be more likely to omit it. This is rather suggested by the examples in *Richard III*: in statements with the subject before a closed-class verb, there are fourteen cases where this verb is auxiliary *do*; thirteen of these occur after *thou*, and only one after *you*. With questions the figures are less extreme, but there is still a difference: auxiliary *do* occurs four times before *you*, but ten times before *thou*. But here again more material is needed.

It is perhaps worth adding one small additional point which emerges from an examination of the grammatical structures in *Richard III*. The statistics given above do not include sentences like *Well are you welcome to this open Ayre* (I.1.124), or *by despairing shalt thou stand excused* (I.2.86), since these are statements in which the pronoun-subject follows the verb. In these examples of "inversion" in the play, neither *you* nor *thou* is dominant as subject (there are ten examples of each); but what is striking is that all twenty examples have a closed-class verb. With *you* or *thou* as subject, there are no examples like *O then, began the Tempest to my Soule* (I.4.44), in which the subject of a declarative sentence is placed after a lexical verb.

Richard III does not give unambiguous support to Mulholland's finding, from *King Lear* and *Much Ado*, that "*you* is the generally accepted majority form of the pronoun in use in the upper classes, except from father to daughter, and, possibly, from women to their female servants".¹² In *Richard III*, in which the vast majority of exchanges occur between characters of noble or royal rank, and in which very few lines indeed are spoken by characters below the rank of knight,¹³ examples of *Thou* in fact outnumber examples of singular *You* in the ratio of about 54 to 46. There are 568 examples of *Thou*;

there are 689 examples of *You*, but 198 of these are certainly or probably plural, leaving a probable figure of 491 for singular *You*.¹⁴ This may not indeed be a typical situation, for in Shakespeare's works as a whole there are 14,410 examples of *Thou*, but 22,767 examples of *You*;¹⁵ on the other hand, quite a few of these 22,767 examples must be of plural *You*, and even if the proportion is lower than in *Richard III* (where about 29% of the examples of *You* are certainly or probably plural) it seems likely that there is no enormous difference in frequency between *Thou* and singular *You*. It can by no means be said, therefore, that in Shakespeare's works as a whole the usual form is *You*, and *Thou* merely an occasional variant used on special occasions.

It is true that, in *Richard III*, there is a great deal which is consistent with the view that *You* is the normal, unmarked form among the upper classes, and that *Thou* is the marked form, used for particular emotional effects or as an indicator of difference of social status. But there is also evidence which goes against this view: the Duchess of York never uses singular *You*, only *Thou*; and Queen Margaret uses singular *You* in only one speech. Moreover, Margaret's use of *Thou* is not always hostile and denunciatory; she uses it to Buckingham when she is explicitly exempting him from her attacks (I.3.279-83). The monarch, too, tends to favour *Thou*: Edward IV uses *You* to close relatives, but *Thou* to anybody else; and Richard, after he has become King, prefers *Thou* for most of the people he addresses. It is possible, therefore, that for aged and reverend characters like the Duchess of York, and for some people of especially high status, *Thou* was the normal, unmarked form, and *You* the form chosen to indicate particular courtesy or benignity. We need not assume that usage was identical for all members of the gentle class, from the simple gentleman up to the monarch. Equally, we do not have to assume that usage in Shakespeare's plays exactly reflects the usages of the society around them. It would be perfectly possible for *Thou* to play a relatively small role in real life, while in drama, because of its concentration of emotional tension and its tendency to present scenes of confrontation, *Thou* appeared much more frequently. Even when we are more certain, therefore, about the significance of usages in Shakespeare's plays, we shall need to use caution in drawing conclusions about usage in Shakespeare's society.

NOTES

- 1 J. Mulholland, "'Thou' and 'You' in Shakespeare: a study in the second person pronoun", *English Studies*, 48 (1967), 34-43.
- 2 Elizabethan theoreticians normally recognized four main status-groups: (a) Gentlemen, (b) Citizens, (c) Yeomen, and (d) Artisans and Labourers. See for example Sir Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum* (London, 1583), pp.20-34.
- 3 Unless otherwise indicated, quotations are from the First Folio of 1623; I have used the Kökeritz and Prouty facsimile (Oxford, 1955). Speech-prefixes, when given, are normalized. Original italics are removed; italics in quotations are my own, to call attention to particular forms. Line-references, however, are not taken from F1, but from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, edited by G. Blakemore Evans (Boston, 1974), since this is the edition used by the Spevack Shakespeare concordance. For quotations from the First Quarto of 1597 I have used the facsimile in the Shakespeare Quarto Facsimiles series, edited by W.W. Greg (Oxford, 1959). Information about the readings of the later quartos is taken from the parallel-texts edition of *Richard III* by Kristian Smidt (Oslo and New York, 1969).
- 4 In addition to regional accents, there were probably class-accent in Shakespeare's time; see for example C. Barber, *Early Modern English* (London, 1976), pp.37-40. The contrary view is taken by B. Holmberg, *On the Concept of Standard English and the History of Modern English Pronunciation* (Lund, 1964), pp.11-19; Holmberg's material, however, contains much which contradicts his view, such as references by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors to "vulgar" pronunciations, which he tries to explain away. On legislation regulating the clothes to be worn by different social groups, see F.E. Baldwin, *Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation in England* (Baltimore, 1926). In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, such legislation was increasingly flouted, and it has indeed been suggested that one of the reasons for the spread of singular *You* was precisely the breakdown of class-distinctions in dress, which made it difficult to "place" a stranger socially: see T. Finkenstaedt, *You und Thou. Studien zur Anrede in englischen* (Berlin, 1963), pp.91-98. The Murderers of Clarence, however, hardly come from the social groups (wealthy citizens, sons of prosperous yeomen) who were likely to ape upper-class clothes and manners.
- 5 The fact that Clarence regularly uses *Thou* when addressing one Murderer makes implausible an emendation proposed by Tyrwhitt in 1766 and adopted by many subsequent editors, including the editor of *The Riverside Shakespeare*. The lines which in the Riverside edition appear as I.4.266-7 appear in F1 as I.4.261-2, at the end of Clarence's previous speech; the lines do not occur at all in the quartos. The effect of the emendation, however, is to make Clarence switch from *Thou* to *You* in successive lines, when addressing one Murderer, and this is hardly possible in view of his other usages in the scene.
- 6 Sister St Geraldine Byrne, *Shakespeare's Use of the Pronoun of Address; its Significance in Characterization and Motivation* (Washington D.C., 1936), p.28.
- 7 This refers to F1. In Q1, the examples of *my lord* are equally divided between the two Murderers. The F1 readings provide better characterization: it is the more respectful of the two Murderers who finally relents. Q1 also differs from F1 in that the Murderers continue to use *Thou* to Clarence in lines 242-7; this can hardly be read as an expression of anger, but might be a mark of patronizing contempt.

- 8 This is the reading of Q1. The reading of F1 is *Stand'st thou*, which is clearly wrong.
- 9 Mulholland, *op.cit.*, 36-40.
- 10 In her category of closed-class (or grammatical) verbs, Mulholland includes the modal auxiliaries, the primary auxiliaries (*be*, *have*, and *do*), and also *be* and *have* in their non-auxiliary uses. All other verbs are lexical (or open-class).
- 11 These statistical significances have been calculated by the chi-squared method. For *Richard III*, chi-squared is 2.21 for the statements table, and 3.81 for the questions table. For all three plays combined, chi-squared is 4.57 for the statements table, and 4.40 for the questions table. In each case there is one degree of freedom. For statistical method I have consulted G. Udny Yule and M.G. Kendall, *An Introduction to the Theory of Statistics* (14th edition, London, 1973).
- 12 Mulholland, *op.cit.*, 42.
- 13 In *Richard III*, if ghosts are disregarded, 24,509 words are spoken by characters of royal, noble, or episcopal status; 1236 words are spoken by knights; and 2108 words are spoken by other characters. (The Lord Mayor of London is included in this last category.) The figures are derived from Marvin Spevack, *A Complete and Systematic Concordance to the Works of Shakespeare* (8 volumes, Hildesheim, 1968-75), Vol. II, pp.997-1079.
- 14 As with the other statistics given, the text of the Riverside edition has been used for the count; for *Richard III*, the Riverside editor uses F1 as his copy-text, but incorporates some readings from Q1. The breakdown for the figures given for *You* and *Thou* is as follows: *thou* 207, *thee* 121; *thine* 15; *thy* 213; *thysself* 12; total *Thou* 568. Singular *You*: *you* 260; *ye* 2; *you'll* 1; *your* 209; *yours* 12; *yourself* 6; *yourself's* 1; total singular *You* 491. Plural *You*: *you* 128; *your* 64; *yours* 3; *yourselves* 3; total plural *You* 198. The forms are as listed in the Spevack concordance.
- 15 The figures are compiled from Vol. VI of the Spevack concordance. The breakdown is as follows: *thou* 5855; *ta* "thou" 1; *th'* "thou" 33; *thee* 3423; *th'* "thee" 1; *thine* 498; *thy* 4360; *thysself* 239; total *Thou* 14,410; *you* 14,432; *y'* "you" 63; *ye* 346; *you'll* 166; *you'd* 15; *you'd* 4; *you're* 28; *you'st* 1; *your* 7065; *yours* 269; *yourself* 300; *yourself's* 2; *yourselves* 76; total *You* 22,767.