Homecoming

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One man alone cannot help or save the age in which he lives; he can only express the fact that it will perish. --Kierkegaard

I want only to try to live in accord with the promptings which come from my true self. Why is that so very difficult? --Hermann Hesse

End and Goal.--Not every end is the goal. The end of a melody is not its goal; and yet: as long as the melody has not reached its end, it also hasn’t reached its goal.
A parable. --Friedrich Nietzsche

It is to ascertain the truth that we propose some liberating measures. --Sarah M. Fuller

I will go to the bank by the wood and become undisguised and naked; I am mad for it to be in contact with me. --Walt Whitman

It was a bright, quiet garden, without striking features. Like a rosary rubbed between the hands, the shrilling of cicadas held sway. --Yukio Mishima
community were reunited. Whether you were rich or poor, famous or obscure, for a split second, the world came home with the East Berliners.

At the end of four and a half weeks, I was glad to return “home” to Birmingham. What had before felt so foreign to me here was now relatively familiar and very comforting. For nine months, Great Britain has been my home. But more than challenging my concept of what an apartment should look like or what food should taste like, this island has come to symbolize the ambiguity of perspective.

My time in Sweden, also, connected me with my heritage and my past. The people there now feel like family and the land a second home. But images of yet another home are fighting my consciousness for recognition. Nine months ago I accepted the challenge of adapting to a new physical place and culture. Now I am preparing to face the challenge of redefining what home is.

Nine months ago I accepted the challenge of adapting to a new physical place and culture. Now I am preparing to face the challenge of redefining what home is.

It is spring here now, and it is beautiful. But I have come a long way since the bleak rainy days of the English autumn, and I am ready to come home.

Comments on Literature
by Daniel Wright

Circumstances Attending the Fall of Shakespeare’s King John and the Deposition of Richard II

Some remarkable likenesses define the circumstances with which Shakespeare depicts the collapse of two of his English monarchs’ reigns, and the points of similarity that he emphasizes are all the more interesting for their essential lack of conformity to the historical facts attending the falls of these two misguided kings. Shakespeare obviously fictionalizes much of the historical data (especially in the declamatory speeches that he attributes to several of the principals) to give us a glimpse into what he perceives to be the preeminent points of interest in these failed monarchies; indeed, astonishingly little of what Shakespeare records in these plays has anything whatsoever to do with the actual events which they purportedly represent; the speeches, especially, in many instances, bear no correspondence to anything attested by other historical documents of the period; they are altogether invented by the author. Why should Shakespeare so distort—or at least re-invent accepted historical accounts in these plays? In short, the answer is that in these history plays, Shakespeare is more interested in probing the politics of royal events than he is in simply chronicling the events themselves. He is attempting to underscore historical truths as opposed to historical facts.

Shakespeare, for example, in King John, does not hesitate to inform us early of John’s rather hollow claim to the English throne. So significant, in fact, is John’s questionable accession that it becomes the source of dramatic tension throughout Shakespeare’s play about England’s thirteenth-century king. Indeed, we are confronted with the bitter contention surrounding John’s royal claims as early as the first scene of the first act when Philip of France’s envoy, Châtillon, suggests that John is the heir of a “borrowed majesty” (KJ II.1.4). Even the Queen Mother, though in public sympathy with John, acknowledges in a private moment during the same scene that her son’s power actually is more the consequence of “his strong possession... than [his] right” (KJ II.1.39-40). In Act Two, John’s arrival before the court of Philip of France initiates an argument between the two monarchs, through which we learn of Philip’s passionate desire to see John dispossessed and John’s impressionable young nephew, Arthur, acknowledged as the rightful heir to the English throne, with Arthur at his side, Philip argues a persuasive case before John:

... Geoffrey was thy elder brother born, And this his son: England was Geoffrey’s right, And this is Geoffrey’s in the name of God. How comes it then that thou art called a king, When living blood doth in these temples beat, Which owe the crown that thou o’er masterest? (KJ III.1.104-09)

John, however, determined to protect his usurped majesty and protect England from a king fawned upon by France, rebukes Philip’s contents and offers Arthur a bribe in return for public recognition of his uncle’s authority (KJ II.1.156-58). With the failure of this venture, England and France resort to arms to settle their dispute, although the people of England, speaking through the voice of Hubert de Burgh, cannot with confidence affirm John as their rightful king. The effect of their rejection is comic:

Hubert. The king of England, when we know the king. (KJ II.1.162-63)

Richard, in contrast, has no such difficulty as John. His majesty is unquestioned, as it was obtained “by fair sequence and succession” (R2 II.1.199), although Bolingbroke’s challenge to Richard encourages the rather convenient argument that the king’s majesty ought not be recognized as perpetual unless it is upheld with noble deeds. By way of contrast, Bolingbroke’s own father, John of Gaunt, like King John’s mother before him, never proposes that Richard ought to surrender his government—although he, in several speeches, suggests that Richard’s government is corrupt and blighted. Gaunt’s dying declaration to Richard,