

# "richard ii" by william shakespeare essay sample

[Art & Culture](#), [Symbolism](#)



Richard II, by William Shakespeare, is a play about a King whom is a poor chose in spending his countries wealth, separated from his subjects, and makes unwise decisions for counsel. Richard II then begins to lease land to wealthy noblemen and takes the money from a deceased uncle to fund his lifestyle the commoners and other noblemen become outraged. In the play there are symbolisms to England as being like " Eden"; and the first symbolism and maybe one of the most significant ones is by John of Gaunt in Act 2, scene 1, lines 31-68. After Gaunt's symbolic reference to England as a garden there are other symbolisms towards gardens referenced throughout the play along that aid in Shakespeare's use of imagery. The first symbolic comparison of gardens is seen in Act 2, scene 1, lines 31-68 by John of Gaunt. Gaunt begins describing England as a garden;

" 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 [... ] 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" (Bevington, 2009, pg341). This is a reference to what England used to be before Richard started his wrath upon the land. Another reference to a garden and the actions of Richard can be seen in Act 3, scene 4, lines 56-66. The Gardener states " That he has not so trimmed and dressed his land, As we this garden!

We at time of year, Do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit trees, Lest being overproud in sap and blood, With too much riches it confound itself; Had he done so to great and growing men, They might have lived to bear and he to taste, Their fruits of duty. Superfluous branches, We lop away, that bearing boughs may live; Had he done so, himself had borne the crown, Which waste of idle hours hath quite thrown down" (Bevington, 2009, pg356).

In this reference the Gardener is comparing England to a garden and Richard as its gardener. With Richards lack of taking care of England like a garden the land has died because of his failure to nurture and care for it. It is in my opinion that Shakespeare has used this various types of analogies for gardens as a symbolism for life. When you look at what Gaunt says about how England used to be, it is a representation of things change without proper care. In life if you do not take care of the things that are important then they will eventually change and not for the better. The next example with the gardener is another great example of how one must look after their resources. When the gardener says " We lop away, that bearing boughs may live" ((Bevington, 2009); it is my opinion that this shows that sometimes you must sometimes take a little off so others can prosper. It is the symbolic references that Shakespeare uses in Richard II towards gardens to aid in the rise and fall of the kingdom. Through this imagery, if Richard had taken better care of the land and his people, instead of using them for his own needs, then just maybe he would have still been king. If one takes care of his belongings and responsibilities then in return they shall be as rich and prosperous as a king.

## References

Bevington, D. (2009). *The necessary shakespeare, as you like it*. (Third ed., p. 341, 356). New York: Pearson Education, Inc.