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**Where the Devil did he learn our language?**

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**Abstract**

*Richard III* is a bravura exploration of the power of rhetoric, and indeed of the relationship between rhetoric and political and personal power. This essay explores the different registers and ethoi Shakespeare gives to Richard of Gloucester, and suggests that just as his audiences IN the plays are taken in by them, so too the audience OF the play is in no more secure position. It also suggests that the end of the play is far less reassuring than it is often taken to be.

**Keywords:** *Richard III, rhetoric, language, power, providence, ethoi*