

Beyond Sorrow's Eye: Affect and Taste in *Richard II*
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"Each substance of a grief hath twenty shadows," Bushy tells the Queen in Act Two of *Richard II*, "Which shows like grief itself, but is not so. / For sorrow's eye, glazed with blinding tears, / Divides one thing entire to many objects." In Act Three, Richard, having fled to Wales after Bolingbroke's invasion, recites a litany of his weaknesses, underscoring his humanity: "For you have but mistook me all this while," he declares; "I live with bread, like you; feel want, / Taste grief." Taking these two passages – Bushy's warning against introspective misprision and Richard's assertion of emotional vulnerability – as jumping-off points, my paper explores the ways in which looking and tasting were distinct, important and imperfect means by which early modern subjects investigated their own emotional states. As the paper aims to show, the process of "tasting" emotions offered early modern subjects a productive alternative to the distorting introspective gaze, a way out of the radical indeterminacy of ocular self-regard. Yet tasting, implying as it does the bodily integration of the materials of emotion, can preclude critical distance, foreclosing the rich possibilities for self-understanding that perspectival flexibility provides. *Richard II* thus complicates our critical assumptions about the porous early modern body and raises new questions about the conceptual vocabulary available to early modern subjects seeking self-expression. What is more, the play's emphasis on the failures of representation suggests a skeptical investment in the problem of other minds. Most significantly, by suggesting the interpretive possibilities of taste, however tentatively, the play urges us to reconsider the history of a concept often consigned to the long eighteenth century.