



# The Wider Conversation

February 7, 2024

## “There can be nothing about us without us.”

That’s the clever slogan of the Disabled Artists Alliance, which last week [tweeted](#) a complaint about the casting of Richard III by [Shakespeare’s Globe](#).

They weren’t complaining, as a naïf might suspect, about an *actress* playing the *king*.

Oh, no.

“We,” the signed letter explained, “are outraged and disappointed by the casting of a non-physically disabled actor in this role, and the implications this has not only for disability, but the wider conversations surrounding it.”

Michelle Terry, the Globe’s current artistic director,

cast herself as Richard. Daring move? An advance for her “gender”? You may find the choice forced, or kind of dumb, but on the London stage it may seem like turnabout as fair play. In Shakespeare’s own time, men and boys often portrayed women and girls on stage. So the acting profession has a long history of making do with less-than-convincing performers in roles.

The Disabled Artists Alliance wants us to side with disabled actors, as a class, even if, as [has been noted](#), past disabled players of Richard III had not suffered from the precise disability of the historic English king: [scoliosis](#).

The idea is that a disabled actor has more relevant “lived experience” to offer to the role than a healthy actor.

Yet, that’s just one element of the character. Why not look for actors with the same moral defects? There’d be plenty.

Or choose a royal. For the relevant experience.

Isn’t Prince Harry out of work?

Next up: Flat-earthers complain about the name of the theater wherein the scandal occurs: the Globe.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.