

Richard the third soliloquy analysis essay sample



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Richard the Third's soliloquy conveys many aspects of not only the setting but also his own thoughts and feelings. This prologue, expressed through Richard's words, explains how circumstances have become a lot better after the ending of war. Everyone is transitioning from the discomforts and sorrow of war to the merriment after victory; instead of grimly fighting enemies they now indulge in light-hearted sexually active romantic affairs. However, even though Richard desires to do so, he cannot participate in such activities because he describes himself as a person who lacks physical attractiveness.

Richard blames his inability to obtain love on his deformed body and since he is not able to partake in any of the happiness those around him are experiencing, he is determined to be evil — plotting to ruin the lives of others. He admits of causing hatred between the King and his brother Clarence, and making the King think Clarence is planning to murder him. Richard hopes it will result in the jailing of Clarence and he becomes quiet when he sees his brother approaching. Richard's thought process changes throughout the soliloquy, giving the readers a look into the type of man he is.

In his soliloquy Richard of Gloucester conveys his true feelings of hatred and exasperation of his appearance and provides deeper insight into the man who he is through diction, imagery and syntax. The word choice in Richard the Third's prologue gives input into the true feelings and motives of the main character. First, Richard describes how after the ending of war, " Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths... Our stern alarums chang'd to merry meetings, Our dreadful marches to delightful measures"(5-8).

He uses the word “our” to collectively define the rest of the state including him. In the beginning of the prologue he groups himself with everyone else. Later, Richard states that “... instead of mounting barbed steeds... He capers nimbly in a lady’s bedchamber to the lascivious pleasing of a lute” (10-14). At this point Richard no longer considers himself one of the public, but instead uses the term “he” to show that he himself is not necessarily one of them. This usage of diction is deliberate in order to distinguish the difference between him and others.

In addition, he describes himself as “deformed, unfinished, sent before my time Into this breathing world scarce half made up—And that so lamely and unfashionable that dogs bark at me...” (20-23). Richard uses such strong negative terms in order to display his misfortune, going as far as to say that even dogs find him repulsive. This strong word usage displays his anger and resentment at his own appearance, and may explain the motivation that he has to become a villain and ruin the lives of others. In addition, he predicts Clarence will be jailed if King Edward be as true and just As [he] is subtle, false, and treacherous”(36-37).

As Richard expresses his hopes, he gives the impression that he is proud of his villainous characteristics. He talks of these negative traits with such ease that it seems as if he flaunts them. Richard the Third’s language shows how he despises his unattractiveness to such an extent that it prevents him from experiencing happiness, and easily transforms him into a hateful being which he becomes boastful about. Richard provides very descriptive statements that express his attitude towards certain subjects.

For example, he talks of how now men “[caper] nimbly in a lady’s bedchamber To the lascivious pleasing of a lute”(12-13). Richard describes these sexual acts in an apparent favorable tone. His attitude toward a sexual relationship is positive. However, he suddenly contrasts with that feeling when he proclaims “ But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks Nor made to court an amorous looking glass; I, that am rudely stamped, and want love’s majesty To strut before a wanton ambling nymph; I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion, Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature... (14-19).

Richard provides imagery and description that clearly shows the intensity of his feelings and detachment from what he desires. His tone expresses the extreme exasperation and exaggerated tragedy that he faces. In continuation, Richard of Gloucester complains that “[he] has no delight to pass away the time, Unless to spy [his] shadow in the sun And descant on [his] own deformity”(25-27). Richard’s extremely negative attitude towards his own appearance is prevalent throughout his self-description and explains his state of mind which drove him to become “ treacherous.

He really hates how he looks and the misery it puts him into, and it is apparent that it resulted in very low self-esteem and depression. Richard’s vivid and varied descriptions convey his tone and attitude towards what he wants, what he hates and shows his pessimism. The syntax used in Richard of Gloucester’s soliloquy gives a lot of information into the state of mind he is in. Mostly, Richard makes statements such as “ therefore, since I cannot prove a lover To entertain these fair well-spoken days, I am determined to prove a villain And hate the idle pleasures of these days”(28-31).

These statements convey thoughts that are not common and are usually spoken out in anger and irrationality. However, the lack of exclamations and the resulting emotional outburst show that he is calm and seems to have put thought into his stance on this situation. The syntax provides gives his words more substance and also show that Richard has some sort of control over his feelings. Richard of Gloucester's forty-word soliloquy gives much insight into his character and state of mind.

The diction and imagery both explain his extreme loathing for his appearance, and how it led him to decide to become an evil man. The descriptions explain the importance a relationship has in Richard's perspective, and why the lack of one is so detrimental to his esteem. The syntax of the passage gives his statements weight, making them seem less like spontaneous irrational feelings and more like well-thought out decisions. Combined, the diction, syntax and imagery help form a more complete picture of Richard of Gloucester.