

# *Richard III: Villain and* **Educator**

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## 1. Introduction

When teaching English at secondary schools in The Netherlands certain levels of reading proficiency must be accomplished by the Dutch pupils. One of the goals of the Common European Framework of References and the Dutch literature curriculum is that secondary school pupils have to have been taught literature from different literary ages, such as the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, Romanticism, and 20th Century Literature. However, this poses a problem: how does one present the literature of difficult periods to secondary school pupils who do not have C1 or C2 proficiency in English? In The Netherlands, English is taught as a foreign language. This means that it is almost impossible for the Dutch pupils to reach C1 or C2 language proficiency in English in secondary school. Another problem then arises: according to Witte (2006), who has distinguished between 6 reading levels, the Shakespeare plays are scaled as level 6 texts. A level 6 text is the most difficult and challenging text to read.

This is where I would like to bring in *Richard III*. Because it is a history play, the use of *Richard III* might overlap with subjects such as History or Sociology; subjects taught at Dutch secondary schools. The use of background information on the time frame in History might make it easier for pupils to understand the play when discussing it in their English class. In other words, the discussion of a history play like *Richard III* might provide material for an interdisciplinary project. In addition, using a history play instead of the more commonly used plays such as *Romeo and Juliet* might present a nice change of perspective. Usually, plays such as *Romeo and Juliet* or *Hamlet* are used to be read in class, because these are the plays students usually know. However, I think that introducing a history play could be a valuable addition to the curriculum, as it is a good way to show students how Shakespeare's history plays are not only relevant for British history, but for the understanding of the history of many other countries as well.

The goal of this thesis is to find a way of making *Richard III*, the history play and its themes, an appropriate subject to teach at VWO 4, VWO 5 or 6 level at Dutch secondary schools. VWO pupils are the A level pupils. In order to investigate this, I propose the following research question:

“What are the key aspects when it comes to designing a lesson plan for teaching *Richard III*?”

To investigate this research question, I propose the following sub-questions:

- » “What are the requirements of the Common European Framework of References and the Dutch literature curriculum when it comes to English literature teaching at Dutch secondary schools?”
- » “What are the key themes of *Richard III*?”
- » “How can the character of Richard III be explained?”
- » “Which didactic methods from the literature can be found in the analysed lesson plans?”
- » “Which improvements to the exemplary lesson plan can be made to teach *Richard III* to Dutch secondary school pupils?”

The reason for including the second and third sub-questions is that knowledge about these subjects is useful for both an analysis of the play, as well as for sharing these insights with students. In order to provide teachers with a framework to incorporate *Richard III* into their literature curriculum, I think it is crucial to make an argument as to why this play is a good and useful addition to the curriculum. I will make this argument in the second and third sub-sections. The fourth and fifth sections are about the didactic methods used for teaching *Richard III* and how to improve them. Based on the literature, a lesson plan was devised and taught to VWO 5 level pupils. After the lesson series of two lessons, the pupils had to fill out a questionnaire about the lesson series. This questionnaire will be analysed and the results will be discussed.

In this thesis, I would like to explore various didactic methods for teaching *Richard III* by means of looking at the themes of the play. One of the issues for discussion in *Richard III* discussed

in this research is “image”. This theme might be used to provide a link to the media, and a comparison between the ‘historical’ King Richard III and the king in the play can be made. For example, students may be given an exercise to do a web quest on *Richard III* now that his remains have been found<sup>1</sup>. Another link between the media and *Richard III* is the fact that this play can be seen as a piece of propaganda.

Another aim is to provide a framework for English teachers in The Netherlands. This framework might help them to incorporate Shakespeare into their lessons, and into the literature curriculum. Hopefully, English teachers can use the outcomes of this research as a basis for their lesson plans. Moreover, I will argue that teaching Shakespeare’s history play *Richard III* should not be restricted to English class, because it can also be used in History and Sociology lessons, thus providing an extension to other subjects or disciplines. This extension to other subjects might make teaching *Richard III* more efficient, because, for example, in History a time frame of the Elizabethan period can be provided. In Sociology, the role of the media can be discussed, which leaves more time for the English teacher to go into the actual Shakespearean play.

Finally, I would like to point out the relevance of this thesis for myself as an English teacher in The Netherlands. Currently, I am working at a school in Utrecht where one Shakespeare play is taught in VWO 5. Usually, this is a play or a comedy, such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, or *The Merchant of Venice*. My personal goal is to try and find out if there is a place for the history play in this curriculum. Hoenselaars (139) states that the history play is a genre that covers the “late medieval English past, as they depict successive monarchs in their attempts to secure their position and protect the nation’s integrity.” One history play that I think would be suited for this is *Richard III*, because it shows the power of propaganda and the difference between history and historiography. I would very much like to have the opportunity to create a lesson series based on this thesis, and

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<sup>1</sup> Freeman, David, “King Richard III Of England Skeleton Shows Deformity & Deadly Wounds, Scientists Say.” *Huffinton Post*: 02/04/2013: <[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/04/king-richard-iii-england-skeleton-deformity-wounds\\_n\\_2615234.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/04/king-richard-iii-england-skeleton-deformity-wounds_n_2615234.html)>

teach *Richard III*. As an educator, I would like to teach my students that there are many layers in *Richard III*, and that this play is still relevant today. We may have more advanced means of spreading news items and communicating, but these news items are still being censored. We only get to read and see what editors decide ends up in a newspaper or on the news, and in this way it has not changed how we find out what happens in the world. In Shakespeare's time, many people were illiterate and only had the Church and artists to teach them about subjects such as history. Shakespeare's history plays were a way for the people of Britain to learn about their nation's history. Furthermore, seeing that King Richard III is portrayed as a villain, it benefitted the queen (Elizabeth I) that her grandfather (Henry VII) was portrayed as a saviour of the people of England. In other words, *Richard III* may have been written to make sure that the people of Britain saw their monarch as secure and rightfully on the throne. This particular portrayal of King Richard III in *Richard III* is known as the Tudor Myth.

Also, I would like to teach my students that there is a difference between the King Richard III who was once a monarch of Great Britain, and the character Richard III. While teaching my students about these differences, I would like to point out that we will probably never know who the 'real' King Richard III was, because history as it is written down is always biased, and we can never get to the 'real' past because it is past. What we call the past is our individual and contemporary representation of the 'past'. Students will have to read critically, and may also think about what they are reading. What I would like to achieve is that they do not take everything in without considering other possibilities and scenarios.

## **1. Theoretical Framework**

In this theoretical section, I will explain what the Common European Framework of References is, and how this is applied in The Netherlands. Moreover, I will explain what the levels of literary competence introduced by Theo Witte are, and how these affect the teaching of literature. Then, I will move on to discussing the context in which *Richard III* was written, and what the key themes in this play are.

### **1.1 What are the requirements of the Common European Framework of References and the Dutch literature curriculum when it comes to English literature teaching at Dutch secondary schools?**

The Common European Framework of References is an initiative of the Council of Europe. Its aim is to create European standards concerning language learning. The CEFR (1) states “what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively.” In the four basic language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) the Framework describes three levels of competence: A (basic user), B (independent user), and C (proficient user) (23). Each of these three levels is subdivided into two stages. The level of basic user is divided between A1 (breakthrough), and A2 (waystage). Next, the independent user level is split up between B1 (threshold), and B2 (vantage). Finally, the level of proficient user is divided between C1 (effective operational proficiency), and C2 (mastery) (23). By the time secondary school pupils are taking their final exams, A level students are supposed to be at level B2 for reading competence. To keep track of the level you are in as a student, most didactic methods have a table at the beginning of each chapter that states in which level you are. This is done in the form of can-do statements, for example “and the end of this chapter you will be able to...”.

Moving on to the Dutch literary curriculum, I will first explain some of the developments in this area. In 1998, the “Tweede Fase” (Second Phase), was introduced in Dutch secondary schools. The “Tweede Fase” means that the pupils in the second half of their secondary school period have to choose between four course profiles: Culture and Society, Economy and Society, Nature and Health, or Nature and Technology. The first two course profiles are directed at the Humanities and Social science, the third and fourth course profiles are directed at the Hard sciences. The aim of the “Tweede Fase” is to guide pupils towards an independent learning strategy. This means that the role of the teacher has shifted from classroom teaching to guiding the pupils through their lesson material. Schools were given the liberty to design their own school exams, which weighed as 50% of the final grades of the pupils at the end of their secondary school time.

With the liberty of designing their own school exams, schools also have a certain freedom in composing their own literature reading lists, as long as pupils adhere to the end requirements as established by the Dutch Ministry of Education. In his article entitled “Op zoek naar een ‘gezond’ curriculum voor literatuuronderwijs” (Looking for a ‘healthy’ curriculum for literature education), Theo Witte (1) argues that this unstructured literature curriculum is the cause of problems in the connection between pupils and literature education. There are no clear-cut learning goals or teaching methods (Witte, 3), which leads to students having difficulty in seeing structure in the information provided in the lessons. Pupils have made it known that they experience problems relating the information they acquired in class to the literary works they are required to read. Moreover, literature education is not cross-curricular. This means that, for example, the literary terms that are discussed in Dutch class do not necessarily accord with the literary terms that are discussed in English class. This adds to the confusion that pupils experience, when they are required to do their homework and activities one way for Dutch, another way for English, and yet another way for German. According to Witte (15-16) teachers need to be able to choose from a database of literary works of different reading levels in order to be able to advise their pupils on which literary works are suitable for them

to read. Furthermore, Witte recommends that teachers of the language courses discuss at which levels they want the students to arrive at the end of the school year. In addition, pupils who receive literary history as a course – i.e. the VWO level students – remark that they feel like they lack background information on the subjects. Witte recommends that literature teachers cooperate with history teachers in order to make sure the lesson material is coherent.

As a solution to the incoherence of the literature curriculum, Witte has established six reading levels, one being the lowest and six being the highest level. Level 1 is scaled at very limited literary competence; level 2 at limited literary competence; level 3 at modest literary competence; level 4 at fairly broad literary competence; level 5 at broad literary competence; and level 6 at sophisticated literary competence (translations from Stolz: 2009). For each level Witte defines what the pupils' skills, reading level, and literary knowledge are. Along with this, he provides a short list with examples of Dutch books for each reading level. For example, level 1 (limited literary competence) indicates that the pupil can only read books that are close to his experiences, have a simple plot and few or no flashbacks.

According to Witte, Shakespeare's plays and sonnets are scaled at level 5 to 6, which are the levels of broad to sophisticated literary competence. At level 5 pupils are able to read and understand complex literature written before 1880. Their general, historical, and literary knowledge is sufficient to read and understand modern and older, classical texts. The pupils are willing to read these texts and willing to go deeper into the socio-historical context of the book, as well as the themes and writing structure. The task of the teacher is to provide readers who have accomplished level 5 to put the text in a literary-historical context and expand the readers' knowledge in terms of style, literary conventions, and literary history. On a side note, not every student may be willing to read and go into socio-historical context of the literary work. They may have the ability to read text on a high level, such as level 5, but lack the motivation to do so regularly.

At level 6 pupils are able to read texts that are more difficult than level 5 literary works. Level 6 texts have an experimental writing style, and a layered and complex structure that makes it difficult to understand the plot. The text has abstract motives, and refers to other texts (intertextuality). In other words, level 6 readers can be described as academic readers. As in level 5, level 6 readers' general historical and literary knowledge is sufficient to read and understand difficult books. Their general knowledge should also be adequate to help the level 6 readers to relate events from the book to current events. The level 6 readers are willing to read level 6 books, and enjoy the fact that books help them understand the real world. The task of the teacher is to motivate the level 6 readers to expand their knowledge regarding literature, and to relate their literary knowledge to other subjects.

Shakespeare texts can be scaled in at level 5 or 6. However, it should be noted that not all secondary school students will be able to achieve such a high reading level. In theory this means that not every student will be able to read Shakespeare. However, with the guidance of a teacher students may be able to read Shakespeare.

## 1.2 What are the key themes of *Richard III*?

### *The history play as a genre*

First, in order to discuss the themes of *Richard III*, I would like to discuss the history play in terms of its literary genre. I think a genre discussion would clarify some of the themes in the play. The history play can be seen as distinct genre, typical of the sixteenth century (Hoenselaars 137-138). However, as the genre of the history play is a relatively new one during this period, ambiguities arise.

Hoenselaars explains that the editions published during Shakespeare's lifetime are listed under different genres than they are in the Folio edition put together by Heminges and Condell (138). For example, in the 1597 quarto of *Richard III* is referred to as a tragedy, while we know it as a history play. Hoenselaars (139) explains that the history play distinguishes from the other genres in its "primary interest in the late medieval English past, as they depict successive monarchs in their attempts to secure their position and protect the nation's integrity." Another characteristic of the history play, Hoenselaars (139) says, is "the delineation of personal and political identities throughout, as well as the complex interaction between more or less traditional Christian perceptions of kingship on the one hand and, on the other, the pragmatic views of statecraft as formulated by Niccolò Machiavelli' and his contemporaries."

Shakespeare wrote ten Histories, starting with the reign of King John, and ending with *The Life of King Henry the Eighth*. However, Shakespeare did not write the history plays chronologically. The Histories are divided into the first tetralogy, which consists of the three *Henry VI* plays, and *Richard III*, and the second tetralogy, which consists of *Richard II*, *1 and 2 Henry IV*, and *Henry V* (Chernaik,7). Shakespeare's main sources were Thomas's More's *History of King Richard III* (c. 1513), Edward Halle's *Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Yorke and Lancaster* (c. 1548), Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1587), the anthology *The*

*Mirror of Magistrates* (1559-87), and the poem *The Civil Wars between the Two Houses of York and Lancaster* (1595) by Samuel Daniel (Hoenselaars 139).

### *The history of the Wars of the Roses and King Richard III*

King Richard III is both a historical monarch and a stage character. However, a distinction must be made between the historical figure and the protagonist of the play. Richard was born as the youngest child of Richard Plantagenet, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of York, and his wife Cecily Neville. Richard had three older brothers, Edward, Edmund, and George. Edward later became King Edward IV. He also had three older sisters, Anne, Elizabeth, and Margaret. Richard Plantagenet died when his youngest son was eight. Richard's father died in the Battle of Wakefield where the Yorkists fought the Lancastrians in the Wars of the Roses.

The Wars of the Roses started in 1455, with the first open battle at St Albans, north of London. The war started when the House of York had an equally good claim on the throne as the House of Lancaster. The Wars of the Roses takes its name to the family symbols of the two rivaling families: the red Lancashire rose, and the white York rose. At the start of the Wars of the Roses, King Henry VI ruled the country with the help of his wife Queen Margaret. The First Battle of St Albans was won by the Yorkists, and the king was captured. More battles followed, and a period of relative peace existed during the reign of Edward IV. When Edward IV died, he left the throne to his twelve-year-old son; Edward V. Richard was named Lord Protector of the realm, as his nephew was too young to rule. Edward V would be crowned at his coming of age. However, Richard took the crown and imprisoned Edward V and his younger brother Richard, who was nine. The two princes were imprisoned in the Tower of London, and were never seen since their imprisonment. To this day it remains a mystery where they went. Richard ruled two years as King Richard III and his reign ended with the Battle of Bosworth, where Henry Tudor – later Henry VII – defeated him. After

Henry was crowned king, he married Elizabeth of York and thus united the Yorkshire rose and the Lancaster rose ending the Wars of the Roses.

As a historical figure, King Richard III is known for many offences, but also for many virtues. On the one hand, Zeeveld says that Richard III created good laws, reduced excessive taxation, established local administrations of justice, and was lenient towards offenders (947). In addition, Zeeveld (947) says that Richard was praised for his “extraordinary physical bravery, his discretion, moderation, and disregard for luxury.” Zeeveld (947) is of the opinion that Richard might be preferred over his brother Edward IV “who had notably abused his public office and had squandered his talents in lustful living.”

On the other hand, Richard had many foes and was a relatively unpopular king. It is many of his unpopular acts that have made him such a disliked king. He may have been responsible for killing king Henry VI and his son Prince Edward, in the name of faithful service to his brother King Edward IV. Richard is also suspected of killing his brother Clarence and his nephews Edward V and Richard. Richard is most infamous for the murder of his two nephews in the Tower. However, none of these offences were ever proven to be true, but still many of Richard’s opponents joined Henry Tudor in the Battle of Bosworth. Richard’s army lost this battle and Richard was killed at this battle. It was only in 2012 that his remains were found under a car park in Leicester, UK.

### *The Tudor Myth*

One of the things that made *Richard III* famous is the Tudor Myth. The Tudor Myth is a negative representation of the reign of Richard III, with the purpose of putting the Tudors in a better position. As mentioned earlier, Henry VII defeated Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth. This battle meant the end of the Wars of the Roses when Henry VII, a Lancastrian from his mother’s side, married Elizabeth of York, the daughter of Edward IV and niece of Richard III. However, Richard III was an anointed king and Henry VII was an invader with a remote claim on the throne. In other words,

Henry's claim was weak and he needed a means to secure the throne. That is where the Tudor Myth comes into the picture.

According to Zeeveld (946), the Tudor myth originated when hardly ten years after the accession of Henry VII, John Rous initiated the legend of Richard's deformity. However, now that the skeleton of Richard has been found in a car park in Leicester in 2011, it was confirmed that Richard had a curved spine (David, 2013). This means that his right shoulder may have been higher than his left, which means that Richard had an actual deformity. It is still unknown if this means that he would have had a limp. The finding of Richard's skeleton plays an important role in finding out on which facts the Tudor Myth is built, and which part of the myth is fiction.

Also, Rous charged Richard III of the murder of Henry VI, the princes in the Tower of London, Rivers, Hastings, and the poisoning of his wife Anne. However, it was the piece by Sir Thomas More, *History of King Richard III*, that became one of the best known manifestations of the Tudor Myth. Zeeveld (946) argues that this might be because his portrait of the villain king was "of such a high standard of literary excellence that subsequent historians adopted it with little variation." Moreover, More's text was one of Shakespeare's sources for his play *Richard III*, which popularized Richard's deformity and wickedness. In other words, Zeeveld claims that Shakespeare fixed the legend of Richard III as an evil king. However, it remains unknown who initiated the Tudor Myth and to which purposes. It appears as though the Tudor Myth is a case of historiography. In this case that would mean that the bad image of Richard III is not simply due to More's writing, but to more writers who all spread the same ideas.

Hoenselaars (143), on the other hand, claims that Henry VII himself started the Tudor myth and Shakespeare supported it. Hoenselaars (143) states that the reason for Henry VII's eagerness to rewrite the history of England may have originated from his desire to remain "silent about the remaining genealogical queries that could undermine the nation's peace and stability all over again." This way, *Richard III* can be seen as a means of propaganda in the favour of the Tudors.

As a character in Shakespeare's *King Richard III*, the king is known for his wicked schemes, his deformity, and his cruel reign, his sense of humour, his deft control of rhetoric. For a large part, this is due to the Tudor myth created by Rous, More, Shakespeare and Henry VII. As was mentioned earlier, the Tudor Myth was used as a means of propaganda in favour of the Tudors. Depicting Richard as wicked, deformed, and cruel added to the credibility of the Tudor Myth. As I will explain in the following section, deformity was seen as a sign of wickedness.

### *Themes of Richard III highlighted: Deformity, masculinity, power, and image*

Moving on to the actual themes of *Richard III*, I have highlighted four themes that I think are important for understanding the play. The first theme is "deformity", the second is "masculinity", the third is "power", and the fourth is "image".

I. Starting with deformity Torrey (123) argues that Richard's misshapen body can portray a number of things. Richard's body might reveal "not only his own moral condition but that of the state and the world as well." Torrey (126) discovers remarkable events in the play. He says that "[i]n the course of the play, his body alternately does and does not seem to give him away." This means that Richard's victims at times seem to know what he is, and other times they do not. For example, when Anne is wooed by Richard, she both accuses him of the murder of her husband and agrees to marry Richard at the end of this scene.

According to Torrey, a misshapen body might be a sign for a misaligned soul. Torrey says that Francis Bacon argued that deformity is a sign of boldness, industry, and watchfulness (137). A distinction can even be made in terms of ugliness. Torrey (134) says that "[s]uperficial ugliness, by virtue of its superficiality, has little impact on either the person in question or the opinion of others, while more severe deformity alters the soul and by implication reveals that alteration." In Richard's case, his deformity started as a physical condition, but turned into a spiritual condition. It seems that in the course of the third of the *Henry VI* play, Richard's schemes and lust for power increase in their

villainy. At the beginning of *Richard III* he is a real villain and much like the Vice in the medieval play. This means that Richard is the representation of evil, and therefore he has to pay for his actions.

Moreover, Torrey (139-140) mentions that Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard is consistent with Tudor historiography, "which constructed Richard as a deformed villain." In relation to the earlier comment about deformity as a character reading, this means that Richard's ability to deceive others stems from his deformity. By making Richard deformed, Shakespeare suggests that Richard's evil was easily known (141). As I said earlier, deformed people were considered evil because of their ugliness. It was thought that a misaligned body meant the soul was also misaligned. In addition, Torrey (141) says that "By combining deformity and deception, Shakespeare sets these two elements of Richard's character against each other; his ability to deceive repeatedly complicates the semiotic status of his deformity." This means that on the one hand, the signs of Richard's physical deformity are visible to everybody. On the other hand, by betraying others, Richard's inner deformity also becomes apparent. At times, Chernaik (59) says that Richard even uses his deformity as an excuse to betray others, as "nature has cheated him."

II. The second theme to be discussed here is "masculinity". Ian Frederick Moulton (251) has argued that "any patriarchal society is the control of the masculine aggressivity, violence, and self-assertion that constitute patriarchy's base" Furthermore, Moulton (251) says that "[a]lthough patriarchy depends on male homosocial ties and masculine aggressivity for its organization and enforcement, the masculine values inculcated by patriarchal societies can themselves pose a threat to patriarchal order." In other words, the masculine aspect that is so important to a patriarchal society can also pose a threat to that same society. Moulton mentions that when Shakespeare wrote *Richard III* the political friction between England and Spain created a lot of tension. In combination with the rapid population growth this led to thirty-five outbreaks of disorder in London between 1581 and 1602. These outbreaks of disorder are an example of the unruly masculinity, as it was mainly apprentices, masterless men, servants, and discharged sailors who rebelled. Moulton (253) says that "[t]o foster

on patriarchy's inability to control the masculine aggression it fosters is not to claim that unruly men are the primary victims of patriarchy but rather to point out an important structural incoherence in any society organized around the supremacy of aggressive masculinity." Moreover, Moulton says that a shift took place in the male elite from a warrior culture to a court culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This means that the ideology of masculinity also changed. Masculinity was no longer measured by physical force, but by graceful dancing and measured speech. Years later, with the death of Henry VIII, the monarch became a woman, Queen Elizabeth I. This is supposed to have created great anxiety about unruly masculinity, because people wondered how a woman could perform a task that was perceived as masculine. According to Moulton, the Elizabethan stage reacted to these events in the history play (254).

Moulton says that the feminine and effeminized order is staged in the three *Henry VI* plays (255), while in *Richard III* "a specifically masculine disorder plagues the kingdom (...) until proper patriarchal proportion is reintroduced with the accession of the earl of Richmond as Henry VII." The feminine comes to the fore in the *Henry VI* plays with the king. Henry VI came to the throne as an infant, which means that he became king before he became masculine. In early modern England, boys were not separated from their sisters and given distinctly masculine attire until they were seven. At the age of seven, boys were given their masculine attire and became masculine. Henry VI ascended the throne as an infant of nine months, and he never made the important transition from child to man. Thus, he is seen as feminine. In this way, the feminine threatens the masculine society, which has become dysfunctional. Moulton (258) says that "If, at the beginning of the tetralogy, patriarchy is revealed as dysfunctional and incapable of passing its values to future generations, by 2.5 of 3 *Henry VI* the basic structures of patriarchy are shattered: no longer do fathers and sons share the same ideals and fight side by side; instead the hapless king witnesses the horrible spectacle of fathers killing sons and sons killing fathers." The masculine aggression gets out of control without a

strong masculine royal authority and turns to devour itself. It is the deformed body of Richard III that represents this unruly masculinity.

In terms of deformity and masculinity, Richard thinks his deformity sets him apart, when actually it is his masculine aggression that constitutes his monstrosity (262). Moulton (262) explains that his ambitions “become monstrous when cut loose from the structure of bonds between male warriors which constitutes English ruling-class society.” Richard becomes alienated from patriarchal order which gives his deformity significance. This is reflected in his hatred, scorn and fear of the feminine. Moulton (266) says that Richard feels incapable to love women, and “endorses a (demonstrably false) opposition between effeminate love and masculine conquest and makes his “heaven to dream upon the crown.”” In other words, the effeminate and masculine are opposites according to Moulton.

III. The third important theme in *Richard III* is that of “power”. Chernaik (51) says that “Shakespeare’s play is an anatomy of tyranny, dramatizing the tyrant’s rise and fall.” In the play, Richard takes over the crown after the death of his brother Edward. His eldest nephew, Edward V, was his father’s successor and his uncle Richard was to be Lord Protector. However, Richard crowned himself instead and became the ruling monarch after the death of Edward IV. Richard locked away his two nephews in the Tower of London, and nothing was heard of them afterwards. In other words, Richard took over the power from his nephew Edward V. Chernaik (53) mentions that “Richard uses his skills as an actor – his ability to “frame my face to all occasions... [c]hange shapes with Proteus for advantages’, aware at having ‘nothing to back my suit at all [b]ut the pain devil and dissembling looks” to aid him in his shameless pursuit of power.” This power, however, starts to slip away from him, as does his confidence. When the Earl of Richmond sets foot in England, Richard discovers he “hath no friends but who are friends from fear [w]hich in his greatest need will shrink from his.” (5.2.20-1) At the end of the play, Richard gives up his power when he falls off his horse at

the Battle of Bosworth and is killed by the Earl of Richmond. In short, Richard takes power at the beginning of the play, and gives it up at the end.

What I would like to do now is to explore the notion that power comes with knowledge. Chernaik (51) says that Richard uses his knowledge and skills “to bring about the downfall of possible rivals.” By this, Chernaik (51) means that by using his knowledge Richard is able to grasp the power. In the play Richard plays off “the Queen and her fraction against Clarence and Hastings, ruthlessly dispatching both Clarence and Hastings while pretending friendship to them.” In other words, Richard causes stir and disquiets people in order to gain more power. In both Shakespeare’s play and More’s text, Hastings is blind to Richard’s true nature. Hastings is too trusting, and both Shakespeare and More use this to demonstrate Richard’s tyrannical power (52). The same goes for Clarence, who is also too trusting of his brother. Clarence believes that Richard will intervene on his behalf when he is about to be executed for pursuing the crown, while in truth Richard is the evil force behind this scheme.

Moreover, Chernaik (53) says that Richard uses his skill as an actor “to aid him in his shameless pursuit of power.” Another argument by Chernaik (53) in favour of Richard as a skilled and clever actor is that his “cosy, intimate relationship with the theatrical audience complicates any moral judgement and keeps us from siding entirely with his victims.” Richard is too clever to entirely keep everyone in the audience from regarding him as the bad guy. He has ambitions and wants to pursue these ambitions. In addition, not only is Richard a good actor, but he also takes delight in his acting and deceiving.

When discussing Richard’s deformity I mentioned that Richard could be compared to the Vice in the medieval morality play. Characteristic of the Vice is that he exults in his role as demonic jester (Chernaik, 54). In addition to being a Vice in terms of looks, Richard can also be seen as a Vice in terms of his acting and deceiving.

IV. The fourth theme is that of “image”. This theme connects to the Tudor Myth. Richard’s image has changed because of the Tudor Myth. We can recall that as a king Richard also created good laws, reduced taxation, and established a local administration of justice. However, due to the Tudor Myth people have tended to forget this and Richard comes off as a bad king. Now that Richard has been found in a parking lot in Leicester in 2012, scientists have been able to confirm a curvature of the spine, but have been unable to confirm if he would have limped or had a withered arm (BBC).

Focussing on “image”, we may identify Shakespeare as a historiographer as well as a playwright. With his play *Richard III* Shakespeare may have added to the Tudor Myth. Shakespeare’s history plays added to the formation of a national British identity by sharing knowledge of the history of Britain. However, history as it is written down is always biased, which means that no one can ever retell history objectively or record it without adopting a point of view. Following this line of thought, Shakespeare too, inevitably, had a point of view when retelling the story of Richard III. In this light we might see Shakespeare as a historiographer. In addition, we can also see Shakespeare as a playwright who would have wanted to sell a good story. Writing plays was Shakespeare’s living, and in order to make a good living he would have had to write exiting and intriguing plays that also pleased the queen.

I should note that these arguments are only my interpretation of the matter. Should I discuss this subject in class, I would encourage my students to come up with their own interpretations. My point of view is that anyone could come up with their own interpretation, on the precondition that they are able to argue why, or why not, they hold a certain point of view with reference to the themes that are discussed here. To show how these four key themes are reflected in the character of Richard III, I will devote another section to a character exploration of Richard III. This interpretation will be my own, and it will hopefully help Dutch teachers to get an overview of how the character of Richard III relates to these four key themes.

### 1.3 A character exploration of Richard III

As I mentioned in the previous section, there is a difference between the king Richard who actually lived in and ruled England and the main character of the play *Richard III*. In this section I will explore the stage character. First, I must comment that everyone can have their own interpretation of Richard's character. In this light, there are many interpretations to be found, of which I will share some. In addition, I will give my own interpretation. The aim of this section is to shed light on the connection between the key themes of *Richard III* and the personality of the character Richard III. I found that there are similarities between the key themes of the play and the personality of its main character.

In his book, Chernaik dedicates a chapter to *Richard III*, and the character Richard III. This chapter is titled 'Determined to prove a villain: *Richard III*' (45-69). Chernaik argues here that Richard is the embodiment of the Vice from the medieval morality play, which is a genre that was still very popular in Shakespeare's time (Pearlman, 421). The Vice is a character who, in a clownish and humoristic manner, is the embodiment of evil and wickedness. Moreover, the Vice pretends to be exactly what he is not. In other words, the Vice "murders and smiles simultaneously" (Pearlman, 421). According to Pearlman, we can even go so far as to assume that the Vice always has an alternative personality. This means that Hypocrisy claims to be Friendship, Revenge tends to be Courage, and so on (422).

As I mentioned in the previous section, one thing that used to make someone ridiculous was deformity. It happens to be that Richard is deformed. In the play he is said to have had a hunched back and a limp. This, Richard believed, set him apart. In other words, he was not like the others. Returning to our discussion of the embodiment of the Vice, Chernaik (54) says that "One of Richard's roles is that of the clown, generating 'roars of laughter at wickedness...'" Richard even assigns himself this role, when he says:

Thus like the formal Vice Iniquity,

I moralize two meanings in one word. (3.1.82-3)

In other words, by saying that in each word he conveys two meanings, Richard explains to the audience how he embodies the Vice. He says he is not who people think he is.

I would like to bring up that Richard did not make his first appearance in *Richard III*, but in *2 Henry VI*. Richard then makes an appearance in *3 Henry VI*, and finally in *Richard III*. Pearlman (1992) talks about the creation of Richard III in his article ‘The Invention of Richard of Gloucester’ and he explains that Richard is developed in the course of three plays: *3 Henry VI* and *Richard III*. It is in the course of these plays that Shakespeare develops Richard as the embodiment of the Vice. Pearlman says that Richard started out as “deformed, audacious, and bloodthirsty” in *2 Henry VI*. Then, in the course of *3 Henry VI* Richard develops into a character that is evolving a skill for disguise and pretence. In other words, this is where Shakespeare starts to turn Richard into the embodiment of the Vice. In *Richard III*, Richard undergoes another transformation. From being the Vice of the play, he also becomes a Machiavellian prince (Pearlman, 422). By this I mean that Richard develops from the Vice – a character with two faces – into a political analyst who uses knowledge to get ahead.

Moving on to the connection between Richard’s character and the key themes of *Richard III*, I would first like to elaborate on the theme of deformity. With Richard being misshapen, deformity is a major theme of *Richard III*. As I mentioned earlier, Torrey (123) points out that the deformity not only points out the physical condition of Richard, but also his mental condition. The reason for this is that people used to think that a misshapen body might be a sign for a misaligned soul (Torrey, 137). In other words, by having a deformity someone would be evil by personality. According to Chernaik (59) that is also the assumption Richard makes of himself. Chernaik (59) says that Richard suggests his deformity “has shaped, has helped determine his inward nature”.

The second theme that is also a character trait of Richard is masculinity. According to Moulton (258) Richard's masculinity is connected to his deformity. Usually, the crown is passed on from father to son. However, in *Richard III* this is interrupted. After King Edward died, his son was not yet of age and Richard was assigned as Lord Protector. However, things took a different turn. Richard decided that if he wanted the crown, he should take it now. He imprisoned his nephews in the Tower and ruled the country as King Richard III. According to Moulton (259) this change of succession might be due to Richard's masculine aggression getting out of control and devouring itself. It is the deformed body of Richard that represents this unruly masculinity. It was not only because of his unruly masculinity that Richard took the opportunity to rule, but because of the combination of his deformity (being inwardly evil) and his unruly masculinity.

The third character trait that connects to Richard character is power. I have tried to explain that Richard is a very intelligent character. I explored the idea that power comes with knowledge. Richard does not lack knowledge, and at a certain point power is within his grasp. In the course of *Richard III*, Richard rises to power and then falls. In pursuing power, Richard uses a combination of intelligence and his deformity. However, Richard is not intelligent enough to stop his power from slipping away. In the end, playing off one character against the other turns out bad for Richard. His once trusted friends abandon him at the Battle of Bosworth, and Richard loses and dies. In other words, Richard's ambition for power is both his drive for more and his downfall.

Furthermore, it is not merely the literal grasping of power that Richard is skilled in. He is also skilled in the power to persuade the people around him to do certain things. In act 1.2 of *Richard III* he persuades Anne to marry him.

The fourth issue for discussion of the play is image. This is an issue for discussion that is not directly a character trait, but it can be related to Richard's character. In his own way, Richard cares about what people think of him. Pearlman (421) says that Richard admits that he is jealous of his brothers, and the reason for this is his deformity. In addition, Pearlman (421) states that because of

this deformity Richard says that he cannot be “a man to belou’d [sic].” He is not destined to be loved by women, and therefore he aims for the crown to get a sense of fulfilment. He needs the crown in order to feel whole.

After the real Richard III’s death, the character of Richard III was created by several authors and playwrights. When Shakespeare created the character of Richard III, Pearlman (411) believes that he experimented with the character, saying that Shakespeare “may well have discovered that the Richard who served adequately in a minor part in *2 Henry VI* was too unmarked for the more central role he would now enact.” Pearlman (411) explains that in the first two acts, Shakespeare seems to have experimented with the character, and only in the third act “does the ironic, leering, self-conscious, and devilish character with whom audiences have become familiar emerge.” It is also suggested by Pearlman (411) that, while experimenting, Shakespeare discovered themes that would come back in other plays as well: jealousy and brotherhood.

In my view, Richard is a complex character. He is a prince looking for his place in the royal family. His brother, Edward IV, became king when he and his brothers defeated Henry VI. The two other brothers became Duke of Clarence (George) and Duke of Gloucester (Richard). That was the highest possible office for them. When Edward got sons, Richard became further removed from the throne. In order to rule, he had to eliminate all his opponents. And so he did. First, he imprisoned his nephews. Then, he took out his brother George. Apart from Richmond (the later Henry VII), the way to the throne is now free. Using his knowledge, Richard seizes power in a very Machiavellian way: analysing politics. In other words, Richard is such an intelligent man with a great hunger for power that he eventually becomes a tyrant.

Then, Richard is also a man who seeks fulfilment. Being deformed, Richard has always been different from his brothers. He has never had the physical strength his brothers have, and because of that, he does not feel whole. In order to feel whole, Richard pursues the crown. However, when he

eventually gains the crown he realises he is not supported by the nobles who supported his brother Edward. At the end of the play, Richard is defeated and a new ruler enters the stage: Henry VII.

In addition, what makes Richard a complex character is that we know about the Tudor Myth. The difference between the stage character Richard III and the historical figure Richard III is one that is difficult to make. Earlier, I argued that written history is always historiography. In other words, we will never know the truth behind the Tudor Myth and Shakespeare's role in this. However, that may also be the reason why *Richard III* is still relevant today and that we are still discussing it.

In the next chapter I will discuss earlier didactic methods that were used for teaching *Richard III*. Next to that, I will describe the lesson plans I analysed, and provide an analysis of these lesson plans. In addition, I will discuss the results of the questionnaire and try to reach a conclusion on the key elements for designing a lesson series on *Richard III*.

### **3. Analysis**

In this section, different choices are explored in terms of didactic methods. Exemplary lesson plans are used to explore the different options for lesson material and exercises. Below I will explain which opinions there are with regard to teaching Shakespeare to Second Language Learners of English. I will discuss the views of three authors: Carrasco (2001), Collins (1990), and Korcsolán (2011). Then, I will discuss the lesson series I designed based on the views of these authors and discuss the results of the questionnaire.

#### **3.1 Earlier didactic methods**

In her article, Carrasco (2001) writes about teaching *Romeo and Juliet* to Second Language learners of English. Carrasco (14) describes ESL learners as “students who need a little bit of special help with English as a second language.” Because ESL learners are still learning English, it is important to provide language acquisition while also teaching about drama. According to Carrasco (2), the aim of teaching Shakespeare, and in this case *Romeo and Juliet*, is to “help our students understand their world better and, therefore, our goal would be to enable them to express their feelings more accurately by giving their personal opinions and treatment to certain topics in their second language.” One way of teaching Shakespeare to (ESL) students is to have them perform the play in question (Carrasco 2001, Collins 1990), because Shakespeare wrote his plays to be acted.

To solve the problem of teaching Shakespeare to ESL learners, Carrasco is of the opinion that it is important that teachers provide contexts. These are important to help students understand the setting of the play, how it was written, why part of the text is in prose, some in verse, how it was performed, and more such questions. There are various activities to create contexts. One of these could be to build a model Elizabethan theatre.

Another thing teachers must bear in mind is that English is their students’ second language. The students are likely to have greater difficulty with Shakespeare’s language than native speakers of

English. In other words, while teaching Shakespeare to ESL students, the focus lies on language. Consequently, it would be advisable for teachers to work with a number of different versions of the play. This means that, next to the 'original' version of the play (a more or less standard version of the text), teachers might also use prose adaptations, plot summaries, characters, and different acts from the play. Next to this, the introduction of the 'original' version of the play should be timed in such a way that it makes sense to the students. This means that the teacher takes into account the level of English their students have. Carrasco (2) points out that she will not introduce the original work to her ESL students from the very beginning, because it would sound strange to them. Only when the students become more familiar with the play and its author does she introduce the original work. Carrasco (2) says that the students will be ready for the play, without getting frustrated with it. Korcsolán (13-14) agrees and says that teachers have "to plan carefully before exposing students to authentic texts, which they might experience as incomprehensible, confusing, and eventually pointless." To avoid this, teachers are advised to find a proper match between text and task appropriate for the learner's level of proficiency. Collins (256-257) also agrees to the provision of context, saying that "students should realize that it is often helpful to look outside the play to what these days are called its contexts."

Before the students can perform the play, they have to read it. Carrasco has designed a series of pre-reading activities, activities while reading the play, and post-reading activities. The pre-reading activities start with historical background. Carrasco mentions activities such as building a model Elizabethan theatre, the explanation of poetry and writing a poem, discussing verse and rhyme in Shakespeare, and looking at imagery. The latter focuses on Shakespeare's use of metaphors and images. For example, what does it mean that Juliet is "the sun rising from the east"? After the introduction and discussion of the topics mentioned above, the students are ready to start reading the play. The students will have sufficient knowledge to study the play in greater detail with regard to the setting, the characters, and the plot (8).

Carrasco has chosen to prepare her students with a summary of the play to familiarize them with the story (8). Next, the class creates a bulletin board which is used to add new information in the course of reading the play. A character web chart is created, explaining the relationships between characters, and character traits and important details are listed. In this way, students have a clear and reliable picture of the dynamics of the play.

Then the play is read act by act, scene by scene. Students are going to debate, write journals, and discuss topics and themes. Depending on the age of the students an adapted version of the play can be used. It is the task of the teacher to provide a text that is appropriate for the learner's level of proficiency. After reading the play and finishing the various activities, Carrasco's students rehearse and perform the play. Carrasco (11) says that "Performing is not only a wonderful way to involve the whole class and work together as a group, but also to get some social skills since many people from the school will be involved in this performance."

In addition, Collins (256) points out that in order to interpret a play, one can study and look at the different decisions actors and directors make in performances. In the classroom this means that the teacher can provide several films and texts, and discuss with the students what the differences are, and how these differences might be interpreted. According to Carrasco (254) in order to help the students interpret a play, either performed or written, the teacher explains and discusses "the nature of interpretation and the nature of metaphor." Various actors interpretations can be shown by, for example, Orson Welles' and Ian McKellen's performance of Macbeth's speeches in the final act. Collins (256) says that, with the use of these two interpretations, he aims to show his students that "The question of how to play the lines inevitably makes clear the way skilful language and, in our own time, carefully edited images can create their own reality." While watching these two different speeches, Collins asks his students what the difference of focus is between the two speeches, and how the actors bring this about. Collins (256) explains that this "involves students closely in the

process of reading and responding to it and brings them to recognize first the resistance of any play to straightforward and unambiguous interpretation.”

While Collins and Carrasco agree that students would benefit from performing Shakespeare’s plays, Korcsolán points out that in L2 education, teachers have to choose whether or not to have their students read the original version of the play, or an adapted version. There are some advantages and disadvantages to both versions. She also talks about the choice of reading the full version or sections. I will start by explaining Korcsolán’s view on reading the modernised version or the original version in the language classroom.

An argument in favour of using a modernised version is that many Shakespearean jokes and references are lost on the reader. Korcsolán (17) says this is the case with adult Second Language Learners, but I think this argument also holds for adolescent Second Language Learners of English. However, the question that arises here is whether the teachers underestimate the learners’ abilities when it comes to reading and deciphering an original text. With the right guidance, students are often capable of tackling a difficult text. The role of the teacher is that he provides his students with extra information and glossaries. Another question that comes to mind is whether a modernised version of the text provides these jokes and references in an understandable way for the reader, or whether these jokes and references are left out of the text.

An argument against reading a modernised version in the language classroom is that the linguistic features of a Shakespearean text are often seen as difficult. However, approximately 90% of Shakespeare’s language is unchanged (17), which means that 90% of the text will not pose problems to fluent speakers of English. From this I conclude that the original version might well be used for the advanced classes of English, where most students are fluent. Reading the standard version of a Shakespearean text, readers will be able to apply the same reading strategies they use for reading modern texts. That is, when they encounter unfamiliar words, students can discover the meaning of the word from the context, ask a fellow student, or look it up in a dictionary or glossary.

According to Korcsolán, classroom teachers often decide against assigning a text to be read in its entirety (12). A reason for this might be that reading a whole text takes time. Also, students might find it difficult to read a whole text in their own time. In addition, spending much of the time reading a text might become boring for students (12). However, Korcsolán (12) explains that reading only sections of a text does not enable students to “summarise the story, discuss the high-lights of the plot, contemplate the message or moral of the story, discuss character developments or ‘what if scenarios’, because they do not know how the actual plot unfolded.” In other words, students might get a limited experience of the text.

The disadvantage of reading a complete text is that there is less time available to read other texts in class (12). As a teacher, one has only a limited amount of time to teach one’s students what the curriculum requires. There are choices to make about the number of texts that should be covered for literature, and how intensely these texts should be covered. Choosing sections of a literary work gives teacher and student more time to cover a wide variety of literary works. This variety might avoid monotony in lessons. Korcsolán (13) states that, should the instructor opt for selections from a literary work, the following factors should be taken into consideration: “students’ interests, needs and linguistic proficiency; and the unfolding of the book’s plot, while keeping in mind the length and nature of the course.”

Concluding from my own theoretical research as in the Theoretical Framework, I think that the explanation of the Tudor Myth is an important factor in teaching *Richard III*. Including the Tudor Myth in discussing *Richard III* might make the relevance the play still has today clear. I argued that in writing *Richard III*, Shakespeare was in a sense also a historiographer. From this viewpoint of Shakespeare as a historiographer, a teacher could place *Richard III* in current (political) affairs. For example, one in-class activity is to try and find out what moves editors from newspapers or the news to select certain affairs and events for their medium. Another activity is to try to see if the Tudor Myth can be confirmed or not. There are a variety of news items where the rediscovery of Richard in

Leicester is discussed. In history books students can find information about Richard's accomplishments during his reign. In addition, there are online reports and news items concerning his deformity. The in-class activity would be to set up a Mythbusters experiment (like the Discovery Channel TV show) and to either confirm or bust the Tudor Myth.

In this section I have covered the choices and decisions teachers have to make when teaching Shakespeare, as well as my own input. In the next section I will analyse four lesson plans and try to find out which choices and decisions teachers have made when developing these lesson plans. I will also try to come to a conclusion regarding teaching *Richard III* in the Dutch language classroom.

### 3.2 Lesson plans

The lesson plans used for this research were all found on the Internet, with the help of Google. All lesson plans and teacher's guides have been selected on the basis of their viewpoint, i.e. film adaptation, stage adaptation, or the use of a text written in Shakespeare's language.

The first lesson plan is from Signet Classics edition of *Richard III*. What is provided in this teacher's guide is a list of characters, a plot synopsis, and activities before reading, activities while reading, and activities after reading.

The second lesson plan is a preparation for Californian students who are going to watch a theatre adaptation of *Richard III*. This teacher's guide provides a plot synopsis, the activity "Richard: the guy you love to hate?", Elizabethan culture, genealogy, a list of victims, the cast of the play, Shakespeare's language including activity, Richard's first soliloquy explained, history versus fiction, manipulation and the truth, the mystery of the princes in the tower, Richard on film, Richard's physicality including activity, and an interview with the director of the play. Also included are learning goals for different subjects concerning *Richard III*, such as English, History, and Art.

The third lesson plan is actually a student guide, which revolves around the movie *Richard III*, directed by Richard Loncraine. It contains information concerning the film and varied activities. This teacher's guide provides a description of the target audience, a very short synopsis, the audience and text, adapting Shakespeare, creating a drama, creating characters, *Richard III* for a modern audience, the opening sequence, adapting a scene, and the opening soliloquy.

### **3.3 Analysis of the lesson plans: which didactic methods from the literature can be found in the lesson plans?**

All three lesson plans have a clear structure. I will start by describing the Signet Classics lesson plan first, then the lesson plan from the California Shakespeare Theater, and finally I will describe the lesson plan for the film adaptation.

#### *Signet Classics*

This lesson plan is aimed at a wide variety of readers, i.e. both native speakers of English and ESL learners. There is room for teachers to add extra context. It discusses the content of the play and only provides little context in the introduction, which is followed by an overview of the play and several activities. When we look at what Carrasco says about the activities, we see that she advises pre-reading activities, activities while reading the play, as well as post-reading activities. In the Signet Classics lesson plan this sequence is maintained.

Secondly, through the pre-reading activities, context is provided on the situation of Richard III. As it stated in the lesson plan (7), “These activities are designed to build students’ background knowledge about the chronology of events, the historical persons, and the themes explored in the play.” Through these exercises, the students themselves acquire information about the play, instead of having the teacher doing all the talking. These pre-reading activities consist of five topics: (a) building background knowledge through a problem situation, (b) building background knowledge through Internet searches, (c) studying genre: characteristics of the history play, (d) initial explorations of themes, and (e) studying Shakespeare’s language. These topics have much in common with Carrasco’s pre-reading activities. She also uses activities to provide a historical background, and studies Shakespeare’s language with her students.

What follows next is that the students read the play. While reading the play, the Signet Classics lesson plan (11) provides activities to “elicit students’ initial responses and lead to analysis

of the themes and ideas explored in the pre-reading activities.” As is the case with the pre-reading activities, the while reading activities are also broken down into topics: (a) getting down initial reactions, (b) reader response, (c) strategies to build students’ dramatic presentation skills, (d) guidelines for teaching drama, and (e) discussion questions. Again there are similarities with Carrasco’s lesson plan. One of the activities is to create a character chart and bulletin board, which serves the purpose of enabling the students to keep track of events in the play and character relations. However, the Signet Classics lesson plan goes into more detail about the play text itself. For example, the Signet Classics lesson plan also takes into account possible reader responses, where students have to describe how they feel about the events of the play. Students are invited to think about and discuss the events of the play by means of close reading activities. Carrasco also invites her students to discuss topics and themes of the play, but she does not explain how she wishes to achieve this.

The post-reading activities of the Signet Classics lesson plan and Carrasco’s lesson series are different. The goal of the post-reading activities of the Signet Classics lesson plan (16) is to engage students “in activities that will deepen their interpretation, help them see connections between the play and other literary works, and provide a creative outlet.” Carrasco’s post-reading activities are to rehearse and perform the play. What we must bear in mind, though, is that Carrasco’s lesson plan is aimed at ESL students only, while the Signet Classics lesson plan is aimed at a broader audience.

### *California Shakespeare Theater*

The second lesson plan to be discussed here is the preparation for Californian students who are going to watch a theatre adaptation of *Richard III*. This lesson plan is designed by the California Shakespeare Theater. They offer programs for young people both in the classroom at school and in the theatre. The goal of this lesson plan (3) is “to engage students with the work on a variety of levels in addition to the live performance.” In the teacher’s guide it states that “students who are prepared are more engaged” and that is why the California Shakespeare Theater offers these programs.

Included in this lesson plan are hand-outs for students, with information such as “What to expect at the Bruns Theater”, ‘Elizabethan culture: some broad generalizations’, “Family tree of Richard III”, “Who’s who in the cast, cast and characters” and more.

Unlike the first lesson plan, this lesson plan does not consist of pre-reading activities, activities during reading, or post-reading activities in the way Carrasco’s lesson plan does. However, there are “before viewing the play” questions and “after viewing the play” questions. The assignment for the students is (7): “Before going to the performance, choose one or two items from the ‘BEFORE Viewing the play’ list below to consider as you watch the play.” In other words, this lesson plan, like that of Carrasco, takes into account that students have to be guided through the play and in this case its performance. The “before viewing the play” questions are themed “What to watch for”. This means that these questions invite the students to think about certain aspects, for example how others treat Richard, the way Richard addresses the audience directly and his reasons for doing this, or if there are moments where Richard does not seem villainous (7). While watching the play, students answer these questions for themselves. Then, when they have seen the play, they choose one or two items from the “AFTER Viewing the play” list. These questions invite the students to form an opinion about Richard III as a person, and to let the students think about Shakespeare’s intentions for the play, and the picture he was trying to paint in this play. The focus here lies on helping the students interpret the play.

However, before the students are able to interpret the play, the teacher also has to prepare his/her students in class. This teacher’s guide provides several hand-outs and topics for teachers to discuss in class. The preparation by the teacher starts with a plot synopsis and background information on Elizabethan culture. This is what Collins (1990: 256-257) calls the provision of context, aimed at making the students realize that it is often useful to look outside or beyond the play in order to understand it better. Then, after focussing on the cast and characters, the focus shifts to Shakespeare’s language. Carrasco says that it is very helpful for ESL students to get help with

reading Shakespeare's language. However, I think the same goes for native speakers of English, because part of Shakespeare's language has aged: some of it is no longer used, or it means different things today. Students often experience difficulty while reading or watching Shakespeare and might gain greater confidence if some focus is placed on Shakespeare's use of language. From this point Richard's first soliloquy is examined. This is also the point from whereon the focus shifts to Richard as a character in the play and Richard as a historical figure. After these topics, the teacher can choose to discuss Richard on film and Richard's deformity. The students are now prepared to watch the play and to review it with the help of the post-viewing questions. In other words, the students have been provided with various contexts, and are familiar with the play and its main character.

### *Watching the movie*

The third lesson plan is a study guide for students who participate in Media Studies, Film, English Literature, and Theatre Studies. The first thing that I notice is that this lesson plan is shorter than the others. This study guide (1) "looks at the process of adapting Shakespeare's play text into a feature film for a nineties audience incorporating narrative, representation and film language." The level of the students who follow this course is GCSE and A' level, which is the Dutch VWO level. The focus of this lesson plan is on Shakespeare's intentions for and choices of the play. In this, Shakespeare's language is also examined, as is consistent with Collins (1990). In order to be able to direct a performance of *Richard III*, or adapt a screenplay of *Richard III*, you have to be able to understand what the play is about, and which (language) choices were made by Shakespeare. This is the information that the lesson plan provides to the students.

First, this lesson plan starts with a synopsis of the play to familiarize students with the play. This is the same step Carrasco (8) takes. Next, the students have to think about the audience and the text, and how to adapt Shakespeare on screen. While covering the subject of Shakespeare adaptation, students have to think about the characters, how to adapt a scene, and (finding) the right locations. An extract from the screenplay of *Richard III* by Ian McKellen and Richard Loncraine is presented

as an example of how to adapt Shakespeare. Finally, the students are going to watch two movie adaptations of *Richard III*: the film by Laurence Olivier (1955), and the movie by Richard Loncraine and Ian McKellen (1995). The lesson plan ends with a description of Richard's character.

As noted earlier, the focus of this lesson plan is the adaptation of Shakespeare's play into a movie. The focus is split up between the play *Richard III* and how to adapt a Shakespeare play, in this case *Richard III*, to a movie the characters of the play are explored, as well as the locations, and the audience. In this way this lesson plan is different from the other lesson plans. Collins (256) briefly mentions that, in order to interpret a play, we have to look at different decisions actors and directors make in their performance. This means that a teacher provides material in the form of different movies and texts, and discusses with the students which choices and decisions are made. This aspect returns in the third lesson plan.

In this section of the thesis I hope to have established the didactic methods from the literature used in my lesson plans. In the next section I will show how these components may be used to create a lesson plan.

### 3.4 Exemplary lesson plan based on the literature

Based on the literature, a lesson plan was created to test the applicability of the concepts found in the literature. The lesson plan was taught at a Havo/Vwo level (A level) school in The Netherlands. The two lessons were built up in the order that was recommended by the literature. First, background information on Shakespeare was provided. This was done by means of an activity in which students first had to think of everything they know about Shakespeare, after which the answers were discussed in class. The teacher was free to add information to that provided by the students. This focus on Shakespeare as a person was a first step in creating a frame for background information, because according to Carrasco (8), students had to have sufficient knowledge to read and study the play.

The second activity consisted of a plot synopsis. This decision was based on Carrasco's advice to use plot summaries, characters, prose adaptations, and other material. In addition, the curriculum of the school where the lessons were given did not allow more than two lessons to teach *Richard III*. Next, the students had to determine who the characters of the play are, and their relationships. After the students had determined who the characters were, the answers were discussed in class and a character chart was created. The aim was to help students to get an overview of all the characters and their relationships.

The third activity discussed two themes of the play: deformity and image. These images were chosen, because they are both apparent in the opening soliloquy. In this part of the lesson, the teacher explained the themes and introduced the Tudor Myth. To make sure that students understood the Tudor Myth, there were two activities that went deeper into the myth. For the first activity students had to explain to each other what the Tudor Myth is. In other words, they had to repeat their teacher's explanation in their own words. This activity helps the teacher to find out if his explanation has been clear, and what he might need to elaborate on. The second activity linked the Tudor Myth to the play *Richard III* by looking at both the themes and the plot synopsis. The students had to think

about how the Tudor Myth relates to the theme image. After a discussion of the answers in class, the teacher and students moved on to the opening soliloquy.

The opening soliloquy was discussed by means of reading the “original” text and watching Ian McKellen perform the opening soliloquy as Richard III. The idea was that students have a visual aid while reading the text, as well as hearing the Shakespearean words pronounced correctly. This provides context to the ESL learners. To further help the students with the actual language, a glossary with difficult words was provided. Carrasco pointed out that ESL learners are still learning the English language, and are therefore known to have more difficulty in reading Shakespeare. That is why a glossary was provided for this final activity. After reading and watching the opening soliloquy, the students were asked to try and figure out the meaning of the opening soliloquy. While doing this, they had to focus on the way Richard describes himself. During this activity, the role of the teacher was to guide the students, and to encourage them to dig deeper.

On a side note, Korcsolán (12) comments that teachers often decide against reading a text in its entirety. In this particular case, there simply was not enough time to read the entire text. The students may need a significant amount of language help, as well as help with the symbolism in the opening soliloquy. At this point it is difficult to say how much time it would take Dutch students to read *Richard III* in its entirety.

To find out what the responses to the lesson series of *Richard III* were, a questionnaire was set up. It consisted of three open questions and thirteen statements which were to be rated on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). In the section below I will explain who the target group was, and the results of the questionnaire.

### 3.5 Analysis of the questionnaire

In this section I will describe the results of the questionnaire. First, I will describe the target group. Second, I will explain the choices that were made with regard to the development of the questionnaire. Third, I will describe the results of the questionnaire.

#### *Target group*

The target group consisted of one 5Vwo class of 22 pupils at the Gerrit van der Veen College in Amsterdam. This school specialises in drama, dance, and music education. Some of these pupils also train and perform at the Dutch Ballet Academy. The Gerrit van der Veen College profiles itself as an educational institution that is primarily culture based (*Cultuur-gebaseerd Onderwijs*). This type of school focuses on the values of art in education. For example, English teachers at the Gerrit van der Veen College use listening assignments that are art related, such as a documentary about the Elmhurst School for Dance.

The questionnaire was filled out by 17 of the 22 pupils. This was due to the fact that 5 students did not follow both lessons. The lessons were taught by an English teacher who has 29 years of experience teaching Dutch Havo/Vwo pupils.

#### *Teacher response*

After the two lessons had been given and the questionnaire had been conducted, I sat down with the teacher who had taught the classes to write down his experiences while teaching *Richard III*. We also talked about the responses and reactions of his pupils during the lessons. First, the teacher noted that students would like to have had more background information on Shakespeare, including more useful and fun facts about his life and his career, and information about the historical period in which he lived. Additionally, the teacher noted that pupils had wanted more information on Shakespeare's writing style, his use of language. To provide this information, the assignment where students have to

read the opening soliloquy could be extended and assignments with a focus on language and writing style added.

The teacher further noted that his pupils found it difficult to create a character map as they were not familiar with the aristocratic titles in the English play. Richard III belongs to the House of York, but his title is that of the Duke of Gloucester. In addition, Richard is referred to as 'G' in the opening soliloquy, which is confusing to the Dutch pupils. A suggestion from the teacher to help pupils through the genealogy is to add extra activities. In the current lesson plan there is only one character building activity. The suggested adjustment is to break the character building activity down into several smaller activities, such as constructing a carefully structured character profile. The end result could be an actual character map that is constructed as a class, or in groups. Additionally, the plot synopsis activity was too short. The teacher noted that pupils still found it difficult to keep track of the story line. This relates to the difficulty to keep track of all the different characters and their titles. In other words, more in-depth information on the characters and the plot line would certainly help pupils to understand *Richard III* better. Also, the teacher noted that as a result of a lack of understanding of the characters and the plot line, pupils also found it hard to spot the two selected themes in the play.

On the other hand, pupils experienced watching the opening soliloquy in the movie as helpful. To hear the unfamiliar words pronounced correctly helped Dutch students to figure out the meaning of the opening soliloquy. In addition, it also helped to see the facial expression of the actor, the gestures, and the setting. In combination with the explanation of the teacher, pupils are better able to come to the meaning of the opening soliloquy.

These were the findings of the teacher. Below I will describe the outcome of the questionnaire.

## *The questionnaire*

As was mentioned earlier, a questionnaire was filled out by the pupils who attended both lessons.

The questionnaire consisted of three open questions, and one question with 13 statements that had to be rated on a scale from 1 (= completely disagree) to 5 (= completely agree). The open questions were:

1. What were your expectations about getting two lessons on Shakespeare and his play *Richard III*? Write down your expectations below.
2. Did these lessons live up to your expectations? Why, or why not? Explain your opinion below.
3. If you have any suggestions or recommendations for the future, please write them down below.

The other questions involved rating statements on a scale from 1 to 5. These were the statements:

- A. I liked following this lesson series.
- B. I would like to have a follow up lesson (series) on this topic.
- C. I thought this lesson series was informative.
- D. I thought this lesson series was a pleasant introduction to Shakespeare.
- E. I now know well enough what the play *Richard III* is about.
- F. I now know well enough which themes are important in discussing *Richard III*.
- G. I now know who the main characters in *Richard III* are.
- H. I now know how to read the opening soliloquy of *Richard III*.
- I. I liked being able to watch and hear the opening soliloquy in a movie.
- J. I now know what to pay attention to when reading Shakespeare.
- K. I really liked the assignments I had to do.
- L. I thought the assignments I had to do were useful.
- M. I thought the difficult words were explained sufficiently.

The statements cover four topics: the quality of the lesson series (A – D), the content of the used material (E – I), the assignments (J – L), and the language assistance (M). Below I will explain the outcome of the questionnaire.

### *Results of the questionnaire*

The first question on the questionnaire was about the expectations of the pupils. In total, 6 out of 17 pupils said they did not have any expectations. Then, 5 out of 17 pupils said that they expected to get information about Shakespeare's most famous plays and their plot lines. Of these 5 pupils, 3 also commented that they thought they would receive more information on Shakespeare himself. Two pupils said they had expected to receive more general knowledge about Shakespeare, and the rest of the pupils said that they had expected they would have to read something Shakespeare wrote.

The second question was designed to find out if the lesson series lived up to the expectation of the pupils. Of the 17 pupils, 6 pupils did not answer this question, because they did not have an expectation in the first place. Only 3 pupils said that this lesson series had lived up their expectations, and 4 pupils were of the opposite opinion. The remaining 4 pupils gave answers that did not give a clear indication as to whether or not the lesson series had lived up to their expectations. Answers included "We immediately started to read a text", and "I liked watching a little bit of a movie."

As we look at the statements, we will be able to find out if the teacher was right in his observations. As we can recall, the first statement was "I liked following this lesson series." 13 Pupils scored this statement a 4 (agree) and 4 pupils scored it 3 (neutral). This means that generally speaking, the pupils liked to follow this lesson series. The next statement was "I would like to have a follow up lesson (series) of this topic". 1 pupil completely agreed, and 8 pupils agreed with this statement. Another 8 pupils were of a neutral opinion. What we can see here is that the pupils are of a divided opinion on this statement. In total, 9 pupils would like to know more about *Richard III* and 8 do not seem to mind if they would or would not get more lessons on this topic.

When we look at statement C (I thought this lesson series was informative), 4 pupils said that they agree with this statement, and 1 pupil said he completely agreed with this statement. Then, 10 pupils reacted neutrally to this statement, and 1 pupil said he disagreed. From this I conclude that generally speaking, the pupils did not find this lesson series convincingly informative. A majority of 11 pupils either reacted neutrally or disagreed with this statement. Next to this, 9 pupils also expressed that they did not necessarily find this lesson series a pleasant introduction to Shakespeare by giving a neutral reaction on the statement. 1 Pupil scored this statement (I thought this lesson series was a pleasant introduction to Shakespeare) a 2, which means that he disagreed and thus did not find this lesson series a pleasant introduction. On the other hand, 5 pupils agreed with this statement and 1 pupil completely agreed. This means that 6 pupils thought this lesson series was a pleasant introduction to Shakespeare. One pupil filled out multiple positive scores on this questionnaire, which led me to exclude him from the discussion of this statement.

With regard to the next statement (I now know well enough what the play *Richard III* is about) the pupils seem to be divided. 4 Pupils completely agreed with this statement and 6 pupils simply agreed. In other words, a total of 10 pupils is confident that they know what the plot line of *Richard III* is. Then, there were 4 neutral reactions to this statement and 3 pupils disagreed with this statement. This means that their teacher was right in his assumption that there were a number of pupils who found it difficult to keep track of the events in the play and its plot line.

The next statement refers to the themes of the play. The teacher noted that his pupils found it difficult to see the themes deformity and image in the play, and how these themes related to Richard's character. Looking at the responses of the pupils, we can see that 7 pupils said that they did not feel as if they knew which themes are important when discussing *Richard III*. There is 1 pupil who completely disagreed with this statement. In addition, there were 2 neutral responses. A minority of 5 pupils agreed with this statement, and only 1 pupil completely agreed with this statement. There was 1 pupil who gave two scores to this statement, which led me to exclude his

score from the analysis of this statement. This means that, once again, the teacher was right about his pupils' responses.

Statement G states that "I now know who the main characters in *Richard III* are." There was only 1 pupil who scored this statement 2 (disagree). The rest of the pupils were positive in their reactions. 12 Pupils agreed with this statement, and 4 pupils completely agreed. This means that, although the teacher said that his pupils encountered difficulty with the genealogy within the play, the pupils actually did learn who featured in the play.

Following statement G, statement H states that "I now know how to read the opening soliloquy of *Richard III*." There were 2 very positive responses (completely agree) to this statement and 9 positive responses (agree). Then there were 4 neutral responses and 2 negative responses (disagree). In other words, the pupils were, generally speaking, fairly positive about the close reading aspect of the lesson series.

Statement I explored the attitudes of the pupils regarding the movie clip of the opening soliloquy. The statement (I liked being able to watch and hear the opening soliloquy on a movie) got a lot of positive reactions, and no negative reactions. This means that 11 out of 17 pupils completely agreed with this statement, another 4 pupils agreed with this statement, and the last 2 pupils gave a neutral reaction. This outcome means that, once again, the teacher was correct in his observation that his pupils found it helpful and supporting to be able to hear and watch the opening soliloquy.

On the other hand, pupils gave an overall neutral reaction to statement J. Responding to the statement "I now know what to pay attention to when reading Shakespeare" 11 out of 17 pupils gave a neutral reaction, and 6 out of 17 pupils gave a negative score. This means that the pupils needed more support in summarising the various skills that are needed to read and analyse a Shakespeare text. An exercise in the form of skill building could be included in the lesson series, for example, "Which skills did you use to read this piece of text? Name at least two skills that you used and

discuss these with your neighbour.” In this way, pupils are provided with a clear plan of action when reading Shakespeare in the future.

Next, pupils had to evaluate the assignments they had to do. Statement K was “I really liked the assignment I had to do.” This statement was scored 1 (completely disagree) by 2 pupils, and 2 (disagree) by 7 pupils. Then, there were 6 pupils who gave a neutral reaction, meaning that they did not particularly like or dislike their assignments. Only two pupils gave a positive reaction: 1 pupil completely agreed with the statement, and 1 pupil agreed with the statement. Statement L (I thought the assignments I had to do were useful) was scored in a different way. This means that 4 out of 17 pupils disagreed with this statement, and 7 out of 17 pupils gave a neutral response. Another 5 pupils agreed with the statement, and 1 pupil completely agreed. The responses between statements K and L are slightly different. The pupils seem to have a more divided opinion of statement L than of statement K. In other words, though the exercises were not perceived as particularly fun, a little over a third of the pupils did perceive the assignments as useful. However, the goals and purpose of the assignments could be explained more clearly in order for the pupils to understand why they have to do certain activities.

The last statement is statement M (I thought the difficult words were explained sufficiently). The responses to this statement were largely neutral (9 pupils) and negative (3 pupils disagreed). Only 5 pupils agreed with this statement. Even though a glossary was provided for the opening soliloquy, the pupils declared they needed more language support. This is in line with the comments of their teacher, who said that pupils needed more information on Shakespeare’s writing style and language use.

In the table below I have listed the statements, their letters, and their mean scores. The purpose of this is to be able to conduct a broader analysis of the questionnaire. By analysing the mean scores, I am going to look at the overall attitude towards the statements.

Statement letter	Statement	Mean score
A	I liked following this lesson series.	3.8
B	I would like to have a follow up lesson (series) on this topic.	3.3
C	I thought this lesson series was informative.	3.4
D	I thought this lesson series was a pleasant introduction to Shakespeare.	3.4
E	I now know well enough what the play <i>Richard III</i> is about.	3.6
F	I now know well enough which themes are important in discussing <i>Richard III</i> .	2.9
G	I now know who the main characters in <i>Richard III</i> are.	4.1
H	I now know how to read the opening soliloquy of <i>Richard III</i> .	3.9
I	I liked being able to watch and hear the opening soliloquy on a movie.	4.5
J	I now know what to pay attention to when reading Shakespeare.	2.6
K	I really liked the assignments I had to do.	2.5
L	I thought the assignments I had to do were useful.	3.2
M	I thought the difficult words were explained sufficiently.	2.9

Starting with statement A, we can see that the pupils generally liked the lesson series with a mean score of 3.8. This means that they are leaning towards a positive attitude to the lesson series. Statement B gets a more neutral response, which means that the class do not necessarily need a follow up lesson (series), but would also not object if it were presented to them. Then, statement C has a mean score of 3.4, which means that the pupils lean a little bit towards a neutral attitude on this statement. In other words, the class say that the lesson series was not particularly informative or uninformative. The same goes for statement D, which also has a mean score 3.4. The pupils lean

towards a neutral reaction on whether or not this lesson series was a pleasant introduction to Shakespeare.

With a mean score of 3.6, statement E gets a slightly positive response. According to their teacher, the pupils found the plotline of *Richard III* difficult to follow. In the end though, most pupils thought they knew what this play is about. However, when asked if they knew what the most important themes of the play were, the pupils leaned towards a neutral reaction. The mean score of statement F is 2.9, meaning that the discussion of the themes of the play may not have been very productive. This could be due to the fact that a lot of pupils struggled with the plot line, and thus found it harder to see the reflection of the themes in the play. On the other hand, as the students did not assess their teacher's role, it would be hard to decide his influence on this project.

Then, statement G gets a high score of 4.1. This means that pupils got an overview of the main characters of the play. Following this, statement H also has a positive mean score (3.9). In other words, pupils felt that they knew how to read the opening soliloquy of *Richard III*. In addition, the pupils gave statement I a score of 4.5, meaning that the pupils appreciated the support of the movie when discussing the opening soliloquy.

On the other hand, the final four statements received a neutral to negative score. Starting with statement J, which has a mean score of 2.6, pupils said that they felt they did not know what they should pay attention to when reading Shakespeare. In addition, they did not enjoy doing the assignments by scoring statement K with a 2.5. However, the pupils gave a neutral response to statement L, which means that the students did not find the assignments particularly useful or not useful. Earlier, I noted that the lesson goals and the learning goals could be specified more clearly to help solve this issue. Finally, the pupils gave a neutral reaction to the question whether or not they got enough vocabulary support. With a means score of 2.9, the pupils lean towards a neutral reaction from which I can conclude that more support in this area could be useful.

Last but not least, the final question on the questionnaire was if the pupils had any further recommendations or comments. Out of 17 pupils, 8 pupils did not have further recommendations or comments, and 4 pupils would like more information on Shakespeare. One pupil said that he would like to have more information on Shakespeare's writing style, because he found this a difficult part when reading the opening soliloquy. The lesson plan, then, could have included more linguistic features of Shakespeare's work. Another pupil wanted different assignments, but did not suggest how these might look. Then there was a pupil who would like to watch the entire movie and then discuss the contents by means of various assignments. Another suggestion is to better prepare the pupils for the topic of Shakespeare, by being more enthusiastic about this topic. A final comment was that the opening soliloquy from the movie slightly differed from the version the pupils got on their worksheet.

To summarise, the pupils gave useful information and provided useful insights. I found out that the topic was well chosen, because the pupils liked the overall lesson series. Also, the movie support proved to be very helpful when reading the opening soliloquy. On the other hand, the plot synopsis proved to be difficult. To clarify the plot line, more activities could be included to help students get an overview of the plot. The same goes for the characters. According to their teacher, the pupils found it difficult to keep track of who is who. Activities such as drawing character charts and hanging these up in the classroom could clarify who the main characters of *Richard III* are. Also, teachers from different departments could help each other out. For example, the history of the Wars of the Roses could be taught in History, thus allowing more time in English to go deeper into the genealogy of the English monarchs of that time. Finally, the pupils would like more information on Shakespeare himself, and his writing style. From this I conclude that the pupils would like to have some linguistic activities next to the close reading of the opening soliloquy. The pupils said that they felt that these kinds of activities would help them understand the meaning of the opening soliloquy.

#### **4. Conclusion: What are the key aspects when it comes to designing a lesson plan for teaching *Richard III*?**

In the previous section of the thesis it was established which didactic methods found in the literature were used in the lesson plans. I also gave an example of how these aspects could be put into a lesson series and how to improve on this lesson series.

There were some similarities with the didactic methods from the literature and the didactic methods used in the lesson plans. First, all the lesson plans provide context in the form of background information on Shakespeare, his life, and the Elizabethan period. We can recall that Carrasco said that context is important for students to understand the setting of the play, how it was written, how it was performed, and more of these questions.

Another similarity between the lesson plans and the literature is that all the lesson plans provide a focus on language. Most readers experience Shakespeare's language as dated and find it difficult to read. Therefore language support is in order. This language support takes the form of explanations about metaphors and vocabulary, and close reading.

The third aspect all the lesson plans have in common is that there are many activities that encourage the student to find out things about the play for himself. This means that the student is an active participant in the learning process, which means that he/she is not simply a consumer of knowledge, but also a user and producer of knowledge. The active attitude and participation of the student makes the learning process more effective, which might ensure a better understanding of the play.

A final aspect that all lesson plans have in common is that the Tudor Myth is not mentioned. This strikes me, as it seems to me that the Tudor Myth is an important aspect for discussion in discussing *Richard III*. In the section Earlier Didactic Methods, I have tried to argue that having students look at the Tudor Myth and historiography adds to the relevance of the play.

However, there are also differences to be found between the lesson plans. The first difference is that the second and third lesson plans focus on the opening soliloquy by Richard. The first lesson plan puts no particular emphasis on this part of the play. This may be, because the first lesson plan is a reading of the entire play, and not a preparation for a viewing of the play (lesson plan 2) or adapting it (lesson plan 3).

The second difference between the lesson plans is that the third lesson plan does not have a distinction between pre-reading, while reading, and post-reading activities. A reason for this might be that in the third lesson plan, the play is not read or viewed. There is a screening of two movie versions, during which the focus lies on the different interpretations of the play as they are portrayed in the movies. In other words, the focuses of the lesson plans are different and therefore the lesson goals are different.

I think I can conclude from the analysis that was performed, that there are no clear don'ts when it comes to designing a lesson plan for teaching *Richard III*. However, there are clear dos. The first is that context in the form of background information on Shakespeare, his life, and the Elizabethan period should be provided. Also, all the lesson plans have a synopsis of the play in them, from which I conclude this is also a key aspect in designing a lesson plan for teaching *Richard III*.

The second key aspect is the focus on language. As mentioned earlier, Shakespeare's language can be perceived as discouraging to students. Therefore, students should be guided through the language of Shakespeare by means of explanations about metaphors and vocabulary, and close reading.

The third key aspect is actively to engage the students in the lesson programme. As a teacher you have to make sure that students actively participate in the lessons, and that they get the chance to think about certain aspects on their own. This can be achieved through exercises such as re-enacting scenes of the play, explorations of characters, and more.

Fourthly, what also turns out to be essential in teaching *Richard III* is explaining that there is a clear distinction to be made between the Tudor myth in the play and the “real” or elusive “historical” King Richard. As was explained in the Theoretical Framework, the Tudor myth is a means by which the Tudors were represented as the saviours of England, and the Yorkists and Lancastrians as the dynasties steering England towards destruction. The Tudor myth was created to view the ruling queen – Elizabeth I – as the rightful ruler. It should be noted here that Elizabethans were not allowed to think of their ruler as someone whose ancestors had committed crimes. In other words, people were not allowed to talk or write about the “wrong” things Queen Elizabeth’s grandfather, Henry VII, might have done. This is likely to be one of the reasons why Shakespeare and Thomas More assigned to King Richard III his deformations as a sign of evil, and moreover, wrote that Richard ordered the murder of the princes in the Tower. However, no murderer was identified. This might be valuable information to provide in the classroom before discussing the plot of the play.

Moreover, when designing a lesson plan for Dutch pupils, there are some aspects to take into consideration. First, Dutch pupils tend to find the genealogy of the characters in the play difficult. Character building activities are in place here, and could be expanded or left out based on the need of the pupils. Second, the plot line of *Richard III* is very complicated and this is perceived as difficult. What could help is to divide the background information activities between English and History. For example, in History the Wars of the Roses and the people who were involved with this could be discussed. In English, the teacher could build on this foundation by going through the plot line step by step. However, this would take a lot more time than I was able to take for the exemplary lesson series. Third, more background information on Shakespeare would be appreciated by the pupils. There are a number of activities that could be done to explore what we know of Shakespeare’s life, and Shakespeare as an author and actor. This means that, next to activities on Shakespeare’s life and career, some linguistic activities could be included. Fourth, the pupils suggested to watch the entire

movie and discuss the content with regard to the themes and the characters. This would also take more time than I initially scheduled for the lesson series. However, if the time is available this could be a way of discussing the play, the themes, the characters, and the plot line.

Finally, I would like to comment on the personal relevance of this thesis. As a teacher, I have gained more insight in methods of teaching *Richard III* to Second Language Learners of English. This thesis has left me with new ideas for lessons I would like to give in the (near) future.

## 5. Discussion

This thesis was an examination of previously conducted research in combination with an explorative research. One of the shortages of this research is that I was only able to gather 17 questionnaires. This makes it difficult to generalise the data for Dutch pupils. Future research could be conducted with a larger population and among various schools in The Netherlands. Added to this, the teacher who taught the lesson series had only two lessons available for this lesson series. In order to go deeper into the background information and the close reading itself, at least one more lesson would have to be added to the lesson series.

Another shortage is that I was not able to test the knowledge of the pupils after having followed the lesson series. This could be solved by developing a test and comparing grades to find out how much the pupils have learnt about *Richard III*. These quantitative data could be analysed with respect to the effectiveness of the assignments.

Moreover, I have been able to discuss the lesson series with the teacher that taught it in his class. In order to gather more data about the used didactic methods, Dutch teachers from various schools in The Netherlands could be interviewed. Their suggestions and ideas could be used to improve the lesson series and design varied activities.

The above mentioned suggestions for further research would be useful additions to the present research.

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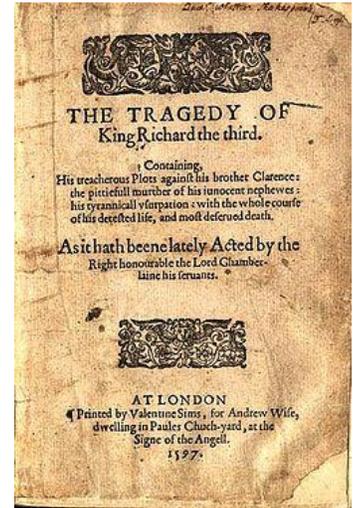
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## 7. Appendices

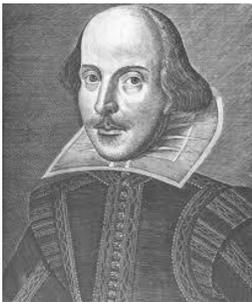
### Shakespeare's *Richard III*: An Introduction

Name: ..... Class: .....

In this lesson series, you are going to find out who Shakespeare was and what his play *Richard III* is about. The aim of these lessons is to prepare you for future readings and discussions about Shakespeare and his plays. In discussing *Richard III* you will learn how to read Shakespeare and which items for discussion to take into account.



#### 1. Who was Shakespeare?



You might have heard of a 16<sup>th</sup> century Englishman called William Shakespeare. But who was this man? Assignment: Take 5 minutes to write down what you know about William Shakespeare. After 5 minutes, the answers will be discussed in class.

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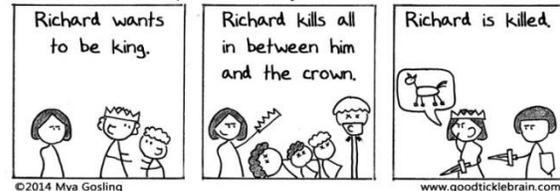
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#### 2. Richard III: plot synopsis

After a long civil war between the royal family of York and the royal family of Lancaster, England enjoys a period of peace under King Edward IV and the victorious Yorks. But Edward's younger

RICHARD III (in 3 Panels)



brother, Richard (Duke of Gloucester), resents Edward's power and the happiness of those around him. Malicious, power-hungry, and bitter about his physical deformity, Richard begins to aspire secretly to the throne—and decides to kill anyone he has to in order to become king.

Using his intelligence and his skills of deception and political manipulation, Richard begins his campaign for the throne. He manipulates a noblewoman, Lady Anne, into marrying him—even though she knows that he murdered her first husband. He has his own older brother, George (Duke of Clarence), executed, and shifts the burden of guilt onto his sick older brother King Edward in order to accelerate Edward's illness and death. After King Edward dies, Richard becomes lord protector of England—the figure in charge until the elder of Edward's two sons grows up.

Next Richard kills the court noblemen who are loyal to the princes, most notably Lord Hastings, the lord chamberlain of England. He then has the boys' relatives on their mother's side—the powerful kinsmen of Edward's wife, Queen Elizabeth—arrested and executed. With Elizabeth and the princes now unprotected, Richard has his political allies, particularly his right-hand man, Lord Buckingham, campaign to have Richard crowned king. Richard then imprisons the young princes in the Tower and, in his bloodiest move yet, sends hired murderers to kill both children.

By this time, Richard's reign of terror has caused the common people of England to fear and loathe him, and he has alienated nearly all the noblemen of the court—even the power-hungry Buckingham. When rumours begin to circulate about a challenger to the throne who is gathering forces in France, noblemen defect in droves to join his forces. The challenger is the earl of Richmond, a descendant of a secondary arm of the Lancaster family, and England is ready to welcome him.

Richard, in the meantime, tries to consolidate his power. He has his wife, Queen Anne, murdered, so that he can marry young Elizabeth, the daughter of the former Queen Elizabeth and the dead King Edward. Though young Elizabeth is his niece, the alliance would secure his claim to the throne. Nevertheless, Richard has begun to lose control of events, and Queen Elizabeth manages to forestall him. Meanwhile, she secretly promises to marry young Elizabeth to Richmond.

Richmond finally invades England. The night before the battle that will decide everything, Richard has a terrible dream in which the ghosts of all the people he has murdered appear and curse him, telling him that he will die the next day. In the battle on the following morning, Richard is killed, and Richmond is crowned King Henry VII. Promising a new era of peace for England, the new king is betrothed to young Elizabeth in order to unite the warring houses of Lancaster and York.

<http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/richardiii/summary.html>

### **Characters of *Richard III***

Assignment: Map out the characters of the play on the basis of the plot summary. Write down the characters and who they are below in the assigned area. One example is already given.

King Edward IV: king of England, oldest brother to Richard of Gloucester.





<p>Cheated of <u>feature</u> by dissembling nature,  Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time  Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,  And that so lamely and <u>unfashionable</u>  That dogs bark at me as I <u>halt</u> by them;  Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,  Have no delight to pass away the time,  Unless to spy my shadow in the sun  And <u>descant on</u> mine own deformity:  And therefore, since I cannot <u>prove</u> a lover,  To entertain these fair well-spoken days,  I am <u>determined</u> to prove a villain  And hate the idle pleasures of these days.  Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,  By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams,  To set my brother Clarence and the king  In deadly hate the one against the other:  And if King Edward be as true and just  As I am subtle, false and treacherous,  This day should Clarence closely be <u>mew'd up</u>,  About a prophecy, which says that 'G'  Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be.  Dive, thoughts, down to my soul: here  Clarence comes.</p> <p><i>Enter CLARENCE, guarded, and BRAKENBURY</i></p>	<p>good appearance</p> <p>badly formed limp</p> <p>remark upon prove to be</p> <p>resolved; fated</p> <p>caged (like a hawk)</p>
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DsGGjXZw1eQ>

Assignment: You are now going to watch the speech “The winter of our discontent” from the movie ‘Richard III’. Read along with the speech, and try to figure out the meaning of it. Pay special attention to the way Richard describes himself.



As well as belonging to its pool of actors and playwrights, Shakespeare was one of the managing partners of the Lord Chamberlain's Company (renamed the King's Company when James succeeded to the throne), whose actors included the famous Richard Burbage. The company acquired interests in two theatres in the Southwark area of London near the banks of the Thames - the Globe and the Blackfriars.

In 1593 and 1594, Shakespeare's first poems, 'Venus and Adonis' and 'The Rape of Lucrece', were published and he dedicated them to his patron, Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton. It is thought Shakespeare also wrote most of his sonnets at this time.

### Playwright

Shakespeare was prolific, with records of his first plays beginning to appear in 1594, from which time he produced roughly two a year until around 1611. His hard work quickly paid off, with signs that he was beginning to prosper emerging soon after the publication of his first plays. By 1596 Shakespeare's father, John had been granted a coat of arms and it's probable that Shakespeare had commissioned them, paying the fees himself. A year later he bought New Place, a large house in Stratford.

His earlier plays were mainly histories and comedies such as 'Henry VI', 'Titus Andronicus', 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', 'The Merchant of Venice' and 'Richard II'. The tragedy, 'Romeo and Juliet', was also published in this period. By the last years of Elizabeth I's reign Shakespeare was well established as a famous poet and playwright and was called upon to perform several of his plays before the Queen at court. In 1598 the author Francis Meres described Shakespeare as England's greatest writer in comedy and tragedy.

In 1602 Shakespeare's continuing success enabled him to move to upmarket Silver Street, near where the Barbican is now situated, and he was living here when he wrote some of his greatest tragedies such as 'Hamlet', 'Othello', 'King Lear' and 'Macbeth'.

### Final years

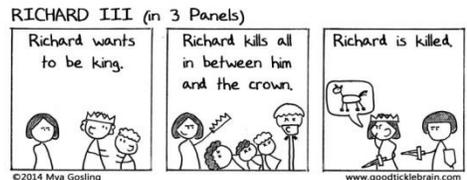
Shakespeare spent the last five years of his life in New Place in Stratford. He died on 23 April 1616 at the age of 52 and was buried in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford. He left his property to the male heirs of his eldest daughter, Susanna. He also bequeathed his 'second-best bed' to his wife. It is not known what significance this gesture had, although the couple had lived primarily apart for 20 years of their marriage.

The first collected edition of his works was published in 1623 and is known as 'the First Folio'.

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/people/william\\_shakespeare](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/people/william_shakespeare)

## 2. Richard III: plot synopsis

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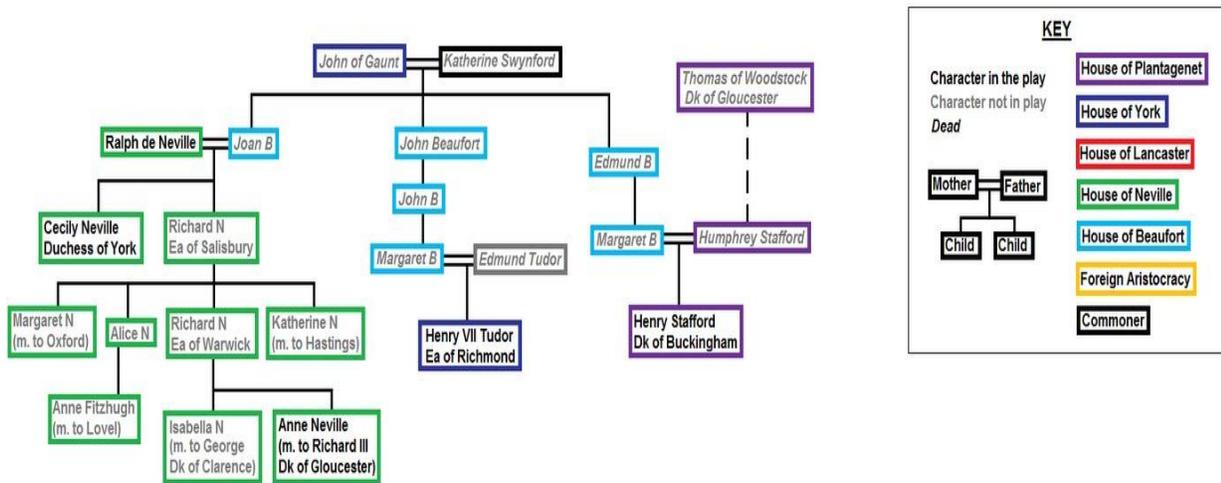
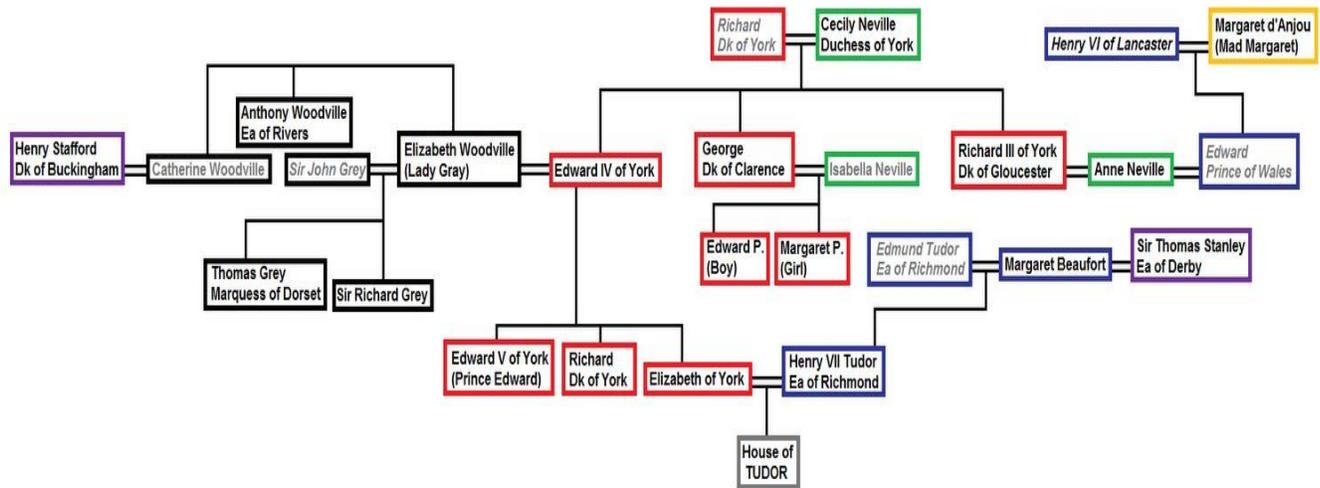
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# Historical Personages of Richard III



KEY	
Character in the play	House of Plantagenet
Character not in play	House of York
Dead	House of Lancaster
Mother	House of Neville
Father	House of Beaufort
Child	Foreign Aristocracy
Child	Commoner

### 3. Themes of the play

In my thesis, I have explored several themes of *Richard III*. Two of these themes are deformity and image. Below I will explain these themes.

I. Starting with deformity Torrey argues that Richard’s misshapen body can portray a number of things. Richard’s body might reveal “not only his own moral condition but that of the state and the world as well” (123). Torrey discovers a remarkable going of events in the play. He says that “In the course of the play, his body alternately does and does not seem to give him away” (126). This means that Richard’s victims at times seem to know what he is, and other times they do not. For example, when Anne is wooed by Richard, she both accuses him of the murder of her husband and agrees to marry Richard at the end of this scene.

According to Torrey, a misshapen body might be a sign for a misaligned soul. Torrey says that Francis Bacon argued that deformity is a sign of boldness, industry, and watchfulness (137). A distinction can even be made in terms of ugliness. Torrey says that “Superficial ugliness, by virtue of its superficiality, has little impact on either the person in question or the opinion of others, while more severe deformity alters the soul and by implication reveals that alteration” (134). In Richard’s case, his deformity started as a physical condition, but turned into a spiritual condition. It seems that in the course of the third of the *Henry VI* play, Richard’s schemes and lust for power increase in their villainy. By the beginning of *Richard III* he is a real villain and much like the Vice in the medieval play. This means that Richard is the representation of evil, and therefore he has to pay for his actions.

Moreover, Torrey mentions that Shakespeare’s portrayal of Richard is consistent with Tudor historiography, “which constructed Richard as a deformed villain” (139-140). In relation to the earlier comment about deformity as a character reading, this means that Richard’s ability to deceive others stems from his deformity. By making Richard deformed, Shakespeare suggests that Richard’s evil was easily known (141). As I said earlier, deformed people were considered evil because of their ugliness. It was thought that a misaligned body meant the soul was also misaligned. In addition, Torrey says that “By combining deformity and deception, Shakespeare sets these two elements of Richard’s character against each other; his ability to deceive repeatedly complicates the semiotic status of his deformity” (141). This means that on the one hand, the signs of Richard’s physical deformity are visible to everybody. On the other hand, by betraying others, Richard’s inner deformity also becomes apparent. At times, Richard even uses his deformity as an excuse to betray others, as “nature has cheated him” (Chernaik, 59).

II. The next theme is image. This theme has a great overlap with the Tudor Myth. Richard’s image has changed because of the Tudor Myth. As mentioned earlier, as a king Richard also created good laws, reduced taxation, and established a local administration of justice. However, due to the Tudor Myth people tend to forget this and Richard comes off as a bad king. Recall that the Tudor Myth portrays Richard as a deformed villain, who is responsible for the murder of King Henry VI and his son, his brother Clarence and his two nephews, the Princes in the Tower. Now that Richard has been found, scientists were able to confirm a curvature of the spine, but were not able to confirm if he would have limped or have a withered arm (BBC).

With respect to image, we can see Shakespeare as a historiographer as well as a playwright. With his play *Richard III* Shakespeare might have added to the Tudor Myth. As was mentioned earlier, Shakespeare’s history plays added to the forming of a national British identity by sharing knowledge of the history of Britain. However, history as it is written down is always biased, which means that no one can ever retell history without taking a point of view. Following this line of thought, Shakespeare too had a point of view when retelling the story of Richard III. In this light we might see Shakespeare as a historiographer. In addition, we can also see Shakespeare as a playwright who would have wanted to sell a good story. Writing plays was Shakespeare’s living, and in order to make a good living he would have had to write exiting and intriguing plays that also pleased the queen.

## The Tudor Myth

One of the things that *Richard III* is famous for is the Tudor Myth. The Tudor Myth is a negative representation of the reign of Richard III, with the purpose of putting the Tudors in a better position. As mentioned earlier, Henry VII defeated Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth. This battle meant the end of the Wars of the Roses when Henry VII, a Lancastrian from his mother's side, married Elizabeth of York, the daughter of Edward IV and niece of Richard III. However, Richard III was an anointed king and Henry VII was an invader with a remote claim on the throne. In other words, Henry's claim was weak and he needed a means to secure the throne. That is where the Tudor Myth comes into the picture.

According to Zeeveld (1946), the Tudor myth originated when hardly ten years after the accession of Henry VII, John Rous initiated the legend of Richard's deformity. However, now that the skeleton of Richard is found in a car park in Leicester in 2011, it was confirmed that Richard had a curved spine (David, 2013). This means that his right shoulder may have been higher than his left, which means that Richard had an actual deformity. It is still unknown if this means that he would have had a limp. The finding of Richard's skeleton plays an important role in finding out on which facts the Tudor Myth is built, and which part of the myth is fiction.

Also, Rous charged Richard III of the murder of Henry VI, the princes in the Tower of London, Rivers, Hastings, and the poisoning of his wife Anne. However, it was the piece by Sir Thomas More, *History of King Richard III*, that became one of the best known manifestations of the Tudor myth. This might be because his portrait of the villain king was "of such a high standard of literary excellence that subsequent historians adopted it with little variation" (1946). Moreover, More's text was one of Shakespeare's sources for his play *Richard III*, which popularized Richard's deformity and wickedness. In other words, Zeeveld claims that Shakespeare fixed the legend of Richard III as an evil king. However, it remains unknown who initiated the Tudor Myth and to which purposes.

It appears as though the Tudor Myth is a case of historiography. In this case that would mean that the bad image of Richard III is not simply due to More's writing, but to more writers who all spread the same ideas.

Hoenselaars (1943), on the other hand, claims that Henry VII himself started the Tudor myth and Shakespeare supported it. The reason for Henry VII's eagerness to rewrite the history of England might have originated from his desire to remain 'silent about the remaining genealogical queries that could undermine the nation's peace and stability all over again' (1943). This way, *Richard III* can be seen as a means of propaganda in the favour of the Tudors.

#### 4. The winter of our discontent

##### ACT I

##### SCENE I

*Enter GLOUCESTER, solus*

##### GLOUCESTER

Now is the winter of our discontent

Made glorious summer by this sun of York;  
And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house  
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.

glowered/family

Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;

Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;  
Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,  
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.

armour/memorials

call to arms

dances

Grim-visaged war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front;

forehead

And now, instead of mounting barbèd steeds

armoured

To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,

He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber

To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,

amorous

Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;

I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty

lack

To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;

I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,

shape

Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,

good appearance

Deformed, unfinish'd, sent before my time

Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,

And that so lamely and unfashionable

badly formed

That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;

limp

Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,

Have no delight to pass away the time,

Unless to spy my shadow in the sun

And descant on mine own deformity:

remark upon

And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,

prove to be

To entertain these fair well-spoken days,

I am determined to prove a villain

resolved; fated

And hate the idle pleasures of these days.

Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,

By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams,

To set my brother Clarence and the king

In deadly hate the one against the other:

And if King Edward be as true and just

As I am subtle, false and treacherous,

This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up,

caged (like a hawk)

About a prophecy, which says that 'G'

Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be.

Dive, thoughts, down to my soul: here

Clarence comes.

*Enter CLARENCE, guarded, and BRAKENBURY*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DsGGjXZw1eQ>

*Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious summer by this son of York;  
And all the clouds that loured upon our house  
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.  
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths,  
Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,  
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.  
Grim-visaged war hath smoothed his wrinkled front,*

...

*He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber  
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*Why, I in this weak piping time of peace  
Have no delight to pass away the time,  
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun  
And descant on mine own deformity.  
And 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.*

*(I.i.1–40)*

Richard speaks these lines to the audience at the beginning of the play. His speech serves a number of important purposes. It sets the scene, informing the audience that the play begins shortly after the death of Henry VI, with King Edward IV restored to the throne of England. Richard speaks of recent fighting, and says that “All the clouds that loured upon our house”—that is, the house of York—have been dispelled by the “son of York,” King Edward, whose symbol was the sun. Richard paints a vivid picture in which the English have put aside their arms and armor and celebrate in peace and happiness, culminating in the image of the god of war smoothing his rough and fierce appearance and playing the part of a lover in a woman’s chamber. All of these images make it clear to us that Richard has no justification for seizing the throne. England is obviously not oppressed or subject to tyranny, and Richard’s own brother holds the throne. That Richard intends to upset the kingdom by seizing power for himself therefore renders him monstrously selfish and evil.

Richard offers a pretext for his villainy by pointing out his physical deformity. He says that since he was not made to be a lover, he has no use for peace, and will happily destroy peace with his crimes. We are not likely to accept this reasoning as a valid or convincing justification for Richard's villainy. Instead of making Richard sympathetic, it makes him seem more monstrous, because he can so blithely toss aside all of the things that the rest of humanity cherishes. At the same time, Richard's speech makes his true motivations seem all the more dark and mysterious.

<http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/richardiii/quotes.html#BABGBFFJ>

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## Enquête over ‘Shakespeare’s *Richard III*: An Introduction’

Klas: .....

4. Wat was/waren je verwachtingen van een les over Shakespeare en zijn toneelstuk *Richard III*? Schrijf je verwachting(en) hieronder op.

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.....  
.....  
.....

5. Voldeed deze lessenserie aan jouw verwachting(en)? Waarom wel/niet? Leg dit hieronder uit.

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.....  
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.....  
.....

6. Scoor de volgende stellingen op de hieronder aangegeven waardes. Hieronder staat ook uitgelegd wat de waardes betekenen.

1= heel erg oneens, 2= oneens, 3= neutraal, 4= eens, 5= heel erg eens

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| N. Ik vond deze lessenserie leuk om te volgen.                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| O. Ik zou graag een vervolg op deze lessenserie krijgen.                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| P. Ik vond deze lessenserie informatief.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Q. Ik vond deze lessenserie een fijne manier om met Shakespeare kennis te maken. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| R. Ik weet nu goed waar het toneelstuk <i>Richard III</i> over gaat.             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| S. Ik weet nu goed welke thema’s belangrijk zijn in <i>Richard III</i> .         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| T. Ik weet wie de belangrijkste personages zijn in <i>Richard III</i> .          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| U. Ik weet nu goed hoe ik de eerste toespraak in <i>Richard III</i> moet lezen.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| V. Ik vond het fijn dat ik de toespraak ook heb kunnen zien en horen op film. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| W. Ik weet nu waar ik op moet letten bij het lezen van Shakespeare.           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| X. Ik vond de opdrachten die ik moest maken erg leuk.                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Y. Ik vond de opdrachten die ik moest maken erg nuttig.                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Z. Ik vond dat de moeilijke woorden goed uitgelegd werden.                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

7. Schrijf hier op of je nog suggesties hebt voor toevoegingen of aanpassingen aan de lessenserie.

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Bedankt voor het invullen van de enquête!