



Richard III: The Other King

Richard III: Öteki Kral

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Abstract

Richard III is one of the most disreputable kings of British history. He is accused of a series of murders, including the death of his two nephews, his wife's ex-husband and her ex-father-in-law, all for one reason; to seize and hold the throne. The reason why this king, who was on the throne for about two years and, according to the reliable historical documents, did not showed an unsuccessful management, has such a bad reputation is William Shakespeare's main character in Richard III. The author wrote this play during the reign of Richard's natural enemy, the Tudors. Because of the resources he used and the political environment of the time, Shakespeare had to create a monster, not a national hero. As a result a character who is as evil as Iago and Lear's daughters (Goneril and Regan), but more colourful than them, emerged. However; Shakespeare's text has many exaggerated and inconsistent aspects. This study focuses on the relationship between the exaggerated evil of Richard III and the effect of physical insufficiency on his psychology. In addition, it is claimed that the brutal and masculine behaviors of Richard is primarily a result of social expectations.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Richard III, Freud, Passion, Villain

Özet

III. Richard İngiliz tarihindeki en kötü şöhretli krallardan biridir. İki yeğeni, karısının eski kocası ve onun eski kayınpederinin ölümü de dahil olmak üzere bir dizi cinayetten suçlanmaktadır. Bu cinayetlerin tamamı tahtı ele geçirmek ve elinde tutmak için gerçekleştirmiştir. Yaklaşık iki yıl tahtta kalan ve güvenilir tarihi belgelere göre başarısız bir yönetim göstermeyen bu kralın kötü bir şöhrete sahip olmasının nedeni William Shakespeare'in III. Richard oyunundaki baş karakterdir. Yazar bu oyunu Richard'ın doğal düşmanı olan Tudor hanedanı döneminde yazmıştır. Yararlandığı tarihi kaynaklar ve dönemin siyasi ortamı gereğince Shakespeare bir ulusal kahramandan ziyade bir canavar yaratmak zorundaydı. Sonuç olarak Iago ve Lear'ın kızları (Goneril ve Regan) kadar kötü ancak onlardan daha renkli bir karakter ortaya çıkmış oldu. Shakespeare'in metninde birçok abartı ve tutarsızlık bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışmada III. Richard'ın abartılı kötülüğü ile fiziksel yetersizliğinin psikolojisi üzerinde yarattığı etki arasındaki ilişki üzerinde durulmaktadır. Ayrıca, Richard'ın acımasız ve erkeksi davranışlarının öncelikle toplumsal beklentilerin bir sonucu olduğu iddia edilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Shakespeare, Richard III, Freud, İhtiras, Kötü Adam

Richard III is no angel and it is not easy to claim the opposite because he himself reveals his villainy both with his speeches, and actions. Just at the beginning of the play he says, "I am determined to prove a villain, / And hate the idle pleasures of these days" (Rowse, 1988: 960). Therefore, not only some of the characters in the play but also real people who see Richard on the scene or read him from the text make similar comments on his character: he is a vicious monster, cruel, power hungry, inhuman. He is often compared to Macbeth who was a brave and successful soldier at the beginning, but having ambitions to the throne he loses all his virtue. They both have political ambitions and committed murders. As Honigmann (1989) states: "In *Richard III* Shakespeare attempted a sophisticated study of man's moral nature. One cannot resist comparing this early play with Shakespeare's supreme tragedies. *Macbeth*, in particular, resumes the same subject, the ambitious man who murders for a crown, and technically resembles *Richard III* all too often –an unusual self-repetition that may indicate Shakespeare's awareness of his earlier inadequacies" (37).

Although critics find some inconsistencies both in the structure and historical context of the play, it is still a theatrical success on the stage which depends on the brilliance of the main character. Further, it is one of Shakespeare's early plays and because of this some scholars attribute to these so-called inadequacies and inconsistencies to his immaturity. Shakespeare was not a historian but a creative dramatist; he created these characters to represent the struggle of the good and the bad on the scene. He exaggerated or dismissed some facts. Nevertheless, along with Iago, Richard was a favourite figure among Romantic writers. They were inspired by these characters when creating their Gothic villains.

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Richard III, as in the other Shakespearean villains (e.g. Iago, Goneril and Regan) was described as treacherous, ruthless, amoral, and jealous. In spite of his bad reputation he was always an attractive character and the play has been popular on the stage unbrokenly from Shakespeare's day to this because; "It offers exciting drama as such, completely integrated as the Chronicle plays of *Henry VI* could not hope to be; though the longest, except for *Hamlet*, one's attention is compelled at every moment. Above all, it has the compulsive fascination of Shakespeare's first fully developed character as a psychological study" (Rowse, 1988: 952).

Shakespeare wrote the plays through synthesising the events from historical, literary, and dramatic sources. The author never denied the sources he benefited from, however his plays differ in many ways with the historical records. Although his plays were based on historical records, he "had never been strictly loyal to the original sources" (Urgan, 1996: 154). Due to the censorship politics of the Elizabethan era, the lack of suitable players for each role and the various difficulties associated with the stage techniques, Shakespeare chose to eliminate some scenes and characters in such historical plays rather than sticking to the source. Sometimes he had to make some changes to increase the dramatic effects of his plays. He usually shortened the events because the plays take two hours but he had to show the events that happened in years. On the other hand his historical sources do not necessarily reflect the history correctly since they were written under the influence of repressive monarchs. However, in general he is considered to be as true as possible to the truth, "weaving together all the various strands to create a single epic masterpiece which, for all its minor inaccuracies, is almost always right when it really matters" (Norwich, 1999: 5-6).

The political environment in England in which Shakespeare lived was not suitable for making a different choice. History is written by the victors. Once Henry Tudor won the battle and became the King Henry VII, his enemy, the former king turned to an evil minded man. He should be depicted as an immoral villain. And so it happened. Nevertheless, Shakespeare couldn't refrain from seeing Richard's personal bravery and sharp mind. For many people he is one of the most interesting and attractive characters in all Shakespeare plays. Considering "his skilful behaviours against his enemies, he was seen as one of the anti-heroes of English literature" (Wells, 1995: 25). In spite of his evil actions, there is something about Richard that fascinates the audience, even makes feel sympathetic, or at least affects them. In this way, what contemporary audience feel about Richard is not different to his relations with some of the characters in the play which express the force of his intelligence and personality. This situation can be considered as one of the inconsistencies of the play. For example Lady Anne insults Richard by calling him "dreadful minister of hell"; "the foul devil"; "foul lump of deformity"; "villain"; "hedgehog"; "fouler toad. Thou dost infect mine eyes" and "dissembler" (Rowse, 1988: 964-965-966). Depending on her remarks on Richard it can be said that she clearly has the knowledge of his evil character. Yet she is immersed in the magic of the Richard's masterful rhetoric. She became the victim of the insistent pursuit of his selfish desires.

What makes Richard III so evil is mostly his responsibility in a series of murders, all committed for one reason: to be the King of England. In the history much more violent crimes were committed for this purpose. For example some of the sultans of Ottoman Empire –many people respect and admire them today – killed their own sons, brothers, and with all their families, supposedly for the survival of the state. In fact the real reason of these murders is to maintain political power. In the history of England or any other monarchies there have been many similar events. The great King of England Henry VIII killed his wives and many other people. Jan Kott (1986), after taking the inventory of the deaths for the sake of the throne at the beginning of *The Kings*, says, "Every historical period finds in [Shakespeare] what is looking for and what it wants to see.... [we] cannot do otherwise" (5). Therefore in our contemporary world Richard's villainy has to be addressed from a different perspective.

As a matter of fact Richard III is no angel; neither with the wings nor with the horns. He was a tough fighter and certainly not the weak hunchback that Tudor propaganda depicted him as. He had a physical distortion. This has been proven scientifically by the investigation of Richard III Society: (The real) Richard III had suffered from "scoliosis", not hunchbacked (Richardiii.net). In other words there was an abnormal curvature in his spine. Richard III in Shakespeare's play has the same disorders, too. Throughout the play different characters talk about his physical status many times. He is physically "deform'd, unfinish'd", sent by "dissembling Nature" into the world "scarce half made up" (Rowse, 1988: 960). He should be considered as a disabled man. It is possible to say that he was covering his weakness, his physical ugliness with his powerful sides. Besides, he is highly jealous of the people around him especially his brother Edward and his relationship with Lady Grey. Disabled people, either from birth or acquired later with some handicap that prevent them from functioning normally, strengthen their other senses or abilities. They simply compensate one thing with another. Some studies have indicated that people born deaf have better peripheral vision. And it is widely accepted that blind people have more powerful senses than sighted people.

In a world that kindness and effeminateness are seen as weakness – for example Henry VI – Richard, with his deformed body and his disability of loving women, had no other choice; there was no other option for him than to act as a villain. He simply compensated his deficiencies with transforming into a vicious character. "Psychoanalytic theory has focused on the relationship between Richard's physical deformities and his deviant behaviour (Dobson&Wells, 2001: 388)". From a similar point of view psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud made comments on his character; Freud argued that Richard exemplified the pathology of exceptional persons who flaunt their physical limitations to excuse their antisocial desires, which serve as compensation: "Nature has done me a grievous wrong in denying me the beauty of form which wins human love. Life owes me reparation for this, and I will see that I get it. I have a right to be an exception, to disregard the scruples by which others let themselves be held back. I may do wrong myself, since wrong has been done to me. Richard's inner motives have also been discussed in terms of various sexual pathologies" (qtd. in Dobson&Wells, 1988: 388).

In terms of the Shakespearian character, Richard's villainy is not from birth. There is a different character in the *Henry VI* plays. "Richard is a minor character in *2 Henry VI*; ... he shows none of his later cunning or ruthless lust for mastery

(Moulton, 1996: 259-60)". But in *Richard III* his identity shifts from a heroic war hero to the vicious statesman of Machiavelli. He turned out to be a dynamic representation of Renaissance monstrosity. Despite some historical facts, this transformation is not an unnatural creation of fiction. It can be seen both as a natural result of his physical condition and the course of events. Moulton (1996) also draws attention to the transformation of Richard III, and he points out some factors that led him to do evil things. He argues that King Henry VI and Edward IV did not represent the traditional patriarchal order and English manhood destroys itself if there is no strong masculine authority to rule and tame the men. According to Moulton the political situation of England at the Elizabethan Era helped the unruly masculine violence to increase because a woman was ruling the country. And as this traditional role is transformed, Richard became more monstrous.

Shakespeare obviously knew that hundred per cent evil is a very rare characteristic among humans like hundred per cent goodness. So, he created a multidimensional character that can be handled from different aspects. It is not easy to come to an absolute judgment about him. Looking at previous part of the story, in terms of Shakespeare's histories, Richard's character change reveals more details. In the *Henry VI* plays, although he has little parts in these plays, they say much about his character. *2 Henry VI* pictures him as a trusting and devoted nobleman, while *3 Henry VI* represents Richard as a successful and courageous warrior. Richard's father, the Duke of York, accepts him as the true king of England. King Richard II was illegally deposed from the throne, so the legal heir should have been from the younger brothers of him. Richard III comes from Richard II's eldest brother, while Henry VI comes from his younger brother. Because of this situation, he has brought opposition to the court. This controversial issue appears in *1 Henry VI*. Later he decides to let Henry VI rule during his lifetime and take the throne on his death, but York's son encourages him to take the throne sooner. His father's inevitable death has an enormous effect on Richard III's character change.

Richard's father, York obviously sees him as being both honourable and worthy of the crown. In *2 Henry VI*, Lancastrian Lord (Thomas) Clifford turns on Richard: "Hence, heap of wrath, foul indigested lump, / As crooked in thy manners as thy shape" (Rowse, 1988: 879). Richard's deformity is mentioned for the first time at this moment. Here Clifford attempts to challenge the York's claim to the crown by attacking Richard's deformity. However his father immediately opposed this accusation. He says, "Nay, we shall heat you thoroughly anon" (ibid, 879). Richard's physical defect suddenly becomes insignificant, because York wants to preserve his son's honour. Even though it happened in the course of a quarrel, this accusation functions as the basis of the perception of Richard's physical distortion in the context of the War of the Roses. At this stage, it is clear that Richard's physical disability is not seen as a sign of evil. Richard's value should be determined through his actions.

This hostility between Cliffords and the Yorks is not random or meaningless. Clifford is a lord of the court whose family is always loyal to the Lancastrians, so he was called for to judge York when he claimed that he should be the real owner of the throne. In battlefield York kills him at the end of *2 Henry VI*, and his son, (John) Clifford, announced he would not feel pity any of the Yorks after he finds his father's body. Later, he kills York's the younger son Rutland and York himself. After this they become enemies, so Richard decides to kill him on the battleground, but Clifford dies from an arrow wound before Richard can find him.

In *3 Henry VI*, Richard is shown as equal to his brothers, both in bodily strength and his leading abilities. At first he appears in *3 Henry VI* as a glorious soldier. After brutally killing Somerset he says, "Thus do I hope to shake King Henry's head" (ibid, 892). Here, Richard is able to kill a non-disabled warrior. He proves himself as a brave soldier. He is also one of the vigorous warriors in *3 Henry VI*: He destroys the young Clifford, the Prince Edward and King Henry VI. By destroying them, he makes it possible for his family to take the crown. Depending on this it is also clear that here Shakespeare presents him as a character both physically capable and skilled. But in the later part of the story, in *Richard III*, when he faces Henry Tudor, he cannot stay in that position.

Compared to Richard III with the other kings before or after him it could be seen that his actions are not against nature, but instead they can be considered as realization of social expectations. If Richard is seen only as a vicious murderer, heroism of this tragic character may be missed. Francis Bacon in *Of Deformity* claimed that "all deformed persons are extreme bold first, as in their own defence, as being exposed to scorn, but in process of time, by a general habit" (Bacon). By demonstrating courage in combat, Richard drew a different character than the expectation that "his deformity is a clear sign that he is odious and wicked" (Torrey, 2000: 123). He tries to come up to the identity arranged for him by his father. He wanted to be his father's favourite son and tried to gain his consent. Throughout the first part of *3 Henry VI*, Richard's physical distortion is a negligible feature that has not caused a negative perception since his personality stems from his successes in battlefield.

Richard's support system is damaged after his father's death because "he is the only person that Richard really loves and respects" (Urgan, 1996: 186). While Richard and Edward are waiting for news about their father, they do not know anything about his situation, captured or killed. Edward recognizes that Richard is distressed. Here, Richard replies, "I cannot joy, until I be resolved / Where our right valiant father is become" (Rowse, 1988: 903). Richard is closer to his father than his brothers, so his father's wellbeing is very important for his happiness. As a result of this when York's life is in danger, it also becomes a danger for Richard's steadiness. Richard says "Methinks, 'tis prize enough to be his son" (ibid, 903), because of York's valour and nobleness. Without his guidance and protection, Richard's identity is threatened. He was left alone with his deformed body. When their father's death is publicized, Richard states that "I cannot weep; for all my body's moisture" (ibid, 904), and that

To weep is to make less the depth of grief:

Tears then for babes; blows and revenge for me

Richard, I bear thy name; I'll venge thy death,

Or die renowned by attempting it (ibid, 904).

Here it is clear that he plans to take on a course of action that would eventually make him a bloody monster in the eyes of most people. After a while he started to describe his physical condition in detail and reveals his ambitions to catch the throne;

Torment myself to catch the English crown;
And from that torment I will free myself,
Or hew my way out with a bloody axe.
Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile,
And cry 'Content' to that which grieves my heart,
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.
I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall;
I'll slay more gazers than the basilisk;
I'll play the orator as well as Nestor,
Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could,
And, like a Sinon, take another Troy.
I can add colours to the chameleon,
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
And set the murderous Machiavel to school.
Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?
Tut, were it farther off, I'll pluck it down. (ibid, 922).

Richard describes his physical deformity in details, draws his portrait with his arm like a withered shrub, his back like an envious mountain and his legs of unequal size. This soliloquy reveals the psychology of Richard who has a deficiency by nature. And Bacon's idea about ambition and deformity seems to be drawn in Richard's character. The soliloquy comes just after the scene between Edward and Lady Grey where Edward tries to win her. Richard witnessing the immorality of Edward in jealousy, in return, is reminded of his deformed being and having no chance to win a lady's heart. Thus Richard's mind begins to be agitated between two extremes which are those reflecting his inferiority complex and his superiority complex. When he hears Edward's wooing of Lady Grey, he first dreams of English crown, then thinks about his poor form and mocks his deformity. His unfulfilled desires to govern and to be superior haunt his mind and make him quicken his decision to play the Machiavellian villain. His ambitious mind aspiring to ascent high is also revealed in his words later in the play: "And fearless minds climb soonest unto crowns" (ibid, 937).

Though, initially, Richard is drawn as a strong warrior fighting at his father's side in loyalty, as the play proceeds, his portrait as a warrior is pushed backwards but the portrayal of his character as a typical Machiavellian politician who waits for the exact moment to attack and to grasp the power he aimed at is drawn in full detail. The shift of identity and exposure of the inner psyche of Richard and the changing perspective from the warrior to the ambitious political man comes to fore with the naming of Richard as the Duke of Gloucester. When Edward becomes the new king, he announces that his brothers will have new titles. This event will reconstruct the patriarchal system that Richard needs to preserve his former identity. Though, Richard dislikes the title Edward grants him. Richard asks if he can "be Duke of Clarence, George of Gloucester; for Gloucester's dukedom is too ominous" (ibid, 916). Here Richard refers to Thomas of Woodstock, the former Duke of Gloucester, who rebelled against Richard II. He was executed by the order of the king. Shakespeare also used this event in the opening scene of *Richard II*. Edward rejects Richard's demand for it is a "foolish observation," (ibid, 916) and Richard becomes the Duke of Gloucester. In the past Richard's father labelled Richard as a valorous warrior and now Edward, by giving him this title, determines his brother's role; Richard is characterized as a rebellious and put in a more passive situation. The familial ties have broken when Clarence turns his back to his family member and joins Henry's side. After this incident, Richard felt abandoned and left alone. For him this is nothing but a kind of betrayal. Richard rejects his family and, instead of supporting his brother's position, chooses to carry out some evil actions that are clearly against his noble character. On the contrary after his brother's death during the negotiations for *Titulus Regius*³, he did not claim illegality of his kingship. He insisted on his illegal marriage and the fruit of that marriage, Edward V. At the end his claims were justified. In a soliloquy, Richard curses Edward before declaring his desire for the throne; he wishes "no hopeful branch may spring" from Edward's line (ibid, 921). In a monarchy there can only be one king, like there is only one sun in the sky, and Richard wants to be the king. Besides his physical deformity, it is clear that Richard's villainy stems from the lack of loyalty to his family.

³ The statute of the Parliament of England, issued in 1484, by which the title of King of England was given to Richard III.

After Richard was bereft of his family support, he starts to reject all positive feelings. He claims “cold premeditation” (ibid, 921) that derives from lack of affection: “Love forswore me in my mother’s womb” (ibid, 921). Here also his mother’s love becomes problematic because, in a sense, she determined Richard’s nature due to her internalized failings. By attacking his physical deformity, he begins to deny even self-love. Richard no longer regards himself as his father’s earnest son, the victorious war hero who is always loyal to his family, but as crippled humpback who falls from grace. It can be seen that there is a direct connection between absence of love and his physical condition:

And, for I should not deal in her soft laws,
She did corrupt frail nature with some bribe,
To shrink mine arm up like a wither’d shrub;
To make an envious mountain on my back,
Where sits deformity to mock my body;
To shape my legs of an unequal size;
To disproportion me in every part (ibid, 922).

Here Richard’s abnormality is completely categorized, but the description is not as it seems at first glance. According to Bone (2013) Richard is in a state of confusion and instability. He has experienced a destabilizing event, and this accelerated his transformation from a hero to a villain. His arm weakens with which he killed Somerset and King Henry VI, his back twists; and, his legs are bent like a bow rather than walking like the warrior he used to be. His transformation can also be seen through his language. He decides to carry out a course of action that will further remove him from his former identity (22). Here it is clear that what made Richard a complex and attractive character is this transformation he has had.

Additionally, Richard himself brings out a “rhetoric of deformation, calling attention to the novelties of his physical shape and the ways in which that shape liberates him from the constraints of conventional courtly deportment” (Garber, 2004: 56). In other words his physical deformation is strongly related to his inner deformation. The weaker he becomes physically the more he needs compensation. He realized that he needs to write himself a future outside the society. He looks different, he feels different. Nature has not treated him right, so he concludes that he can betray others. He makes a choice to realize his evil plans in order to compensate his physical deformity: He decides to take the crown.

Meanwhile Richard’s self-dehumanisation process was going on. He says;

The midwife wonder’d and the women cried
“O, Jesus bless us, he is born with teeth!”
And so I was; which plainly signified
That I should snarl and bite and play the dog.
Then, since the heavens have shaped my body so,
Let hell make crook’d my mind to answer it (Rowse, 1988: 950).

His words can be linked to his disposition to a malevolent nature. He thinks that he’s born as a dog because of the shape of his teeth. Here his understanding of his physical status may be persuasive. Dogs are usually regarded as very reliable and faithful animals. They protect their homes from enemies. Richard’s former identity and the analogy here seem to be more compatible with each other. He finally concludes that his deformed mind should be the result of his deformed body. According to Bone (2013) from this phrase it seems that he doubts what he says. His words are not like, “My body is crooked, so my mind must conform it” but they are as, “let hell make crook’d my mind,” which suggests that his physical status does not necessarily determine the nature of his soul. Richard has chosen to reconcile his physical disability and his deformed body with the evil that appears in his soul. He prefers see his physical status as a sign of evil. Like Lady Macbeth’s “unsex me here” speech, he decides to free himself from the feelings of guilt and fear caused by his plans to take the crown (24).

Richard questions his physical status in *Richard III*. In the opening soliloquy he gives a long description about his deformed body;

I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stamp’d, and want love’s majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtail’d of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deformed, unfinish’d, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable

That dogs bark at me as I halt 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 descant on mine own deformity (ibid, 960).

He complains that even dogs do not see him as human: Richard portrays himself distorted and malformed as if he is basically inhuman. This soliloquy provides a clear basis for creating an image of Richard; he clearly states that his physical appearance is extremely distorted. Because of his deformity he thinks that it is impossible to enjoy him physically. His words can be read with a different perspective. He has been going downwards since he lost his father's support and love by his death. Considering Richard's journey throughout the tetralogy, it can be seen that although he is determined to be evil, he is undoubtedly certain about legitimacy of his actions. Therefore his actions can be seen as the implementation of the "grand mechanism". Jan Kott explains this concept in the first part of his *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*. For Kott (1986) "there are no bad kings, or good kings; kings are only kings (17)." The wheel is about to take Edwards down and Richard is the one who wanted to be brought up. He is the one who has right to be the king because the Crown reflects his strong side. He was the one who killed the former king and provided his brother the kingship. He was the one who fought valiantly for his family honour and country. He waits for the appropriate time to claim the crown which he believes to be his own right. Here, in the opening scene of the play, as a compensation for his lack of goodness, Richard creates a new inner world for himself and he creates a new personality for himself by seeing the disabled body as an excuse for his evils.

According to Richard he is not suitable to be a lover so becoming an evil character is the only option for him: "Since I cannot prove a lover, / To entertain these fair well-spoken days, / I am determined to prove a villain" (Rowse, 1988: 960). For Richard there seems to be only two potential options: either a man in love or an evil person. Richard uses the word "determined" which shows that he is not yet a villain. On the other hand many scholars think that Richard is evil from the very beginning. Richard is often criticized for using his physical disability to gain the attention of others. Some critics argue that Richard's evil is an innate part of his character, rather than a reaction stemmed from his body's disorder. For example, according to John Palmer, he is almost in love with his hunchback (Palmer, 1948: 84-85) because; his physical deformity is also a symbol of his superiority. He was born ugly and malformed but he is proud of managing things that many handsome men cannot succeed. In contrast Richard is not necessarily an angelic figure but also not a villain from the beginning. He is a premature and has some physical deficiencies but he is also a strong and brave soldier. For most of his life he is totally loyal to his family. Even in the last battle with Henry Tudor, he killed five not-disabled soldiers.

Richard's villainy revealed itself when he betrayed Clarence. Before that, they seem to have a strong brotherhood bond. They worked together to defeat the Lancastrians. So, Clarence trusts Richard that he will save him from the Tower. By destroying him Richard turned into the dishonest cruel and rebellious Machiavellian statesman. The change from external monstrosity to internal monstrosity was actually based on his physical distortion. When Richard turns himself from a natural to an artificial monster, he also frees himself from scorn. It is clear that, in spite of his physical status, Clarence had trust in Richard and by doing this he shows that he still sees his brother as noble and valorous. Clearly his family does not see Richard's deformed body as a sign of danger or villainy. Richard's successful appearance in 3 Henry VI determines his brother's perception. He obviously underestimates Richard. When the guards take him to the Tower, Richard expresses his feelings for his brother in a sneaky way. He loves Clarence because he makes his immoral plans much easier to accomplish.

In the second scene of the first act Richard tries to manipulate a noble woman, Lady Anne, to marry him. Even though he killed her husband, Prince Edward and her father-in-law, she accepts marrying him. Richard tells her that he has killed her husband and father-in-law for the sake of her beauty. Both Richard's and Lady Anne's behaviours are subjected to different interpretations. For example, when Anne says that she is mourning her husband's and father-in-law's death, how sincere is she? One could be suspicious of this behaviour. Critic Stephen Greenblatt says; "The strange and surprising thing in *Richard III* is that the hunchback does, in fact, prove to be a weirdly successful suitor. He seduces Lady Anne, whose husband and father-in-law he has murdered, and more important, perhaps, in his jaunty wickedness and perverse humour, he has seduced more than four centuries of audiences." (Greenblatt, 2013).

At the beginning of the scene Lady Anne curses Richard, but after twenty lines of speech, she agrees to be his wife. Explaining her behaviour here is not easy. Richard is the only dominant character in this play. An overall view on the events in Shakespeare's history plays shows that women are generally relegated into inferior roles; all historical events are dominated by male characters. Lady Anne – wife of the deceased Lancastrian heir – loses her power by the death of her father-in-law, King Henry VI. Anne recognizes her weak position and starts to see Richard's straightforwardness. From this point of view it possible that she simply compensates her loss with marrying a courageous nobleman. Anne's confession "I would I knew thy heart" (Rowse, 1988: 966) suggests "she dimly perceives, even as she succumbs to him, that she cannot see his true intentions figured in his body but instead must see into his interior" (Torrey, 2000: 143). Nevertheless, it is not an appropriate decision for her because she apparently could see that the man who is asking to marry her cannot really love anybody. Richard says, "I'll have her; but I will not keep her long" (Rowse, 1988: 967). Like Clarence, Anne was also cheated. Here, Richard's behaviour seems more understandable, because her wife is a relative of the former King Henry VI. This would be a very useful marriage for Richard's political plans. And this explanation can be seen as an

example of the perspective towards women in the play. After poisoning and killing his wife, Richard begins to make plans for marriage with his nephew Elizabeth for the next phase of his political plans.

The fourth scene of the first act, in which Clarence was murdered by the assassins, is a touching one. After Richard successfully deceived Anne, it is Clarence's turn to meet Richard's change. For the first time, Clarence begins to suspect after he has seen a dream. He speaks,

Methoughts that I had broken from the Tower,
And was embark'd to cross to Burgundy;
And, in my company, my brother Gloucester;
Who from my cabin tempted me to walk
Upon the hatches: thence we look'd toward England,
And cited up a thousand fearful times,
During the wars of York and Lancaster
That had befall'n us. As we paced along
Upon the giddy footing of the hatches,
Methought that Gloucester stumbled; and, In falling,
Struck me, that thought to stay him, overboard,
Into the tumbling billows of the main.
Lord, Lord! methought, what pain it was to drown! (ibid, 975).

In this play those involved in the dreams generally come true. Clarence's prophetic dream involves Richard causing his drowning at sea. Let alone seeing it as a threat, in the eyes of Clarence, Richard's deformed body is a reason for love and concern. Clarence does not detest Richard's deformed body; on the contrary he wants to preserve Richard's life. Instead of blaming his brother for being thrown into the sea, he blames himself: "I have done those things, / which now bear evidence against my soul" (ibid, 975). He does not establish a connection between his nightmare and his situation. This is contradictory with the monster image of the young brother of Yorks.

Later in this scene, he is drowned in a "cask of wine" by murderers hired by Richard. But he did not suspect Richard even when he faced with his executioners. When Clarence realizes the murderers' purpose, he supposes that it is Edward's command. "I will send you to my brother Gloucester," Clarence says, "who shall reward you better for my life / than Edward will for tidings of my death" (ibid, 978). When the murderers say that he is deceived and tell him who has sent them, Clarence does not believe this new information: "O, do not slander him, for he is kind" (ibid, 979). He had no doubt about his brother until his death. Because of Richard's former goodness, Clarence cannot see the change in Richard's personality.

Murdering Clarence seems to have a drastic effect on Richard's character. He entered into an irreversible way which ends up his final falling in the battlefield. Before this moment he could have returned to his former situation; loyal and dedicated member of York family. But after the death of Clarence his interior monstrosity manifested itself. Buckingham realized Richard's new status and seems to be willing to join his plans in order to have some material advantages. He says "We wait upon your grace" (ibid, 982) to show his commitment to Richard. Besides he hates Queen Elizabeth and her family. Meanwhile King Edward dies. He was planning to cancel the death warrant of Clarence and when he learned his death he started grieving and his condition deteriorated, and eventually he died. When King Edward dies, Richard becomes the Lord Protector of England until the elder of Edward's sons grow up.

After the death of his brothers the main obstacle between Richard and the crown was his nephews. But it was not so easy to eliminate them because their mother was a princess and she had very powerful relatives who could protect her and her sons. In an aside he revealed his intention by saying "So wise so young, they say, do never live long". (ibid, 989) Then Richard made another plan and killed the court noblemen who were loyal to the princes. Later, in order to keep the princes unprotected, he ordered to be captured and executed their relatives on their mothers' side. After that, Richard led his political allies, especially his right-hand man, Lord Buckingham, to crown him as the king. Richard then imprisoned the young princes at the Tower and sent out murderers who had been hired to kill both children.

The death of the young princes makes Richard "the monstrous child-killer whose ruthless stratagems and vicious seductions violate temporal narratives of a future secured by the triumph of innocent youth" (Campana, 2013: 23-24). After *Titulus Regius* the princes are declared illegitimate, so they became politically less threatening for Richard. Yet he insisted on annihilation of them because he seems to believe without the princes his position will be stronger. He does not want to do it himself. Actually Richard only commits murder in battles especially in the previous part of his story. On the other hand in this play, he has murderers realize his plans, and a loyal accomplice, Buckingham. This can also be regarded as his unwillingness to destruct the brave warrior side of his character. After this stage, he put an end to share his plans with the audience, as he often does before. Later when his actions become more complex, he is drawn into the action as if he was drawn into a vortex: "The Richard who seemed to delight in knowing that he was playing in a play becomes the Richard who is trapped in the illusion" (Mooney, 1990: 48).

Until then, the reign of terror that Richard set out gave fear to ordinary Englishmen and they began to hate him. He almost dismissed everyone in the court, even the power-hungry Lord Buckingham. When he hesitated to consent to killing the young princes, he lost Richard's confidence. Though later he agreed and claimed the earldom of Hereford as he had been promised, Richard refused him. When rumours began about a new candidate with an eye on the throne who was gathering forces in France, many upset noblemen were eager to join this operation. This candidate was the earl of Richmond, who comes from a secondary arm of the Lancaster family. England and many Englishmen were ready to welcome him.

In the meantime Richard was trying to consolidate his power. He murdered his wife Queen Anne, so that he could marry young Elizabeth, the daughter of the former Queen and the dead King Edward. Then he says;

I must be married to my brother's daughter,
Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass.
Murder her brothers, and then marry her!
Uncertain way of gain! But I am in
So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin:
Tear-falling pity dwells not in this eye (Rowse, 1988: 1007).

Although the young Elizabeth was his niece, marrying her would secure his position. However, Richard's power began to decline, and Queen Elizabeth managed to prevent him from carrying out his plans. In the meantime, she promised to allow Richmond to marry young Elizabeth.

Finally Richmond invaded England. The night before the Battle of Bosworth, last battle of the War of Roses, Richard had a terrible dream. In his dream he saw that everyone he killed cursed him. They foresee that he would die in the battle. Guiltiness, misery and death await the doomed king. When he woke up he said;

Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
What do I fear? myself? there's none else by:
Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am:
Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why:
Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?
Alack. I love myself. Wherefore? for any good
That I myself have done unto myself?
O, no! alas, I rather hate myself
For hateful deeds committed by myself!
I am a villain (ibid, 1026).

He becomes highly self-reflective. Richard, as a "ruthless" and "vicious" murderer; and who also has "no trouble avoiding the pitfalls of love and compassion", has reached a new level of consciousness (Campana, 2013: 23-24). Yet, by looking at his words one cannot fall the illusion that he was suffering or regretful about what he had done. His conscious bothered him only when he was asleep. When he woke up, he turned to his normal mood;

Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls;
Conscience is but a word that cowards use,
Devis'd at first to keep the strong awe;
Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law (Rowse, 1988: 1029).

He felt the illusion of dominating everything around him. But, it was not the case. He was faltering and he was thinking of the murders he had committed. On the battlefield, Richard was killed and Richmond became the new king under the name of Henry VII. Richmond's marriage to Elizabeth put an end to the problems between the houses of York and Lancaster. Britain entered in an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity. Although *Richard III* is a history play, there are certain elements in the play that makes it a tragedy. For example in the last act before the battle that he was going to die he says; "I shall despair. There is no creature loves me; / And if I die, no soul will pity me" (ibid, 1027).

Throughout the tetralogy, Richard's part has constantly increased and it finished by his death. On account of this Richard is not only *Richard III's* but also the main character of all tetralogy. In spite of his clearly evil actions and confessions confirming his vicious character, Richard cannot be seen as the obvious signifier of evil. For much of the plays he was also depicted as a war hero, loyal family member and a worthy son. Shakespeare had some different reasons to attribute Richard's villainy to his deformed body. In the past many critics did the same thing.

Due to the researches and studies of Richard III Society, the interest on the Richard IIIs, both fictional and the real, has increased in recent years. The members of this society believe that negative judgements on king Richard III mainly stems from Shakespeare's play. And they are doing their best to change this opinion. On the other hand, eventually, it is a literary text and it should be handled with tools of literature not history. In the play there is a man who has important physical disorders living in an environment where power changes hands constantly. Besides, certain events have caused drastic changes in his life. In essence the main theme of the play is what passion can do to a lonely and disabled man with a broken heart. That's why he is neither an angel nor a devil, just a passionate man who needs to be the king in order to relieve his pains.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

III. Richard İngiliz tarihindeki en kötü şöhretli krallardan biridir. İki yeğeni, karısının eski kocası ve onun eski kayınpederinin ölümü de dâhil olmak üzere bir dizi cinayetle suçlanmaktadır. Bu cinayetlerin tamamı tahtı ele geçirmek ve elinde tutmak için gerçekleştirilmiştir. Yaklaşık iki yıl tahtta kalan ve güvenilir tarihi belgelere göre başarısız bir yönetim göstermeyen bu krallıkta bir şöhrete sahip olmasının nedeni William Shakespeare'in III. Richard oyunundaki başkarakteridir. Yazar bu oyunu Richard'ın doğal düşmanı olan Tudor hanedanı döneminde yazmıştır. Yararlandığı tarihi kaynaklar ve dönemin siyasi ortamı gereğince Shakespeare bir ulusal kahramandan ziyade bir canavar yaratmak zorundaydı. Sonuç olarak Iago ve Lear'ın kızları (Goneril ve Regan) kadar kötü ancak onlardan daha renkli bir karakter ortaya çıkmış oldu. Shakespeare'in metninde birçok abartı ve tutarsızlık bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışmada III. Richard'ın abartılı kötülüğü ile fiziksel yetersizliğinin psikolojisi üzerinde yarattığı etki arasındaki ilişki üzerinde durulmaktadır. Ayrıca, Richard'ın acımasız ve erkeksi davranışlarının öncelikle toplumsal beklentilerin bir sonucu olduğu iddia edilmektedir.

III. Richard öncelikle iyi kalpli, melek diye adlandırılacak birisi kesinlikle değildir. Kendisi de gerek oyundaki konuşmaları gerekse de eylemleri ile bu olguyu açıkça dile getirir. Bu nedenle hem oyunda yer alan karakterler, Richard'ı sahnede izleyen seyirciler, hem de oyun metnini okuyanlar Richard'ın kişiliğinin kötülükle yoğrulmuş birisi olduğunu hemen oracıkta anlamakta gecikmezler. Çünkü Richard acımasız, kötü ve gücü elde etmek için yapmayacağı hiçbir şey olmayan biridir. Yapısal olarak oyunda ufak tefek eksiklik ya da tutarsızlıklar olsa da bunlar oyunun yeri ve önemini etkileyecek türden değildir. III. Richard Shakespeare'in ilk dönem oyunlarından biri olduğu için bu tür eksiklikleri yazarın sanatının başlangıç dönemlerinde olduğu gerçeğine bağlamak olasıdır.

Shakespeare bir tarihçi değil, yaratıcı bir oyun yazarıdır ve yapmak istediği şey de iyi ile kötünün mücadelesini sahneye taşımaktır. Bunu yaparken de zaman zaman bazı noktaları abartıp bazı yönleri eksik aktardığı söylenebilir. III. Richard, Othello'daki Iago karakteri ile beraber sonraki yüzyıllarda özellikle Romantik şairlere konu ve esin kaynağı olmuştur. Richard'ı bu kadar kötü yapan şey ise bir dizi cinayetin tek sorumlusu olmasıdır. Bu cinayetlerinde tek bir amacı vardır:

İngiltere Kralı olmak. Omurga eğriliği olarak da bilinen “scoliosis” hastalığı olan Richard’ın bu fiziksel görünümü üzerine oyundaki karakterler de konuşur. Bu tür engeli olanların bilimsel olarak başka yetenekler geliştirdikleri bir gerçektir. Örneğin görme özürülü olanların öteki hislerinin daha gelişmiş olması gibi Richard’daki bu fiziksel bozukluğu kapatma çabası onun hırsı, tutkusu, zalimliği ve acımasızlığı yönünde gelişmiştir denebilir.

Son yıllarda hem Shakespeare’in kurgu karakteri hem de gerçek bir tarihi şahsiyet olan III. Richard’a olan ilginin giderek arttığı görülmektedir. ABD ve İngiltere’de faaliyetleri olan Richard III Cemiyeti, kambur kral Richard’ın kötü şöhretinin, Shakespeare oyunundan kaynaklandığı görüşünü savunmaktadır. Cemiyet yürüttüğü faaliyetler ile bu kötü şöhreti düzeltmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Öte yandan edebi bir metin edebiyat çalışmalarının sağladığı araçlar ile ele alınmalıdır. III. Richard karakteri, gücün sürekli el değiştirdiği bir ortamda yaşayan ve önemli fiziksel bozuklukları olan bir adamdır. Ayrıca, yaşadığı bazı olaylar hayatında ciddi değişikliklere neden olmuştur. Oyunun ana teması, yönetme tutkusunun kalbi kırılmış, yalnız ve engelli bir adama yapabileceği şeylerdir. Bu yüzden Richard ne bir melek ne de bir şeytandır, acılarını hafifletmek için kral olmak isteyen son derece tutkulu bir insandır.
