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Richard *Who*? (drafting)

*“Your purpose is to situate how you interpret something significant about the text within a critical conversation provided by the textual material of the edition. Your purpose is to layer a modest critical reading (of some theme or character or use of metaphor or whatever) with a self-conscious discussion of how the editorial comments enlighten your reading. In other words, I am asking you to write a typical critical paper interpreting some aspect of Shakespeare’s play while simultaneously discussing the ways in which the Arden materials enable that reading.”*

***Topic:*** ***The nature of Richard’s character and why does it matter?, also keeping in mind how… “Correspondence of character and speech act (the ways in which character is revealed through language—diction, syntax, plain/metaphor—and rhetorical form—soliloquy, dialogue, prophesy/dream, disquisition/debate, legal/religious argument—and why it matters.”***

*“Of course, your essay will be very narrow in scope—****take on some well-defined question within these broad topics and generate a thesis claim****. Then closely read the text using whatever additional material is available to you in the Arden edition and your own theoretical framing to support the thesis claim.”*

Basic Theoretical Framing questions: \*(Deconstructionist approach)\*

-How are contradictory and opposing meaning expressed in the work?

-How does meaning break down or deconstruct itself in the language of the text?

-How are implicit ideological values revealed in the work (or passage) ?

What does Arden have to say?

-“In the early eighteenth century, Charles Gildon pronounced Richard ‘Shocking’ and a character ‘not fit for the stage’.”— suspect of his ‘deviant” motivations, Richard seems amoral to the point of comedy in his ability to mock so deeply…They felt “the histories failures of ‘Tragic imitation’ lacking ‘design” or ‘unity’ of action and time, and describing them as suggesting a puppet show...Some parts trifling, others shocking, and some improbable…” (Arden 1-2)[ *I would disagree with these claims; Richard’s calculated nature of thought and language provides a quality of order to life that is largely unattainable to us, therefore evoking a certain sense of envy or admiration. He has the power, is capable, and is unrelenting in his own confidence to wield that power efficiently for his own large gains*.

-**He is hard to place; he is a complex character and cannot be merely categorized so constrictedly…**SO WHAT?

-“Sentimentalist and Romantic writers debated Richard’s character in relation to tragic protagonists such as Macbeth…”

-“20th century scholarship placed Richard among his ‘stock’ theatrical forerunners” (Farcicial)

- Also, recent Machiavellian, do on the fly, type interpretations.

-“Over the years, interpretation has assumed neoclassical, sentimentalist, Romantic, Victorian, modernist and postmodern inflections, **but attention has consistently returned to the play’s unusual protagonist, its highly patterened language, and action**…” (Arden 2) SO WHAT?

[*What does use of language have in relation to the user of language and its attempt to reveal something deep and unfaltering human about his character?...Life is ambiguous and inherently amoral…is it fair to indict Richard for being so if his nature is altogether more truthful in as much as it isn’t wholesome, likeable, or characteristically “pleasurable”*.]

-“In keeping with early modern clichés about the body expressing the soul,Richard was rendered hunchbacked, lame of arm, crabbed of feature and natally toothed” …”The limp may begin with Shakespeare (arden 3)

-“He speaks to himself, and also for us,Freud realized, For Richard provides something anyone can identify with. And he is funny, No Elizabethan would have expected that…”(Arden 3)

-“There have been attempts to ‘humanize him on the stage, but other responses downplay ‘inwardness’ or ‘subjective density’ to stress personification or monstrosity…taken to embody genius or the intellect, self-rule, civil violence, and masculine discursivity.” (Arden 5)