



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S
RICHARD III
2012 STUDY GUIDE



American Players Theatre
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Spring Green, WI
www.americanplayers.org

RICHARD III BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

2012 STUDY GUIDE

Cover Photo: James Ridge.
All photos by Carissa Dixon.

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If you have any questions or comments regarding the exercises or the information within this study guide, please contact Emily Beck, Education Coordinator, at 608-588-9207, or ebeck@americanplayers.org.





Who's Who in *Richard III* (From *The Essential Shakespeare Handbook*)



Duchess of York (Sarah Day)



The widow of the Duke of York, she is mother to Edward IV, Clarence and Richard III, and grandmother to the murdered princes. She comes to lament the day Richard was born.

King Edward IV (Michael Huftile)



Richard's brother, he doesn't recognize his ambition and pays dearly for it.

Duke of Clarence (John Taylor Phillips)



King Edward's brother, he is murdered on the orders of their other brother, Richard of Gloucester.

Richard, Duke of Gloucester (James Ridge)



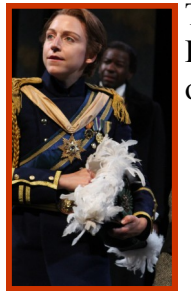
Later King Richard III, he orders the murders of his brother Clarence and his young nephews. He marries Lady Anne, then has her killed. He is finally killed at Bosworth Field by Richmond, the future King Henry VII.

Queen Elizabeth (Colleen Madden)



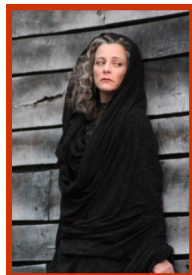
Edward IV's widow, she cannot prevent Richard from murdering her sons. Her daughter, however, was a different story.

Edward, Prince of Wales (Cristina Panfilio)



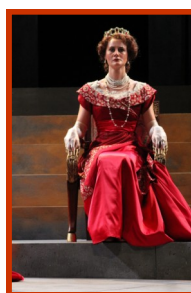
The rightful heir to the throne after Edward IV's death, he is murdered on his uncle's orders.

Queen Margaret (Tracy Michelle Arnold)



Henry VI's French-born widow, she curses her husband's enemies and watches them fall one by one.

Lady Anne (Melissa Graves)



She is wooed into marrying Richard—the man who killed her father-in-law and her husband. Eventually, Richard has her executed, too.



Who's Who in *Richard III*
(From *The Essential Shakespeare Handbook*)



Duke of Buckingham (David Daniel)



A strong ally in Richard's bid for the crown, he feels betrayed by Richard after he becomes King, and rebels. He is eventually captured and executed.

Lord Hastings (Steve Haggard)



Lord Chamberlain, he is originally allied with Richard, but eventually is executed.

Lord Stanley (John Lister)



He supports Richmond, but Richard takes his son (also named Stanley) as leverage so he must stay with Richard's camp.

Catesby (Nate Burger)



Loyal to Richard, he carries many of his orders.

Ratcliff (Eric Parks)



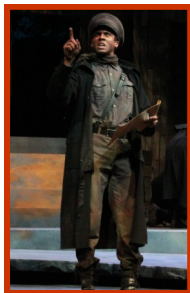
Supporter of Richard, he carries out his orders of execution.

Tyrell (Nathan Hosner)



Supporter of Richard, he carries out his orders of execution, but almost can't follow through with the young princes.

Richmond (Travis A. Knight)



He gathers forces in France before defeating Richard III at Bosworth Field. As Henry VII, he weds Princess Elizabeth and by uniting the Lancastrian and the Yorkist lines, ends the War of the Roses.

Princess Elizabeth (Carlin Johnson)

Young Richard (Caroline Iausley/
Marco Lama)



Daughter to Queen Elizabeth and Edward IV, Richard III seeks to marry her (his own niece), but she eventually weds Richmond.

Elizabeth's youngest brother, also named Richard, is executed in the tower along with Edward V.



ABOUT THE PLAY



Note about the order of events

APT's Richard III begins with the end of Henry VI, Part III, as Prince Edward is named heir to the throne in a pageant. Certain other events have been re-ordered in this production, and some characters have been combined or cut. The following synopsis follows the events of the play as written.

ACT I

Richard, Duke of Gloucester declares that all is finally well in England...with the exception of his own personal unhappiness. Feeling personally slighted (he believes due to his deformity), he begins to plot his ascension. First, he convinces his brother, King Edward IV, to imprison their other brother, Clarence, in the tower. Richard convinces Clarence that he truly loves him, and that it was Queen Elizabeth, their sister-in-law, who passed his sentence.

Next, he visits Lady Anne, the widow of another Edward, the former King Henry VI's son, to try to convince her to marry him. As Richard murdered both Edward and his father, the attempt to woo Anne is kind of a long shot. Much to everyone's surprise, Richard's most of all, she agrees after he convinces her that he killed her husband because of his uncontrollable love for Anne.

In the meantime, Queen Elizabeth explains to her family that Richard will become lord protector of her sons, the heirs to the throne, if anything were to happen to the sickly King Edward IV. Richard shows up and argues with the Queen about his loyalties (which are all false, but he puts on a good show). The previous Queen – Margaret, wife to the slain Henry VI – arrives on the scene and provides them all with a scathing curse, and a great deal of foreshadowing.

Still in the tower, Clarence has just finished describing a dream in which he drowns when Richard's murderers—Tyrell and Ratcliff—show up and kill him.

ACT II

At the palace, King Edward, having sent word that Clarence should be released from the tower, is trying to convince everyone to make amends when Richard arrives with news of Clarence's untimely demise. Edward is distraught at his hand in his brother's death, which brings about his own. Buckingham quietly takes Richard aside, and the two discuss how they will separate Lords Grey and Rivers from their family so they, too, can be imprisoned and eventually executed.

ACT III

Queen Elizabeth learns of her brothers' imprisonment, and she and her younger children leave home for safer harbors. Young Edward, Prince of Wales, having just arrived back in London is beaten down by all the recent tragedies in his family. Richard convinces the prince that he and his younger brother, young Richard, should go rest in the tower, even as he and Buckingham plot to murder the boys and name Richard King. News arrives that Lords Grey and Rivers have been executed. Richard then has his former friend the Duke of Hastings beheaded for "treason" (but really because he refused to support Richard's campaign to become King).



ABOUT THE PLAY

Continued



Moving ahead with the evil plots, Richard tells Buckingham to start rumors that Edward IV's children (the princes and princess) weren't fathered by the King, and therefore are not heirs to the throne. The mayor of London comes to Richard and offers the throne to him, which Richard, "reluctantly" accepts. The Duchess of York (Grandmother), Queen Elizabeth (Mother), and Anne (Aunt) grieve for the young princes' imprisonment in the Tower of London.

ACT IV

At court, the new King Richard III asks Buckingham to murder Prince Edward and his brother, but Buckingham hesitates. Richard then plans to have his deceased brother Clarence's daughter married off in order to get her out of the picture, and also plans to kill his own wife, the hard-won Lady Anne, so he can marry Edward IV's daughter, Princess Elizabeth, his own niece. Richard pays Tyrrel to kill the princes since Buckingham is unwilling to do it. Richard then remembers a prophesy that Richmond (Henry VII, Henry VI's nephew) would be king someday. Anne and the princes are killed, Princess Elizabeth is sent away, and the Duke of Ely (among others) joins Richmond to raise an army against Richard.

Queen Margaret meets the Duchess of York and Queen Elizabeth and tells them to curse Richard, which they whole-heartedly do after asking her to help make their curses stronger. Richard tells Queen Elizabeth that he wants to marry her daughter. While Elizabeth appears to agree to the arrangement (albeit against her will), she sells him out and battle ensues. Richmond attacks England and Buckingham flees Richard's service. Lord Stanley is loyal to Richmond, but Richard keeps Stanley's son as insurance against Stanley's defection.

ACT V

Buckingham has switched teams, but Richard's men find him, and the King orders his execution. On the eve of battle, Richard's victims come to him in a dream to haunt and torment him, saying "Despair and die", which causes him to curse his conscience. The same ghosts also visit Richmond and wish him luck. The two armies meet in battle on Bosworth Field, both generals giving orations to their armies before battle.

Richard's forces are losing the battle, and he is eventually unhorsed, crying "A Horse! A Horse! My kingdom for a horse!") Richmond kills Richard, and Stanley crowns Richmond Henry VII. The new Henry VII, a Lancaster, marries Edward IV's daughter, the Princess Elizabeth, a York, ending the War of the Roses by uniting the houses of York and Lancaster.

APT'S *RICHARD III*



Richard III at APT

depending on the elements has been challenging and exciting.”

There's nothing like seeing Shakespeare outdoors – as it was originally performed at The Globe Theatre in London – accompanied by the sights and sounds of nature. But the beauty of APT's stage and surroundings, which adds so much to the experience, also comes with a unique set of challenges for the actors. Melissa Graves, who plays the tortured Lady Anne in APT's *Richard III*, says “I have worked outdoors before, however I would say that this season's weather has made my experience at APT unique to others. Figuring out how to negotiate my voice to fill the space

Weather also helps dictate the way costumes and sets are designed. Scenery has to hold up to sun fading, and be safe for actors to walk (and run) on. Costumes must be beautiful, durable and adjust to temperatures between spring, summer and autumn. During the peak summer heat, temperatures on stage can soar well over 100 degrees. So beneath the costumes, ice packs are often hidden to keep the actors cool. Also, sets are often changed multiple times in a day – sometimes within just an hour or two – so scenery is designed so it can be taken down and stored when not on stage.

Richard III's set and costumes were designed with a very specific time period in mind, for very specific reasons. Director James DeVita says of the process “one of the first things is deciding on a period, which we do with our designers. And a lot of people ask why we're not doing it in Shakespeare's period. Often people aren't aware Shakespeare used contemporary clothes when he did his plays. So there's kind of a freedom in there. But I didn't want to get too contemporary, I think that makes it too easy, makes the totalitarian metaphor too clear. So we started hovering around 1907 or so, so what we're calling an imaginary England around the early 1900s. And we thought that period fit the criteria that we were looking for



England is well-represented in this production.

and gave us a sense of war. It's not quite WWI, but that's in the mix. And a lot of the costumes are very much influenced by the period.”



Costume rendering by Rachel Anne Healy

Actor James Ridge, who plays Richard, adds that “the military costuming is important for projecting this image of power. And Rachel Healy is doing the costumes, and they're gorgeous. Everybody wants to wear Rachel Healy's costumes. So that's a pleasure. “

But it's not just costumes that contribute to the story, it's also finding a sense of place that makes sense for the production. DeVita continues, “Because this is set in a time of war, so we needed a place where we could justify the battles. And we thought it had to be England, too, because there are a lot of place specific names in the play. We needed royalty, but we also needed armaments. So for the sword fights, we use the sabers that they actually used in cavalry charges, which we still had in this period. We also have lances that they used at that time while



APT'S *RICHARD III*



Model by Takeshi Kata

riding horses, and carbine rifles. So that's how we got into the design.”

The costume and set design also hints at underlying themes in the story. According to DeVita “There are some scenes that are beautiful. We wanted to show the disparity between how wonderful everyone looks, but there's kind of a moral decadence. Inside things are rotting in this kingdom. The people are on the verge of collapse but they don't know it yet. You'll see that in set, too. The set was kind of created that idea of the crumbling. Building a kingdom on a foundation that's not secure. And in that imbalance of new structure and insecurity is where Richard thrives. He can topple that

house very easily given the fear that's in a country that just finished civil war.”

Design elements aside, *Richard III* is a powerful, complicated story, with enough subtlety to allow each production to be completely different. DeVita sums it up by saying “Obviously it's a huge play, it's complicated, but just to kind of encapsulate it's about one man, Richard of Gloucester, who wants to be king for many reasons. And the story's about this man's journey about trying to attempt to get the crown and the means that he'll go through to get it.”

It's easy to portray Richard as an evil, heartless villain. But most of Shakespeare's villains have a moment of redemption – his audience would have expected at least a glimmer of conscience. Richard, like most of Shakespeare's other villains, does have a conscience, though it's buried for quite some time. However, DeVita and Ridge made the decision to portray him not as evil, but as an ambitious man who is continually surprised by what he's getting away with.

According to Ridge, “He is not somebody that you would have to dinner, bring home to mom. It's [his campaign for the crown] very personal, it's something that he wants and he will go to any lengths to get it, and nobody stops him so he just keeps pushing the boundaries. “

This approach was born of conversations DeVita had with the artistic company early on about how evil exists in the world. DeVita says “Right from the top I was not interested in making him a psychopath with no conscience. Characters don't wake up in the morning and say ‘I'm going to be evil today.’ They just keep pursuing the thing they want to get and nobody stops them. And we talked about the tyrants and totalitarian regimes throughout history—about how these people come into being. And one of the things I'm interested in in the play is not only Richard's rise to power, but also the people around him in what we call ‘the culture of enablers.’ Everybody from the guard in the back holding a pike to the most powerful men in the kingdom at some point can



The women of the play hold the key to Richard's conscience.



APT'S *RICHARD III*



Not evil maybe...but still really scary.

say 'no, stop we can't do this. This is wrong.' And some people do in this play, so that's a very interesting component, too. “

Shakespeare wrote Richard as a character who is physically deformed, though there is no clear evidence that the actual historical figure was. But rather than play up the withered arm and limp Richard was written with, as many productions do, APT has played it down. According to Ridge, “This man is in the royal family, and in a picture of really perfect pretty, educated, well-fed people,

how different do you have to be in order to be different enough to have people slight you? So he's got a deformity, but we were interested in what if it's not this huge hump and this huge deformity. But it's enough that all these other perfect people around him have spent his whole life pointing out that he's different. Ignoring him, casting him off to the side because of a it. What does that do to a person to live in that sort of social setting, and with that kind of chronic pain all their lives? And it definitely constructs his psyche in a certain particular way.”

One of the most difficult scenes within that construction comes early on, with the wooing of Lady Anne. It can be difficult for audiences to make the jump that a woman who hates Richard so much, who knows that this man actually murdered the husband that she loved, would be won over so completely. Melissa Graves explains her motivation for playing this troubled character. “Anne has just experienced great amounts of loss in her life; she is alone. In this scene Richard takes advantage of her vulnerable emotional state, spinning her angry fury towards him into a fury of passion. She begins to no longer think with her head but rather with her guts. Richard fills the emptiness inside her and she, in her lonely state, succumbs.” On a personal note, Graves continues, “Her journey is one of the toughest I've had to experience. I find it immensely disturbing, yet completely truthful.”



Ridge continues along this vein, stating “there's this conundrum in trying to play Richard as he is somehow fooling everybody, which in some ways makes everyone around him an idiot. Unless you play the scene straight out, what would it be like if someone was really empathetic to the loss of your husband, or really grieving with you, and the audience alone holds the knowledge that he doesn't believe this. But he's fully there, so of course that person is being hoodwinked. And that seems a lot more interesting.”



Richard III Photo Summary



Richard cheers the return of King Edward IV's son out of one side of his mouth and curses his life from the other.

Now is the winter of our discontent made
glorious summer by this son of York;
Richard Act I Sc i.



First step on his path to the throne is to wed Lady Anne, whose husband and father-in-law Richard murdered.

Was ever a woman in this humour woo'd?
Was ever a woman in this humour won?
Richard ACT I Sc ii



Blaming them for the death of her son and husband, the former Queen Margaret curses Queen Elizabeth and her family, who she considers her enemies.

God, I pray him, that none of you may live your natural age,
But, but some unlook'd accident cut off.
Margaret Act I Sc iii



When the time comes to start bumping off enemies, Richard's brother Clarence is first on the list.

Come, you deceive yourself. Tis he that sends us to
destroy you here.
Ratcliff I Act I Sc iv



Clarence's death hastens the death of Edward IV.



Returning to London after the death of his father, Young Edward and Young Richard are sent to the Tower of London "for t'heir protection".

But come, my lord; and, with a heavy heart, thinking on them
I go unto the Tower.
Prince Edward, Act III Scene i

O God, I fear thy justice will take hold on me and you and mine
and yours for this.
King Edward IV, Act II SC i



Richard crowns himself King on the request of the Mayor of London.



Richard sends Elizabeth's brothers to the Tower, and eventually executes them.

Come Grey... let us here embrace. Farewell until
we meet again in heaven.

Thus high, by thy advice, and thy assistance is King Richard seated.
Richard Act III Sc ii



After using Buckingham to spread rumors that the princes are bastards, Richard pays Tyrell to execute them.

The tyrannous and bloody act is done; the most arch deed of piteous massacre that ever yet this land was guilty of.
Tyrell, Act IV Scene iii



After learning of the death of the young princes, Elizabeth and the Duchess of York mourn, and ask Margaret to help them curse Richard.

My words are dull; O! quicken them with thine! - Elizabeth
Thy woes will make them sharp, and pierce like mine. - Margaret
Act IV Scene iv



Having executed Lady Anne, Richard demands that Queen Elizabeth send word to her daughter, the Princess Elizabeth, that she is to marry him, thus securing his right to the throne.

What were I best to say? Her father's brother would be her lord? Or shall I say, her uncle? Or, he that slew her brothers and her uncles?
Under what title shall I woo for thee?
Elizabeth, Act IV Sc iv



Fearing Richard will turn on him, Buckingham flees Richard's camp, but is recaptured and executed.

Come, lead me, officers, to the block of shame: Wroth hath but wrong,
and blame the due of blame .
Buckingham, Act V Sc i



On the eve of battle, Richard is visited by the ghosts of the people he's murdered.

O coward conscience, how dost thou
afflict me!
King Richard III, Act V Sc iii



Battle isn't going well for Richard, and he is unhorsed and eventually killed.

I think there be six Richmonds in the field; Five
have I slain today, instead of him – A horse! A
horse! My kingdom for a horse.
King Richard III, Act V Scene iv



Richard is vanquished on the battlefield, and Richmond, who will eventually wed Princess Elizabeth, declares victory.

Enrich the time to come with smooth-fac'd peace, with
smiling plenty, and fair prosperous days!
Richmond Act V Sc iv



ACTIVITIES



The following lesson is provided by Mark Miazga through the Folger Shakespeare Lesson Plan.

Exploring Rhythm in Richard III

Plays/Scenes Covered

Richard III 1.2

What's On for Today and Why

Students will examine meter and experiment with pauses in the dialogue between Lady Anne and Richard in 1.2, in order to analyze how rhythm affects meaning and tone. This lesson will take approximately 50 minutes.

What To Do

1. Have students begin reading at around line 72 of 1.2 in Folger text of the play when Richard and Anne start addressing each other. Read it “round robin” style, with all students reading one piece of dialogue without any distinguishable pauses between readers.
 2. Distribute Handout #1 on rhythm and iambic pentameter making sure that students understand the main principles of scansion. Scan about 30 lines of text, counting syllable and noting breaks in iambic pentameter.
 3. Discuss with class – why does Shakespeare break the iambic pentameter? In addition, why does he write some of his iambic pentameter lines with 10 syllables and some with 11 syllables? What is the effect of this break in rhythm? Students should note that breaks in the rhythm seem to come with high emotional points in the dialogue, and seem to shift the balance of power in the conversation.
 4. Re-read lines of text with a 3 second pause, then repeat with a 5 second pause after Anne or Richard speaks. Discuss – how do the pauses affect meaning? Discuss the relationship between the shifts in meter and pauses – does Shakespeare intend for there to be pauses? How do you know?
 5. Assign students into groups of 3-4 students, and have them continue to read through the rest of the scene. As they read, they should note places in the dialogue where iambic pentameter is broken, as well as places where a longer pause most affects meaning.
 6. Have students report back to the group about the specific lines where meter and pauses most affect meaning.
 7. Ask students to decide on the lines of text that most deserve longer pauses because of metrical shifts.
 8. Have the class annotate their scenes with these pauses.
- Have two volunteers perform the scene using the class recommendations for pauses, and taking additional direction from the class as appropriate.

What You Need

- Folger edition of *Richard III* (Act 1, Scene 2).
- Handout on iambic pentameter

Documents:

[Handout #1 Iambic Pentameter](#)

How Did It Go?

At the end of the lesson, the teacher should reflect on whether the students’ work during their group exercises and subsequent report to the class demonstrated understanding of the affect of meter and pausing in dialogue. Participation by all students in the first reading, as well as all students in the class direction and the end, will also demonstrate understanding of the concept.



Handout #1

Shakespeare, Rhythm and Scansion

Scansion is the practice of checking the rhythm of speech written in verse. On a very fundamental level the purpose of writing speech in verse in the first place is not to be “poetic” but to give the language a pulse that makes it easier to speak and hear. The actual sound of lines written in verse can be comprehended more easily by a listener than prose, because in addition to the tones and pitches, rhythmic clues help convey the message. (It is also marginally easier to speak because there are no unintentional tongue twisters as are so common in prose.) Scansion, despite the imposing sound of the word itself, is just the simple practice of checking the verse to be sure you understand its rhythm.

Shakespeare exhibited a strong beat and clear sense of rhythm in many of the passages and songs from his plays and relied upon a type of meter known as iambic. A unit of iambic meter, called an iambic foot, consists of a soft stress followed by a sharp one: da-DUM. (A good example of an everyday word that acts as an iambic foot is toDAY.)

Shakespeare wrote most of his poetry in iambic pentameter, five units of iambic beat to a line:

“But SOFT, what LIGHT through YONder WINdow BREAKS.”

daDUM daDUM daDUM daDUM daDUM

But a lot of the songs from his plays are written in iambic tetrameter, four units of iambic beat to a line:

You SPOTted SNAKES with DOUble TONGUE

daDUM daDUM daDUM daDUM

Although strictly speaking, iambic pentameter refers to five iambs in a row (as above), in practice, poets vary their iambic pentameter a great deal, while maintaining the iamb as the most common foot. However there are some conventions to these variations. Iambic pentameter must always contain only five feet, and the second foot is almost always an iamb. The first foot, on the other hand, is the most likely to change by the use of inversion, which reverses the order of unstress and stress in the foot. For example the first line of Richard III begins with an inversion:

/ ~ ~ / ~ ~ / / ~ /

Now is | the win- | ter of | our dis- | con- tent

Another common departure from standard iambic pentameter is the addition of a final unstressed syllable, which creates a *weak* or feminine ending. One of Shakespeare's most famous lines of iambic pentameter has a weak ending:^[3]

~ / ~ / ~ \ / ~ ~ / ~

To be | or not | to be, | that is | the ques- tion



ACTIVITIES



The following lesson guide is provided by Mark Miazga through the Folger Shakespeare Lesson Plan.

Color Coding *Richard III*

Plays/Scenes Covered

Richard III 1.2

What's On for Today and Why

In preparation for any assessment in which a student is asked to analyze a passage – students will be asked to use color-coded annotation (textmarking) to analyze a passage from *Richard III*. Students will identify imagery, linguistic devices and be able to appreciate Shakespeare's skill with language. This lesson will take approximately 100 minutes.

What To Do

1. Pass out approximately 40-line passage of *Richard III* (I.2.74-111 in Folger edition).
 2. Read text aloud with class, using two volunteers.
 3. Discuss as a class initial impressions and effects of the passage.
 4. Tell students to circle in red all images of animals in the passage. Share and discuss as class.
 5. Instruct students to find at least two more aspects of the passage that strike them as intriguing. These could include linguistic devices such as repetition, enjambement (lines running on), other imagery, as well as breaks in the rhythm, etc. Tell students not to worry about “getting it right,” but, rather, about identifying literary features on their own. Students may find it useful to consult the handout of literary terms.
 7. Discuss their findings as a class.
 8. Have students devise a system of color-coding and annotating (for example, circle all body parts in red, draw a square around animal images, underline death images in black, asterisk any breaks in rhythm, etc) and write this legend up on a large sheet of paper or whiteboard for the whole class to use.
 9. Share responses as a class. Note similarities and differences.
- Have students re-read the passage in pairs and follow this with a class discussion on the ways their understanding/appreciation of the text compared to after the original reading.

What You Need

- *Richard III* (1.1.74-111) Folger edition
- Highlighters
- White board/large sheet of paper

Documents:

[Literary Terms](#)

How Did It Go?

At the end of the lesson, the teacher should assess students' color-coded annotation (not whether it is “right,” but whether students have engaged in genuine grappling with the text). Students should assess in what ways their appreciation of the text altered through this activity.



Color-coding Richard III

Literary terms:

Imagery-pictures or images, often themed, created through words.

Enjambement-the running on of one line into the next, usually for effect.

Invective-speech or writing that abuses, denounces, or attacks. It can be directed against a person, cause, idea, or system. It employs a heavy use of negative emotive language.

Hyperbole -an extravagant exaggeration.

Stichomythia- an ancient Greek arrangement of dialogue in drama, poetry, and disputation in which single lines of verse or parts of lines are spoken by alternate speakers.

Repetition-deliberate repeated use of words for effect.