



CRITICAL THINKING: DESCRIPTION, ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

**Example 1: history dissertation taken from a core chapter:
“Making a monster: The relationship between the body and behaviour of
King Richard III”**

EXAMPLE

Both Rous and Vergil, who had documented the monstrosity and cruelty of King Richard, completely reversed their sentiments when discussing Richard’s noble behaviour at the Battle of Bosworth. Vergil, for example, appears to make a special effort to discourage any rumours that Richard had behaved in a cowardly manner. He suggested that Richard refused to flee even when his men advised it, and instead continued fighting. This ‘manful’ bravery exhibited by Richard in his final hours painted him more like the romantic chivalric ideal, than the monstrous usurper which Vergil had previously suggested him to be. He states that:

King Richard alone was killed fighting manfully in the thickest press of his enemies [...] The report is that King Richard might have sought to save himself by flight; for they who were about him [...] exhorted him to fly, and when the matter began manifestly to falter; they brought him swift horses; but he, who was not ignorant that the people hated him, [is] said to have answered that very day he would make an end either of war or life.¹¹¹

John Rous similarly highlighted Richard’s bravery in battle, however, he seems to be more surprised than Vergil, stating: ‘Let me say the truth to his credit: that he bore himself like a gallant knight and, despite his little body and feeble strength, honourably defended himself to his last breath’. This appears to be great praise coming from somebody who had otherwise devoted so much of his work to blackening the King’s name and tarnishing his reputation. It is worth noting how Rous appears to be almost



shocked that someone of ‘little body and feeble strength’ could actually have the honour and ability to behave as Richard did. This suggests that the belief in the relationship between the monstrous body and monstrous actions was so deeply entrenched within Rous’s work, that it seemed almost impossible to him that Richard could defy his body and act ‘like a gallant knight’.¹¹²

BROKEN DOWN EXAMPLE

COMMENTS

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Description:

The student puts forward the main argument of their paragraph in the first sentence. This is descriptive; they are just describing their argument.

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Analysis:

They go on to discuss the evidence they have used to justify their argument. They have shown why they think what they think. They have not just repeated what another author has said.

Here, the student draws their own comparison between two sources. This demonstrates a good level of critical engagement with the literature.



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Evaluation:

Here the student is exploring what they think this argument brings to their overall argument.