



## Common Themes

### Richard's "unnatural" moral deformity

- Richard's character and deeds are described as "unnatural" by More's narrator (100/60, 101/36, 135/65) and Shakespeare's Anne (1.2.62).
- Richard's inclination toward war rather than peace is emphasized in Shakespeare's opening soliloquy by Richard (1.1.1-41) and More's opening portrait of Richard (101/37).
- Richard's unusual birth and physical appearance are noted by both More (101/28-36) and Shakespeare (1.3.239, 2.4.31) as a foreshadowing of his wicked character.
- Richard is described as transgressing the laws of God, nature, and man by both More (100/55-60, 114/52-56) and Shakespeare (1.2.74).

### Law

- The rule of law is highlighted in both More's history (100/69, 111/32, 111/39-40, 122/74, 85, 133/34-41) and in the reflections of Shakespeare's characters (1.4.190-226, 3.5.42, 4.4.31, 4.4.355, 5.3.329).
- The execution of Rivers, Grey, and Vaughn without due process of law is a catalyst for the political breakdown in the accounts of both More (106) and Shakespeare (2.4.46, 3.3).
- Richard takes precautions to give his actions the appearance of legality in the accounts of both More (110/50, 120/73-11, 123/55-64, 133/34-41) and Shakespeare (3.5.42, 3.7).

### Tyranny

- Richard is described as a "tyrant" by both More (135/62, 136/85, 137/36) and Shakespeare (2.4.56, 4.4.53, 5.2.2, 5.3.179, 5.3.260).
- Richard is portrayed as afflicted by a guilty conscience and "fearful dreams" by both More (135/85-136-11) and Shakespeare (5.3) as a result of his tyrannical deeds.
- Tyranny is antithetical to true friendship for both More (101/43-54) and Shakespeare (5.2.21).

### Citizen virtue & vice

- Richard's *modus operandi* is to exploit the factions in court, and the parties' desire for material gain, in the accounts of both More (102/17-29) and Shakespeare (1.1.65, 3.2.197-99).
- The vices of Edward IV are featured in the accounts of both More (100/1-5, 123-126, 128/80-129/22) and Shakespeare (3.5.73) as the source of Richard's allegations that allow him to claim legal right to the throne. Both highlight the ineffectiveness of Edward's attempted atonement of the nobles (102-103, 2.1).
- The English citizens (and their consent or silence) play a notable role in Richard's seizure of the throne in the accounts of both More (116/72-83, 121/12-27, 126-133 esp. 133/3-33) and Shakespeare (2.4, 3.6, 3.7).
- Both More (117-120) and Shakespeare (3.2-3.4) dwell at length on the execution of Hastings as an example of the rashness and "vain surety" of man in the face of death.

## Notable Differences

- Shakespeare's Richard dominates the stage while More often foregrounds other characters.
- Shakespeare's play prominently features the murder of Henry VI and Prince Edward, and hence the character of Queen Margaret, who is absent from More's account. More mentions the murder of Henry VI in passing (101/54-60).
- Shakespeare features the Duke of Clarence (see esp. 1.4) more prominently than More. (Both, however, attribute his death to Richard and portray it as an instance of Richard's disingenuous character [101/61-66, 1.1.122]).
- More's narrative dwells at length on the breaking of sanctuary (108-115) while Shakespeare treats it briefly (3.1.32-57).
- Buckingham's Guildhall speech is central to More's narrative (127-131) while it is reported briefly and secondhand in Shakespeare's play (3.7.5-42).
- Shakespeare features Henry VII as a hero while he is not mentioned in More's unfinished history.