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**The Three Lives of Richard III: A Comparison of the Different
Literary and Historical Depictions of the
Controversial King Richard III**

Bachelor's Thesis

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedla jsem veškeré použité podklady a literaturu.

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Introduction

When one makes mention of Richard III, many people may think of a villainous, vicious, power-hungry, and physically deformed monster, and overall persona non grata, that once used to rule over England. This perception was put into people's heads mainly through one version of this medieval king written by the Elizabethan playwright William Shakespeare. This is not the only version, however, of Richard III that exists in the world of literature, and there are several versions of him from different historical sources and contemporary research. Exploring the various viewpoints on Richard III's character and the differences in the various depictions will be the main theme of this research. It will also explore what influences the authors were under and the reasoning behind the general fascination with the life of Richard III.

This thesis will observe and analyse both the dramatical and historical writings to answer these questions. It will analyse two different theatre depictions of him. The first chapter will talk about what history plays are in general, and how they started and developed. The following chapter will then provide a brief introduction of the historical facts with which the thesis will be working. This part will provide the readers with valuable information that will help them better understand the atmosphere of the given periods. Chapter three will introduce a concept which is particularly important for this thesis, and that is the Tudor Myth. It will demonstrate its main points and its connection with Richard III.

The following part will introduce what is known from the actual historical sources, two chronicles from John Rous - *The Rous Roll* (1492) and *Joannis Rossi Antiquarii Warwicensis Historia Regum Angliæ*, but also *The History of King Richard the Third* (1513), a biography written by Sir Thomas More. It also will discuss the recent archaeological findings in Leicester and with that some academic research concerning Richard III. All of this should demonstrate the first face of this king and conclude the historical part of the thesis.

The main, literary part, of this thesis, will investigate the other two lives of Richard III, in two plays - *Richardus Tertius* (1579) by Thomas Legge and Shakespeare's *Richard III* (1591). It will first analyse his actions, the way he seized power and became king is

described, what he did to his nephews and what were the last moments of his life like before he died during the War of the Roses. The focus will then be on his physicality, the way he looks, and any possible deformities. The last part will look at his personality and psyche. It will then try to provide an answer as to why Legge and Shakespeare wrote the way they did. The findings will be put into perspective with the Tudor myth and the overall propaganda, which influenced them, how present was it during the era of Elizabethan theatre and if as an author, being closer to the monarch had an impact on the play.

The last two chapters will present more contemporary portrayals of Richard III from film and television, to determine if there is still the presence of the usual traditional description. They will also provide the reasoning behind the ever-so-present fascination with this medieval king more than 500 years after his death.

In conclusion, the chosen dramatical portrayals are compared to one another in relation to all the aspects that were discussed during this thesis. It will put all the discovered facts in perspective with the political and historiographical setting of late medieval and Elizabethan England. It will also demonstrate the extent to which the authors were influenced by the Tudor myth to prove just how interesting, yet controversial, the historical figure of King Richard was and still is and why there is still an ongoing fascination with his life.

1. History plays

According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, a history play is a “drama with a theme from history consisting usually of loosely connected episodes chronologically arranged.”¹ This genre of plays frequently assumes that its audience has a sense of national identity and places a strong emphasis on the public good by using lessons from the past to inform the present.² Their history could be dated back to the beginning of Christianity itself. Benjamin Griffin in his work called *The Birth of the History Play: Saint, Sacrifice, and Reformation* (1999) argues that the origin of European modern theatre comes from two important Christian rituals – the Mass and the saint plays. It can be then said that this is where history plays come from since the saint plays were nothing more than theatrically performed scenes from the lives of the early saints.³ Both of these, Mass, and Saint plays, were more of a Catholic tradition.

Surprisingly, these purely Catholic traditions came to the British Isles during the times of the Reformation and the departure from the Catholic church. The greatest flourishing of history plays came in the days of the English Renaissance and the Elizabethan Theatre, when many playwrights started to create such works; most notable being none other than William Shakespeare, but also for example Christopher Marlowe.

Historical plays did not end in the Renaissance, and audiences can still come across many of them on stages all over the world. These include, for example, Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America*, which dealt with the AIDS pandemic in the late 1980s, and Lin-Manuel Miranda’s *Hamilton*, a musical play about the first Treasury Secretary of the United States are both good examples of the more modern take on the art of history plays. Although one cannot compare Kushner or Miranda to William Shakespeare, it is still apparent that their historical plays have a similar goal, that is to use lessons from the past to inform the present, as was previously mentioned.

¹ “Chronicle Play,” *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed December 29, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/art/chronicle-play>.

² *Ibid.*

³ Benjamin Griffin, “The Birth of the History Play: Saint, Sacrifice, and Reformation,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 39, no. 2 (1999): pp. 217-237, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1556163>, 217.

1.1. Shakespeare's history plays

When talking about the history plays in Renaissance England it is important to distinguish between two types of plays inspired by the past. First are the classic histories, inspired by what we can call world history. In the case of Shakespeare, it would be for example *Antony and Cleopatra* or *Julius Caesar*. Second are then the so-called, chronicle plays which provide the audience with a story from the history of England.⁴ Here one could mention *Henry VI* or *Richard III*. Although nowadays these plays are referred to as Shakespeare's histories, it was not the playwright himself who decided this distinction.

This label was given to these particular plays by John Heminges and Henry Condell in 1623. These men were the editors of the First Folio, which was the first ever published collection of Shakespeare plays. They categorized approximately a third of his plays under the label "histories". As Michael Hattaway demonstrates in his chapter "The Shakespearean History Play" in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*, Heminges and Condell's choice of this name for the genre was based on Shakespeare himself: "they confirmed a dramatic genre that Shakespeare himself seems to have endorsed: Polonius announced that 'the best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history...' have arrived in Elsinore".⁵ Hattaway presents Heminges' and Condell's intentions using an excerpt from Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet*.

The histories relevant for this work are the chronicle plays focusing on English history. In total, Shakespeare wrote 11 history plays with this focus: *King John*, *Edward III*, *Richard II*, *Henry IV Part 1* and *2*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI Parts 1, 2* and *3*, *Richard III* and *Henry VIII*. These plays are, with the exception of *King John*, *Edward III*, and *Henry VIII*, known as the so called eight-play Henriad. It is sometimes described as the First and the Second Tetralogy. This division can be seen in E. M. W. Tillyard's *Shakespeare's History Plays* (1944). *Richard III* is part of the Second Tetralogy which describes the events of The Wars of the Roses, which is further discussed in the following chapter.

⁴ M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Stamford: Cengage Learning, 2015), 52.

⁵ Michael Hattaway, *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3.

2. Richard's biography and his time

Before any further analysis, it is important to briefly introduce both King Richard and his time. For this part, the thesis will be drawing from the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, as well as Paul Murray Kendall's monograph *Richard the Third* (1955). Kendall's monograph is one of the most celebrated biographies of Richard III. Though written in 1955, it does lack the modern research on his life. It is useful for the purpose of the basic overview of this King's life.

Richard's time was the era of the famous War of the Roses, which started not too long after the Hundred Years War. The war was led between two noble families – the Lancasters and the Yorks. The reason for all this fighting was the power over England. This war, which some might call a civil war, went on from 1455 to 1485. Despite its length, the war did not involve a great deal of fighting. The most important, however, was the Battle of Bosworth Field, which finally anchored the victory of the Lancastrians and Henry Tudor.

Richard III, also known as Richard Plantagenet of Gloucester, was born on 2 October 1452. He was the son of Richard, the third Duke of York, and Cecilla Neville, a noblewoman from a very prominent family at that time. Richard was consequently both well-born and well-connected from an exceedingly early age, which made him an eligible bachelor of medieval England. The only thing that was against him, was that he was the youngest son, with the smallest chance of becoming a king, especially when not being from the straight descending lineage. Despite this fact, he ascended the throne in 1483 as the last Plantagenet and York King of England. In 1472 he married Anne Neville. Before their union, Anne was Princess of Wales as she was married to the Lancastrian heir to the English throne, Prince Edward who was later killed in one of the battles of War of the Roses. One of the reasons for Richard's importance, was his involvement in the said war, where he was the leader of the York army. Throughout the war, his greatest opponent was the Lancastrian leader Henry Tudor. Richard died on 22 August 1485 at the Battle of Bosworth Field.

The accession of Henry Tudor, now only Henry VII, to the throne, marks the end of the War of the Roses. To secure his throne, Henry married Princess Elizabeth of York, with which he established a new ruling royal house of Tudor, in whose coat of arms he merged the two roses to symbolize the union. This family became one of Britain's most

famous and important ruling dynasties. During their reign, England underwent numerous changes such as the separation from the Catholic Church under the reign of Henry's son, Henry VIII, as well as launching overseas explorations and the golden age for English theatre, known as the Elizabethan theatre, during the reign of his granddaughter Elizabeth I. She is sometimes called "the virgin queen" as she did not have any children, thus no Tudor heir. With her, the famous dynasty died out.

3. The Tudor myth

The Tudor myth is a phenomenon that has its roots in 15th century England. It was used as a tool of propaganda. As the name suggests, it is connected to the Tudor dynasty started by King Henry VII. It was he who wanted to show the legitimacy of the Tudor dynasty's accession to the English throne through shifting their history and the history of England itself. Tillyard, in his work on Shakespeare's history plays, explains the basis of this myth in the following way: "But the Tudors, to suit their ends, encouraged their people to look on the events that led to their accession, in a special way".⁶ This so-called special way of viewing things stayed in the minds of the people until the age of the last Tudor queen, Elizabeth I. During her reign, a new level of the Tudor myth appeared, called the Elizabethan world picture. A brief explanation is that it was "the medieval world picture modified by the Tudor regime"⁷, as written by Tillyard in his book *The Elizabethan World Picture* (1952).

The rise of the Tudor myth is usually associated with works of historians and chroniclers such as Polydore Vergil, Edward Hall, Raphael Holinshed as well as Thomas More and John Rous whose works will be discussed in the following chapter. It was these men who later influenced playwrights and authors, who used their works as key sources for their writings.

The myth was based on themes that would validate Tudors' right to the throne. As one of the main themes, mentioned by Tillyard, is that: "the union of the two houses of York and Lancaster through his marriage with the York heiress was the providential and happy ending of an organic piece of history."⁸ Another notable theme was the connection of the Tudor dynasty with the legendary King Arthur, to the extent of proclaiming themselves as being his descendants or even reincarnation, due to their Welsh origin.⁹

Later on, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, another factor came into the picture. The old Arthurian legend said "the return of Arthur was to bring back the age of gold"¹⁰ and that Arthur and his knights would help his kingdom in the hour of need. The Elizabethan era has been described as the golden era for England. It was not used just as

⁶ E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1944), 29.

⁷ E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1952), 100.

⁸ Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays*, 29.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid, 30.

a mere admiration, but rather to make an even deeper connection to the old English legend. Apart from that, the Tudor myth also emphasized the divine right to the throne, meaning that the Tudors were chosen by God to rule over England. It also included further revision of history, for example revision of the life and reign, of Henry VII's greatest rival, Richard III.

Tillyard, as well as the British historian Nigel Saul, work with the so-called Bishop's prophecy in connection with the Tudor myth. They present its importance in shaping the myth, even though it was not based on an actual prophesy. It appeared in William Shakespeare's *Richard II*. This prophecy stated that the War of the Roses was sent: "as a punishment from God for the murder of a divinely ordained monarch".¹¹ This only reassured the royal subjects in England about the divine right of Tudors to the throne. It proved to them that the Tudors were sent to rescue the country from those who were guilty of the said murder.

The myth carried its influence even after the end of the Tudor dynasty. During the time of the Stuart kings, it was still present in the everyday life of people, although it was shifted in some way to serve the needs of the current rulers and their propaganda.¹² It was understandable for the Stuarts to continue with it, as the myth also helped to legitimize their own accession to the throne, as the closest descendants of the Tudors.

Propaganda is almost as old as the world itself. Practices like these are used everywhere and in many different ideologies throughout the history. The Tudors were not the first and definitely not the last to alter both past and present to their benefit. The special thing about the propaganda of this time was how it made its way into not only chronicles, annals, and literature, but especially for how many centuries it managed to stay present in the minds of people.

¹¹ Neema Parvini, "Shakespeare's Historical and Political Thought in Context," essay, in *Shakespeare's History Plays: Rethinking Historicism* (Edinburgh, United Kingdom: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 84–121, 84-85.

¹² *Ibid.*, 100-101.

4. The historical Richard III

Even after having several literary works written about him, Richard III is still, at his core, a historical figure. That is why this thesis will now look into who he was in the eyes of the chronicler John Rous and Sir Thomas More. It will also present the contemporary knowledge about the historical King Richard.

4.1. The chronicle of John Rous

In this part, the focus will be on two chronicles by John Rous, namely the *Rous Roll* and *Historia Regum Angliæ*. Looking at the *Rous Roll*, the reader can see that the way this chronicle is written is unusual. It is written in the form of a roll, which means a long continuous sheet of parchment on both sides with cylinder-like wooden pieces. This particular one could be described as a sort of overview of the Plantagenet kings up until Richard III. Each of the kings has a column with some kind of biography, portrait and coat of arms.

Richard has two entries here. In the first, short entry, one notices Richard wearing full armour accompanied by a sword, holding the Warwick castle in one hand, and a charter in the other. The portrait is already demonstrating both the chivalry and decisiveness of King Richard. The text itself is not far from this portrayal either, as it described him as a mighty prince and a good lord for the country.¹³ The second entry is yet again shorter accompanied by another portrait of Richard in his armour with a sword, except here he has an orb in his hand and six helms around him that symbolize the lands he rules over. Here, Rous mentions Richard as “The most mighty prince Richard by the grace of god king,”¹⁴ an upholder of law and beloved by many.¹⁵ It is quite obvious that he was trying to describe Richard in the best light possible as a great and trustworthy sovereign.

Historia Regum Angliæ is a more standard chronicle describing a certain part of English history ending with Henry VII becoming the king. Looking at the portrayal of Richard III in this piece of writing, one can notice how the point of view of John Rous is

¹³ “The Rous Roll,” British Library, accessed January 4, 2023, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-rous-roll>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

changing. Here he starts in a strong way: “Richard was born at Fotheringhay in Northamptonshire, retained within his mother’s womb for two years and emerging with teeth and hair to his shoulders”.¹⁶ This picture of a newborn, had its roots in one legend told by people at the time, which said that children born with teeth bring bad luck to their families. This is not where the physical description of Richard ends. The chronicler describes him as a man of small stature, with a short face and unequal shoulders, the right higher and the left lower.¹⁷ This adds to the less-than-human looks of Richard and the shifting nature of Rous’ writing which is already influenced by the Tudor dynasty.

Phillip Schwyzer, in his work centred on the ways Richard was remembered through the years, talks about Rous’ work after the war: “Rous, who hastily reversed his glowing judgment of Richard after Bosworth, provides an obvious example of such propaganda, there is little evidence from Henry VII’s reign (1485–1509) of a concerted effort to remould popular memories of Richard”.¹⁸ It can be seen that rather than the ruler’s propaganda it was Rous himself trying to gain Henry VII’s favour.

4.2. The biography by Thomas More

Another, and even more famous, historical version of Richard III was created in the biography written by Sir Thomas More called *The History of King Richard the Third* (1513). More was not only an author but also lord chancellor of the Tudor King Henry VIII. He was born in the year 1478 and died in 1535. At the age of thirteen, he was even placed in the household of Thomas Morton, who was the archbishop of Canterbury.¹⁹ He later studied both law and politics to become a part of the House of Commons and later chancellor.²⁰ When Henry VIII wanted a divorce from his wife More was against it. This led to a series of disagreements between them that ended in More’s imprisonment in the Tower of London in which he remained until the end of his life.

¹⁶ “John Rous, History of the Kings of England,” British Library, accessed January 2, 2023, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/john-rous-history-of-the-kings-of-england>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Philip Schwyzer, “Lees and Moonshine: Remembering Richard III, 1485–1635*,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (2010): pp. 850-883, <https://doi.org/10.1086/656930>, 853.

¹⁹ Sidney Lee, *The Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 38 (London: Oxford University Press, 1885-1900), 429.

²⁰ Ibid., 433.

Speaking about *The History of King Richard the Third* (1513), Schwyzer mentions that More claimed to rely on memories of many witnesses, none of which he calls by their name. He points to the fact that it could potentially be Thomas Morton with whom he spent a number of his teenage years and who by the nature of his position would have memories about King Richard.²¹ The biography of Richard III starts with the death of his brother, King Edward IV after which Richard, at that moment the Duke of Gloucester, was appointed the official protector of his children. In the part when the reader first meets Richard, he is mentioned in the following way: “Danger of their uncle Richard”²², which already hints the way this biography is going to be written.

The way Richard looked here is quite similar as to what Rous mentioned in *Historia Regum Angliæ*. He is small of stature with uneven shoulders and a deformed back.²³ He is also described as being “malicious, wrathful, envious, and from before his birth, ever perverse”.²⁴ This could already evoke the image of Richard as a tyrant. More goes on to describe all the political issues that happened both before and after him being crowned king. Dan Breen in his article on morality in More’s Richard III notices a similar pattern: “More’s narrator gestures toward the reader’s assumptions regarding the fully psychologized version of ‘Richard the tyrant’ and then, surprisingly, moves to dislocate that tyranny to the broader sphere of royal politics”.²⁵ In this way, the reader will have a set image of Richard in their mind while reading about everything from his disagreements with the Queen²⁶, his relationship with the Duke of Buckingham²⁷, the situation around Edward IV’s children being labelled as illegitimate²⁸ and the alleged murder of the two princes in the London Tower²⁹, and more.

²¹ Schwyzer, “Lees and Moonshine: Remembering Richard III, 1485–1635*,” 856.

²² Thomas More, *The History of King Richard the Third*, ed. Gerard B. Wegemer and Travis Curtright (Center for Thomas More Studies, 2003), <https://thomasmorestudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Richard.pdf>, 3.

²³ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁵ Dan Breen, “Thomas More’s ‘History of Richard III’: Genre, Humanism, and Moral Education,” *Studies in Philology* 107, no. 4 (2010): pp. 465-492.

²⁶ More, *The History of King Richard the Third*, 21.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 65.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 74.

4.3. Rous vs More

The distinctiveness of the Tudor myth lies in the fact that numerous authors were not explicitly instructed to adopt the specific narrative styles evident in their writings. Neema Parvini elaborates in his article on this particular problem: “The important thing to note here is that the writers of chronicles were not in the business of producing state propaganda”.³⁰ Rous and More were no different in that sense. Looking at their works with the notion of the Tudor myth in mind, one can almost see the way this myth was making its way into the collective mind of the nation. Although both of these men are usually mentioned as the ones standing at the roots of the myth, each of them adopted it in their own separate way.

At the time Rous wrote his works, the Tudors were only gaining power over what was being written about their history. It can be said that what he wrote was either written based on his own beliefs or just to benefit from it under the new ruling dynasty, which would then explain the sudden shift of his thoughts and views presented in his earlier works. It is debatable which of his versions of Richard is the right one, as the Tudors are not the only example of people in power changing history and controlling what is being written about them. That is why it is possible that the Yorks could have also had power over what Rose wrote. The ambiguity surrounding Richard III though, makes it hard for one to decide the level of propaganda in the *Rous Roll*.

More was in a different situation from Rous. During Rous’ time, the myth was not yet rooted in society in a major way. More, who was born only seven years before Tudors came to the throne, wrote his history of Richard III during the rule of the second Tudor king, Henry VIII. Looking at the timeline, it is possible that More did not know any other Richard III than the one presented under the Tudors and their propaganda. Through his close relationship with the Archbishop of Canterbury Morton, shows that he could have known a different view of Richard. More was also working quite closely with King Henry VIII and is almost always mentioned as one of the building blocks of the myth surrounding Richard. In conclusion, there is a possibility that More might have written about Richard the way he did for his own good and to gain the favour of the Crown, the same way Rous did.

³⁰ Parvini, “Shakespeare’s Historical and Political Thought in Context,” 88.

4.4. Exhumation in Leicester 2013

All that was mentioned before were only the thoughts of chroniclers, who were, since the days of ancient Rome, strongly influenced by the current propaganda and political situation. There is a substantial difference in what is known from the more contemporary source based academic and historical research on Richard III. At first it was based on a critical approach to biased writings. One could ask themselves why the remains of king's body have not been studied to obtain at least a clearer picture of his physicality which is often discussed? Richard as a king must have had an official burial place. The fact is that in modern times no one knew where his burial place was. There has been speculation about the location of this place since the second half of the 1970s. At that time, the research was made only by amateur historians from The Richard III Society.³¹ It was not until that later this society actually became professional and endorsed by scholars.

In 2009, a writer and member of The Richard III Society Philipa Langley launched the *Looking for Richard* project in order to find the lost grave.³² In 2012, after three years of searching, Langley and an archaeologist found the burial place and began the excavation in August of the same year. The grave with the king's remains was discovered in February 2013 under a car park in the city of Leicester, next to the Greyfriars Friary.³³

Among the Leicester remains was found, for example, Richard's skull, thanks to which the archaeologist and scientist were able to reconstruct his appearance as accurately as possible. A living descendant of Richard, Michael Ibsen, was brought in to assist during the reconstruction as his DNA was already used to identify the remains.³⁴ The result of the reconstruction was surprising. His face was very sympathetic. Even Philippa Langley commented after seeing his reconstructed face, that it could not have been tyrant's face. Such observations cannot be taken as immutable facts, but in all likelihood, Richard's appearance was much more ordinary.

³¹ Annette Carson et al., *Finding Richard III: The Official Account of Research by the Retrieval and Reburial Project: Together with Original Materials and Documentation* (Horstead: Imprimis Imprimatur, 2014), 29.

³² Ibid., 46.

³³ Ibid., 98-99.

³⁴ "Richard III: Facial Reconstruction Shows King's Features," BBC News (BBC, February 5, 2013), <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-leicestershire-21328380>.

Richard's deformed body is one of the most known facts concerning this medieval king. Before the discovery, there was research focused on king's physicality, not only by historians but also by medical scholars. Phillip Rodes in his article published in the *British Medical Journal* takes into consideration, for example, many illnesses and disabilities that could have caused Richard's deformations. According to him, he might have had either some kind of scoliosis, paralysis or even palsy.³⁵ After a thorough examination of the skeleton in 2013, it was found that indeed he had scoliosis, but one of the less life-limiting ones.³⁶ Although Richard had some medical issues that might have altered the way he looked, it cannot be stated that he looked as repulsive as historians described him throughout the years.

³⁵ Phillip Rhodes, "Physical Deformity of Richard III.," *BMJ* 2, no. 6103 (1977): pp. 1650-1652, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.2.6103.1650>, 1651.

³⁶ Philippa Langley and Michael Keenan Jones, *The King's Grave: The Search for Richard III* (Rearsby: Clipper Large Print, 2014), 135.

5. The literary Richard III

After getting to know the historical side of King Richard, the thesis will now move to the analysis of his literary, in this case dramatic portrayals. It will examine several aspects of him from his actions, his physicality to his personality and psyche in *Richardus Tertius* by Thomas Legge and *Richard III* by William Shakespeare.

Thomas Legge was the master of Caius College in Cambridge and a dramatist. He was born in 1535 in the northern English town of Norwich. He had a fruitful academic career. He first studied at Caius College in Cambridge, then moved to Trinity College, and was also briefly at Oxford. When talking about Legge, it is important to mention that he was a Latin dramatist, which meant that even though he was an Englishman his dramatical works were written in Latin. He died on 12 July 1607 and was then buried in the chapel of his alma mater.³⁷ His *Richardus Tertius* was first performed in the year 1579 and was the first dramatical depiction of Richard III.³⁸ As its name suggests, it is written fully in Latin. This thesis will work with its English translation made by Robert Joseph Lordi from 1979.³⁹ The play was written for the purpose of being performed on an academic ground, rather than for the general public. It consists of three parts, each made up of five acts.

The second author, William Shakespeare, was born in 1564 in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon. Over time he came to London, thanks to the acting company of Lord Chamberlain. Here he started as an actor, and later moved on to writing plays and sonnets in his distinctive iambic pentameter. He wrote tragedies, comedies but also historical plays concerning not only the kings of England, but also ancient historical figures. In the year 1610, he retired and came back to Stratford-upon-Avon and died there six years later.⁴⁰ The play *Richard III* was written between 1592 and 1594 and was published in 1597. It consists of five acts. It is the last part of the “second tetralogy” of

³⁷ William Arthur Jobson Archbold, *The Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 32 (London: Oxford University Press, 1885-1900), 413.

³⁸ Howard B. Norland, “LEGGES NEO-SENECAN ‘RICHARDUS TERTIUS,’” *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 42 (1993): 285–300, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23973875?seq=1>, 285.

³⁹ Thomas Legge, *Richardus Tertius: A Critical Edition with a Translation* (New York: Garland, 1979), 4.

⁴⁰ Sidney Lee, *The Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 51 (London: Oxford University Press, 1885-1900), 348-395.

Shakespeare's chronicle plays about the English kings.⁴¹ While *Richard III* is often referred to as a historical play, many experts believe it is more of a tragedy. Lily B. Cambel in her book called *Shakespeare's "Histories"* debates this thought. She proposes that the presence of certain events in the play justifies different labelling: "In tragedy God avenges private sins; in history, the King of Kings avenges public sins, those of king and subject alike".⁴² Despite these arguments, *Richard III* is still widely considered to be a history and it will be referred to as such in this thesis.

5.1. Richard III's acts

The reign of King Richard III was not the longest. It span over the course of only two years. Legge in his play decided to focus on these two years, so the audience does not obtain much insight into Richard's life prior to his reign: "By focusing on the two-year reign of Richard III, Legge ignores Richard's role in the complex series of conflicts between the Yorkists and the Lancastrians before Edward IV's death,"⁴³ states Howard B. Norland. In *Richardus Tertius*, one meets Richard already after the death of his brother and king, Edward IV.

Conversely, Shakespeare provides the reader with more information. In the canon of his work, there are multiple places where Richard III appears, before the events of the play of the same name. One of these is for example Richard's involvement in the early stages of the War of Roses, which is mentioned in the *Henry VI* trilogy written only few years prior, in the early 1590s.⁴⁴ Unlike Legge's play, *Richard III* starts with King Edward still alive and reascending the throne. His coronation is referred to right at the start:

Now is the winter of our discontent.
Made glorious summer by this sun of York,
And all the clouds that loured upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried⁴⁵

⁴¹ David Bevington, "Richard III," Encyclopædia Britannica, October 3, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Richard-III-play-by-Shakespeare>.

⁴² Lily Bess Campbell, *Shakespeare's "Histories": Mirrors of Elizabethan Policy* (London, United Kingdom: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), 292.

⁴³ Norland, "LEGGE'S NEO-SENECAN 'RICHARDUS TERTIUS,'" 286.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ William Shakespeare, *Tragedy of King Richard III: The Oxford Shakespeare* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 1.1.1–4. References are to act, scene, and line.

This line sets the beginning of the play approximately twelve years before the events of *Richardus Tertius*. In Shakespeare, during those twelve years, the audience sees Richard's marriage to Lady Anne, a widow after a Lancastrian Prince Edward.⁴⁶ One witnesses how Richard, at that time still Duke of Gloucester, eliminates his potential rivals, for example his own brother Duke of Clarence.⁴⁷ Although both works have a different starting point, they do discuss the same major events in the later stages of the life of Richard III.

5.1.1. Queen Elizabeth and the young princes

One of the key points are events around the characters of the young princes, sons of Edward IV, Edward, and Richard. Edward as the firstborn is the descendant to the throne, but at the time of his father's death he is not old enough to be an actual king. A "protector" has to consequently be appointed to take care of the state affairs. This is the point in which Legge starts his play.

Legge focuses on a dispute between Richard and the late wife of Edward IV queen Elizabeth. Richard's sole purpose here is to gain all possession over the descendant. Elizabeth wants a man from her side of family to be the protector instead of Richard.⁴⁸ She has a long monologue about all of the horrid things and murders he has done. Richard, to secure his position, orders to kill all the other potential protectors from among the Queen's allies.⁴⁹ In the end, despite all of the Queen's worries about the future of her son, Richard is made the Protector. Shakespeare's Queen does worry about Richard's motifs, but she is not given as much space at this point to voice her worries.

After becoming the person responsible for the well-being of England and its future king, Richard realizes how much power he gained and wishes for even more. He locks the young princes in the Tower, which he presents as a way of keeping them safe until the coronation. Before that, to everyone's displeasure, Richard is crowned king, while young Edward V is still alive.⁵⁰ When Richard experiences a piece of the royal power, he seizes the opportunity of having complete control over the young boys, and orders that

⁴⁶ Ibid., 1.2.1–248.

⁴⁷ Shakespeare, *Tragedy of King Richard III*, 1.4.1–257.

⁴⁸ Legge, *Richardus Tertius*, 266.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 290.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 372.

⁵¹ Shakespear, *Tragedy of King Richard III*, 4.2.1–124.

both of them be killed: “Shall I be plain? I wish the bastards dead,”⁵² says Richard to his, at that time, loyal companion Duke of Buckingham in Shakespeare’s play.

With this order, an important character appears in both plays. That character is Sir James Tyrell, who is the one actually responsible for the deaths of the princes. In both Legge’s and Shakespeare’s play, one can see Tyrell being apprehensive and reluctant towards the orders that are given to him. As there is nothing he can do about his worries, he hires two assassins, Dighton, and Forrest, to fulfil Gloucester’s orders.

TYRREL: By what kind of death have the small boys been slain?

DIGHTON: When the wandering star had brightened the sad heavens, and the ever-watchful cock has announced evening shadows, lo, as soon as both nephews were lying in bed, (as soon as) the two boys had received (their) sweet sleep, we ourselves entered (their) room with a secret step, and quickly covered the brothers in (their) mattresses (and pillows).⁵³

In *Richard III*, Sir James Tyrell calls this murder a “tyrannous and bloody deed”⁵⁴ and a “ruthless piece of butchery”.⁵⁵ The way Tyrell and the two assassins react right after the murder proves that what they just did was done against their own will and morals. They talk about the young princes in a sensitive manner. This can be seen even in the previously mentioned excerpt from *Richardus Tertius*, where Dighton talks about the act in almost an endearing way. He is no different in Shakespeare, where in a quote he calls his victims, the young princes, “tender babes”.⁵⁶ These descriptions demonstrate that although other people did the murders, Richard is the one who is solely guilty of the crime. Later, after achieving the power he wanted, the odds start turning against him. Both Legge and Shakespeare mention the betrayal of his closest ally lord Buckingham, the sudden and suspicious death of his wife lady Anne connected with his intention to marry his niece to secure his throne. All of these mark the beginning of the end for Richard.

5.1.2. Battle of Bosworth Field and Richard’s death

The last important events in both plays are the invasion of the Earl of Richmond, future king Henry VII Tudor, followed by the crucial Battle of Bosworth Field and

⁵² Shakespeare, *Tragedy of King Richard III*, 1.2.17.

⁵³ Legge, *Richardus Tertius*, 391-392.

⁵⁴ Shakespeare, *Tragedy of King Richard III*, 4.3.1.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.3.5.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Richard's death. Both playwrights put a certain amount of focus on this part of his story as it is its culmination. The battle of Bosworth Field is, after few years of peace, a chance for the Lancasters to take the throne again. Naturally, the battle is a moment of great importance. In the plays this fact is underlined by speeches given to their respective troops, by both Richard and Richmond. Shakespeare makes Richard's speech brief and focused only on boosting the morale so he himself could win.⁵⁷ Richmond's speech is more emotionally driven. He focuses on bringing peace back to England and saving it from Richard. Looking at Legge, one can see that Richard is given much more space, and his monologue feels much more sincere and targeted towards his loyalists.⁵⁸ Richmond's monologue here stays within the same lines as in *Richard III*.

There is one moment before Richard's death worth mentioning, which is specific to Shakespeare's play. It takes place the night before the fatal battle, when in his sleep, Richard is visited by the ghosts of all of his victims, from the young princes to Clarence to even his wife Anne.⁵⁹ It serves as a sort of summary of all the things he is guilty of, that is supposed to weaken him before the battle.

The battle itself does not take up much space in either of the plays. In Legge, the only information regarding the battle is from the previously mentioned monologues, after which the reader immediately receives the news of King Richard's death. Shakespeare places a slightly bigger emphasis on the portrayal of the battle. It is from this part of the story that the audience gets the most well-known quote of the entire play: "A horse, a horse! My kingdom for a horse!"⁶⁰ This sentence could be seen as proof of Richard's lack of care for his own kingdom and the need for his own victory. The King's death is in both works written with a sense of relief and is accompanied by a monologue from the man who defeated him, Earl of Richmond. In both monologues, once senses the presence of Tudor myth, as Richmond places an emphasis on saving England from the cruelty of Richard.

⁵⁷ Shakespeare, *Tragedy of King Richard III*, 5.3.12–18.

⁵⁸ Legge, *Richardus Tertius*, 451.

⁵⁹ Shakespeare, *Tragedy of King Richard III*, 5.4.96–156.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 353.

5.2. Richard III's physicality

When one thinks of Richard III they automatically think of his body and the way he moves around. Although the physicality of Richard is one of the most noticeable things, it is not as thoroughly depicted in either of the plays as the other parts of him are. In this part, the thesis will reflect on Richard's physicality. This will be demonstrated on two levels. The first level is the way Richard sees himself, and the second how the other characters present see him.

5.2.1. Richard's view of himself

Legge does not rely on Richard's physicality in his portrayal. Norland in his article points to this fact: "...in Legge's version Richard's physical appearance is generally ignored... There is no allusion to Richard having a humpback or a limp, and there is no indication of anything unusual about his birth."⁶¹ It could feel odd that a piece of writing about Richard III omits the mentioning of his deformities.

Shakespeare paints the physical picture of Richard right at the start, and it is the king himself who is the first to mention his looks. The famous soliloquy given by Richard at the beginning of the first scene of the first act, is the issue that sets the atmosphere for the rest of the play and makes his appearance one of the main themes. Here he is not only talking about his looks but also about his physical condition.

But I am not shaped for sportive tricks
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass⁶²

The reference to "sportive tricks" hints at the physical deformities of his body. He often uses the verb deformed, and words derived from it. He calls himself "deformed, unfinished and sent before my time"⁶³ and also "descant of my own deformity".⁶⁴ The placing and the nature of these expressions indicates just how well aware Shakespeare's Richard is of his situation, which makes him seem even more powerful. He does not give a chance to anyone else to be the first to mention his looks. It is possible that he says it

⁶¹ Norland, "LEGGE'S NEO-SENECAN 'RICHARDUS TERTIUS,'" 292.

⁶² Shakespeare, *Tragedy of King Richard III*, 1.1.14–15.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

early on because of the number of times he heard these horrid things about himself, and he learned to live with them.

Legge's Richard does not speak of himself in this manner. Because of that he seems a lot less confident and self-assured. It is not until the end of this play that the audience witnesses some sort of self-awareness from Richard, and even then, his tone does not feel as confident. Here the description is not as straight forward. "I was (made) the horrible prey for (these) raging demons; and at length, a great trembling disturbed (our) slumbers, and a horrid fear struck our limbs."⁶⁵, says Richard right before heading off to the battle that would prove fatal to him.

5.2.2. In the eyes of other characters

Focusing on other character's sentiments towards Richard's physicality, one can see that Legge is again not providing much information. The audience or the reader of his play starts getting a slight hint about his looks towards the second half of the play. As it was said earlier, Legge's Richard does not reflect on his body. In this play, it is the other characters who do so.

The way Richard's body is first mentioned feels almost metaphorical, as Legge does not speak directly about the looks of the king but rather about Richard as a personification of villainy: "King Richard! King Richard! King Richard! (Aside) Every cruel villainy seeks the pretext of virtue, (and every) horrible crime is ashamed of its own appearance."⁶⁶ This is said by the crowd which is supposed to be celebrating the coronation of the new king, which they do until he is out of sight. They then continue by calling the pace of his walk "sluggish"⁶⁷ and his feet "hesitating"⁶⁸, hinting at some deformations that could result in his trouble walking. Compared with Shakespeare, his description is once again a lot less explicit. In Legge's play, it seems that the visual of Richard was not that important to any of the characters until he became the king. Although he was a public figure and a prominent member of the royal family, it was only after the coronation when one obtains more information.

⁶⁵ Legge, *Richardus Tertius*, 450.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 372.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 373.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

Shakespeare's self-aware Richard encounters people's opinions in a more personal manner, as for example in a one-on-one conversation with Lady Anne. As he is showering her with compliments, she does the complete opposite. She calls him many things, such as "a lump of foul deformity"⁶⁹, "infection of a man"⁷⁰, and she says that if he were ever to have children, those children should be aborted.⁷¹ Throughout all of this, Richard just keeps on seducing her. There is also a certain amount of irony, as Anne explicitly says that she pities and curses his future wife, if he will ever even marry.⁷² At the end she still agrees to marry him and with that sends the curse on herself.⁷³ There are arguments that rather than Richard just being self-aware, he is a narcissist. Joel Elliot Slotkin argues that it is this behaviour that makes him that more attractive.⁷⁴ This would than make it understandable as to why Anne married Richard at the end. It is more probable, however, that more than the attractiveness it was the pressure that was put on her by Richard. She knew what he is capable of and wanted to save her own life.

Anne is not the only character that had anything to say about Shakespeare's Richard. The Lancastrian Queen Margaret, whose husband has been killed by Richard, calls him "an abortive rooting-hog"⁷⁵, "son of hell"⁷⁶ as well as "yonder dog"⁷⁷. Another person who is very vocal about his physicality is Queen Elizabeth. After the murder of her sons, the Queen confronts Richard. To her, he is "that bottled spider, that foul bunch-backed toad".⁷⁸ The last, but not least, to mention his physical state, is Richard's own mother, Duchess of York. She, in her choice of words, simply agrees with both previously mentioned women by calling him a "toad".⁷⁹ By letting his mother speak of him in this manner, Shakespeare highlights just how appalling he was supposed to be.

It is mainly the female characters that are given the space to directly comment on the appearance of Richard in this way in the course of play. The audience does not

⁶⁹ Shakespeare, *Tragedy of King Richard III*, 1.2.55.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.2.76.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1.2.20.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1.2.24–25.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 1.2.213–215.

⁷⁴ Joel Elliot Slotkin, "Honeyed Toads: Sinister Aesthetics in Shakespeare's Richard III," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 7, no. 1 (2007): 5–32, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jem.2007.0007>, 4.

⁷⁵ Shakespeare, *Tragedy of King Richard III*, 1.3.225.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.3.227.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.3.289.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.4.76.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.4.139.

encounter any male character, neither from his allies nor his enemies, acknowledging the way he looks. All of this can be rooted in the intention of the author to properly indicate the anger of women who are the ones that are most affected by his actions. He is the one that killed their sons and husbands.

This female element is also present in Legge's play, where Queen Elizabeth is one of the few people to comment on his physicality. It is during the same confrontation as in *Richard III* where she talks of him as of "wonderous boar"⁸⁰ with "savage teeth"⁸¹, which she even repeats multiple times. The fact that here the descriptions of Richard's physicality are not as overused as in Shakespeare, gives Elizabeth's words even greater power. In light of her words, it would seem that his physical appearance, if there even was anything odd about it, was something that was not to be spoken of in the universe of Legge's play. On the other hand, her lament could have been used only as a tool for Legge to express Elizabeth's emotions rather than an actual description of Richard.

5.3. Richard III's personality and psyche

Richard's personality is an aspect which both authors call attention to. It is the thing that completes the overall image of the king. "I am determined to prove villain"⁸², says Richard about himself in the beginning of *Richard III*. This quote could easily encapsulate both Legge's and Shakespeare's protagonists. Both Richards are described as villainous people. This does not come as a surprise after getting to know all that he has allegedly done. In addition to being called villain and villainous, the characters use the words such as "black intelligencer"⁸³, "cruel"⁸⁴ and "tyrant"⁸⁵ to describe him. One can also gather that Richard is seen as "peevish"⁸⁶, "evil"⁸⁷ and "stubborn".⁸⁸ All of these could be used to describe someone hungry for power and not very congenial. Combined with his physical looks, the reader is able to understand why Richard is many times talked about

⁸⁰ Legge, *Richardus Tertius*, 394.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Shakespeare, *Tragedy of King Richard III*, 1.1.30.

⁸³ Ibid., 4.4.66.

⁸⁴ Legge, *Richardus Tertius*, 312.

⁸⁵ Shakespeare, *Tragedy of King Richard III*, 5.4.225.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 1.3.191.

⁸⁷ Legge, *Richardus Tertius*, 378.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 368.

as a monster. There are certain differences, however, between the personality with which he presents himself, and his own psyche.

5.3.1. His Personality

Compared with his physicality, where only a few people actually commented on it in the story, his personality is mentioned by the majority of the characters in both plays. What is interesting about these two portrayals is, how differently they depict his personality in the play which comes to the surface not by descriptions from other people, but rather by the way he acts. It is the personality that is for the audience to encode and decide whether or not he is what the other characters make him to be.

Shakespeare's Richard is, similarly as with his appearance, well aware of his personality. For most of the time it feels as if he is content with it, which makes the reader believe that he is as bad as he himself says. Whenever he is confronted by anyone accusing him of anything, most of the times he simply he disproves them.

RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER: Say that I slew them not.

LADY ANNE: But dead they are, and, devilish slave, by thee.

RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER: I did not kill your husband.⁸⁹

Acting like this makes him appear to be two faced. On more than one occasion he is seen saying one thing to a character on stage, and a completely different thing to the audience or to his allies. For example, while talking to his brother Clarence, of King and Queen, he presents himself as an epitome of loyalty, where in reality he sees them as obstacles on his way to power.⁹⁰

Whenever Legge's Richard is faced with a comparable situation, he acts differently. While being told what horrid things he has done, he never tries to disprove those facts. When, after the death of his wife, he intends to marry his own niece, a meeting is arranged. The daughter of his brother, King Edward, cannot help to mention her brothers and their death. His explicit confession to taking a part in the murder of the young princess, makes him both that eviller as well as regretful.

⁸⁹ William Shakespeare, *Tragedy of King Richard III* (2008), 1.2.87–89.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.1.106–112.

DAUGHTER OF EDWARD: ... You cruelly killed, not your guests, but, alas your nephews, who only recently had left behind their swaddling clothes.

KING: ... I confess that my throne was acquired by the blood and death of the guiltless boys ... Have your brothers been slain? I am sorry; the deed grieves me. Are they dead? My former deed cannot be colored.⁹¹

This sincerity can also be interpreted as mischievous, as he could have used this apology just to insinuate himself into her favour. A comparable situation appears during Richard's oration to his soldiers before heading to Bosworth Field. He confesses here to doing bloody and evil crimes, for which he has already been punished. He speaks to them of fighting for their country and defeating the new and unknown Richmond, with help from God. One can yet again see some level of sincerity but is yet again unable to decipher Richard's true intentions.

Looking at the same moment in *Richard III*, the speech seems a lot less personal and more egotistical, by talking of his own victory. It is important to mention, that where Legge's Richard calls for help from God, Shakespeare's Richard says: "King's name is the tower of strength."⁹², as it is his doing that will help in the battle, and no one else. This brings up another part of his personality. At that time, it was a routine thing to pray before battle and ask God for help, so naturally any diversion from this would feel odd. Trust in anything else than God, makes Richard look like an ungodly man. Shakespeare could be using this as a vehicle to make, by Elizabethan standards, a complete villain out of him.

When talking about Richard's personality, one trait prevails among the others. In both plays, one can clearly see Richard's hunger for power. In both cases, it is obvious that the throne and the power that comes with it, is the biggest desire in Richard's life. In Legge one reads: "Desire for rule (once) aroused cannot be stilled: now the sceptres alone (will) satisfy (me). I shall not stop until I have attained the highest of (my) desires".⁹³ This excerpt, although being from Legge's play, could be used to describe Shakespeare's protagonist as well. The hunger for power is the greatest engine behind all of his acts. He does not kill anyone he desires; he kills those that make their way to the top easier.

⁹¹Legge, *Richardus Tertius*, 439-440.

⁹² Shakespeare, *Tragedy of King Richard III*, 5.4.12.

⁹³ Legge, *Richardus Tertius*, 328.

5.3.2. His Psyche

The psyche of a character is also as important as personality. With Shakespeare, the audience follows the changes of his mental state, up until the complete decay of his psyche. Richard is initially a noticeably confident person. He shows his confidence through manipulating those around him as well as in the way he speaks to the audience. At the same time, it is apparent that he has a number of insecurities which only adds to the desire for power.

His confidence appears at the time where everything is going his way, and he is on his way up. He does not show any kind of empathy in anything he does at this point. Once things start to go against him, his inner world starts to collapse. He starts to lose control over the things happening around him. When betrayed by one of his closest, Duke of Buckingham, Richard starts to feel paranoid. This situation worsened for him with the thread of war from Richmond and his army. In their chapter on “Historical Legacy and Fiction: The Poetical Reinvention of King Richard III” in *Historical Legacy and Fiction: The Poetical Reinvention of King Richard III*, Marie-Hélène Besnault and Michel Bitot argue a similar point: “He has become a pathetic man who realises both his isolation from the rest of mankind and the loss of his soul”.⁹⁴ Their commentary is in reference to a moment in which his mental decline culminates. It is towards the end of the play when the ghosts of his victims speak to him telling him about all his sins. After seeing them, he is covered with a sense of guilt. It is a place where one witnesses the complete breakdown of Richard’s character.

O no, alas, I rather hate myself
For hateful deeds committed by myself
I am villain. – Yet; I am not.⁹⁵

With a feeling of fear and despair, Richard heads into his last battle. In *Richardus Tertius*, the reader does not see any movement in Richard’s persona. His psyche does not change in any major way. This lack of evolution makes him a dull character, or as Norland writes

⁹⁴ Marie-Hélène Besnault and Michel Bitot, “Historical Legacy and Fiction: The Poetical Reinvention of King Richard III,” essay, in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare’s History Plays* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 106–25, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/cambridge-companion-to-shakespeares-history-plays/historical-legacy-and-fiction-the-poetical-reinvention-of-king-richard-iii/4C9C73AA955C0E538E054C4E053C62A4>, 121.

⁹⁵ Shakespeare, *Tragedy of King Richard III*, 5.4.168–170.

he: “appears less fully realized as a character”⁹⁶, while comparing him to for example to Shakespeare’s depiction of Richard.

5.4. Legge vs Shakespeare

All things considered, there are a vast number of similarities in *Richardus Tertius* and Richard III. Both show the traditional, and thus influenced by Tudor myth, picture of Richard III. In addition, the Tudor myth can be seen in other parts of the discussed plays as well. One moment that is rather important is the arrival of Richmond, later the first Tudor King Henry VII. Legge as well as Shakespeare present it in the way which was previously mentioned. The presence of the myth, proves on more than one occasion just how much the Tudor myth was present in society. Both playwrights lived and wrote in the late Tudor, early Stuart era when the Tudor historiography had a more than hundred-year tradition. Taking that into consideration, one can assume that they could not have possibly known an unbiased version of Richard. In both cases, it could be said that it was not an intentional use of propaganda for their own sake.

There are speculations about the direct influence of the Tudors themselves in Shakespeare’s work. It is said that Queen Elizabeth I was fond of his writing. In copies of, for example, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* or *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, there is an explicit mention of Elizabeth I seeing both plays.⁹⁷ These sources do indicate that she did attend Shakespeare plays, but it is not enough proof for the Queen’s direct involvement in *Richard III*. This then pulls the focus back on the Tudor myth and the Elizabethan world picture.

5.4.1. More and other influences

In the critical edition of *Richardus Tertius* used in this thesis, the editor Robert J. Lordi specifies in detail, where the inspiration for the specific parts of the play came from, most of the times with some further commentary. The same is seen in the critical version of Shakespeare’s play, *The Oxford Shakespeare*. In both cases, the common denominators are Hall, Holinshed and most importantly the aforementioned Thomas More. The inspiration appears in different forms in each of these play. Both Shakespeare and Legge

⁹⁶Norland, “LEGGE’S NEO-SENECAN ‘RICHARDUS TERTIUS,’” 289.

⁹⁷“Queen Elizabeth I,” Folger Shakespeare Library, accessed March 22, 2024, <https://www.folger.edu/explore/queen-elizabeth-i/>.

adopt the chronological timeline and the events of Richard's life and reign. In the case of Legge, this is where the inspiration ends. Legge does not use the imagery connected to Richard's physicality as it is portrayed in More's biography, and thus Legge's Richard appears "to be closer to the reality"⁹⁸ as noted by Norland. Shakespeare, in contrast, stays true to his source material.

Legge does not use the traditional depiction on more than one occasion. Unlike More and with that Shakespeare, Legge does not incorporate Christian religious motifs. As mentioned by professor Martin Hilský at his lecture on the occasion of the premiere of Richard III, Shakespeare uses Christianity in many points during the play.⁹⁹ One can see it not only in the sense of describing Richard as devil or devilish the way More does, but also in the context of Richard's own Christianity. Hilský demonstrated this aspect with the repeated references to St. Paul as well as in the scene before his coronation when he is seen on the balcony reading the Bible accompanied by his bishops. In both instances it is Richard's way of gaining trust of people around him, rather than him being a godly man.¹⁰⁰ Legge, on the other hand, uses ancient imagery in his portrayal instead of the Christian one. The audience can, for example, encounter Richard being referred to as Nero, or the mythical King Oedipus. Other characters and their acts are put into analogy with the goddess Diana, god Phoebus or the ancient hero Hercules. Considering that this play was written for the academia, it is understandable that he decided to use ancient mythology rather than Christian motifs. The university scholars would understand these parables in the same way the common public audience would understand the Christian ones when seeing Shakespeare.

5.4.2. Complexity of character

The level of complexity found within Richard's character has a significant contrast when compared to Shakespeare's portrayal to Legge's. As it was mentioned, Shakespeare's Richard goes through changes in his psyche and in general evolves as a character. Legge does not work with Richard in this way, and his Richard then stays very two dimensional. The way Shakespeare delves into Richard's persona adds a unique

⁹⁸ Norland, "LEGGE'S NEO-SENECAN 'RICHARDUS TERTIUS,'" 293.

⁹⁹ Martin Hilský, "Richard III – o inscenaci i dobovém kontextu," *Premiéra Shakespearova Richarda III* (lecture, Národní divadlo moravskoslezské, January 13, 2024).

¹⁰⁰ Martin Hilský, "Richard III – o inscenaci i dobovém kontextu," *Premiéra Shakespearova Richarda III* (lecture, Národní divadlo moravskoslezské, January 13, 2024).

dimension to the audience's relationship with him as they have the ability to connect with him on a much deeper and personal level.

In Shakespeare, Richard is engaging not just with other characters onstage, he also addresses the audience directly through extensive monologues. In this way, he serves not only as the protagonist but assumes the role of a potential narrator as well. It is these monologues that allow the audience to witness the innermost thoughts, his motives, and his sense of humour. While dialogues also play a crucial role in revealing his personality, it is these monologues that offer the audience a more profound understanding of Richard's character. Legge does not use Richard as narrator. In his play, this role is taken by servants and advisers. This takes away the chance of further development of Richard's character.

Concerning dialogues, it is not argued that Legge does not use them the same way Shakespeare does. As in any other play, they do move the plot forward. The issue is that there is not any information about Richard conveyed through them in general. One gathers that he is an evil character, capable of horrible things, but does not experience Richard's own thoughts. The overall picture of Legge's Richard then falls flat.

6. The contemporary picture of Richard

The interest in Richard III did not end in the times of the Renaissance. Up until this day, there are numerous portrayals of this king. This part will focus on the those present in the current prevalent medium of film and television. Although Shakespeare's Richard is the most famous, thus has the most adaptations, there are still Non-Shakespearean depictions present in popular culture.

6.1. Shakespearean

Talking about the Shakespearean adaptations it is key to mention the film adaptation starring Laurence Olivier, *Richard III* (1955). His portrayal is not the first, but it is the most well-known. Olivier's Richard has the usual limp and hump, and in general really is close to the source. That being said, he shows the compelling side of Richard. As Christopher Andrews in his article on Richard III on film comments, Olivier plays Richard in a way where the viewers "are meant to feel at ease and comforted by this 'handsome devil'".¹⁰¹ Richard's efforts to climb to the top, combined with the charisma of Olivier, results in a character that immerses the viewers into the play. He is said to be a prominent influence for a number of the future versions. The mark this adaptation left is so deep that it even made its way into animation. One can see him in the DreamWorks Animation film *Shrek* (2001). In particular, the inspiration is visible in the character of the main villain Lord Farquaad.¹⁰² He does not only resemble Olivier's Richard but also has the characteristics of the actual Shakespearean Richard III.

Another depiction worth mentioning is the 1995 film, *Richard III*. The specificity of this adaptation is the unusual setting. Instead of the late Middle Ages, the story is set in the 1930s and it uses fascist like imagery.¹⁰³ Sir Ian McKellen, who took on the role of Richard, is stylized as a combination of Adolf Hitler and the 1930s British Fascist leader and MP Oswald Mosley. The makers yet again stayed true to the original character of Richard. What gives the viewer a different angle on the story is Richard's last moments in the movie. Here Richard faces Richmond, and it is more than obvious that it is Richard's end. He knows Richmond will kill him, but he does not want to give him the

¹⁰¹ Christopher Andrews, "'Richard III' on Film: The Subversion of the Viewer," *Literature/Film Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2000): 82–94, 86.

¹⁰² José Ramón Díaz Fernández, "Shakespeare y El Cine: Un Largo Siglo de Historia," *Casa Del Tiempo* 265 (2007): 69–72, 70.

¹⁰³ Andrews, "'Richard III' on Film: The Subversion of the Viewer," 90.

pleasure of this act, so he decides to kill himself. Although he kills himself, Richmond still shoots at him after which he breaks the fourth wall. This shows that Richmond, later Henry VII, will not be any better than the people before him. It is this moment that serves as a modification of the traditional picture of Tudor, and deviation from the source text.

In the film *Looking of Richard* (1996), starring and directed by Al Pacino, a specific take on Richard III is presented. This 1996 motion picture was a hybrid between documentary and a film adaptation of Shakespeare's play. However, this is not an adaptation of the whole play, but only some of its scenes. This version is solely an American adaptation of Richard III. Because of this, the viewer gets an unusual experience of hearing the play with the American accent. There is not anything particularly odd about Al Pacino's Richard, since it works only with individual scenes. As for the documentary part, Al Pacino is trying to understand Shakespeare and his Richard as much as he can. It also delves into the question of what it means to understand Shakespeare, and whether people understand his plays.¹⁰⁴ He talks to scholars and fellow actors, for example Kenneth Branagh who is known for his own film adaptations of Shakespearian classics. With his film crew, he even travels to Shakespeare's birth house in Stratford upon Avon.

Looking into the 21st century adaptations of Shakespeare history plays, one cannot neglect to mention the BBC series *The Hollow Crown* (2012-2016). Its two seasons focus respectively on the two Tetralogies. With Richard III being a part of the Second Tetralogy, his character appears the second season of this series. The part of Richard III was taken on by the actor Benedict Cumberbatch. Except for omitting the famous dream sequence and a few subplots, this adaptation stays true to the original play. Even while being filmed in the 2016, three years after the discovery of Richard's remains, the makers stayed true to the traditional deformities. What stands out is the different perspective on his personality.¹⁰⁵ It is this adaptation that brings up the discussion of whether he was born evil or whether it was his terrifying experiences in the war that made him the way he was. Since this play was adapted together with the plays that precede it in the Second Tetralogy, the viewer witnesses him as a part of the Wars of the Roses. He entered it as a

¹⁰⁴ Jonathan Sircy, "Looking for Shakespeare: Taking Pacino's Quest Seriously," *Shakespeare Bulletin* 31, no. 1 (March 2013): 63–78, 70.

¹⁰⁵ Siobhan Keenan, "Re-Reading Shakespeare's Richard III: Tragic Hero and Villain?," *Linguaculture* 2017, no. 1 (June 1, 2017): 23–34, 32-33.

boy, unaware of the world's cruelties. It was after he saw his brother being killed, he became a revenge seeking villain.

6.2. Non-Shakespearean

As for the non-Shakespearean depictions, one can see a few different takes on Richard. First are the versions, which for most parts stay true to the usual portrayal, but change few aspects of Richard's character. This is, for example, the film *Tower of London* (1939). Basil Rathbone as Richard keeps all his Shakespearean deformities. What changes is his character. Rathbone's portrayal shows him as a charismatic villain. He is also shown as not personally involved in all of his murders. He leaves those to the executioner in the Tower. Richard here is not without humanity. They show that he actually loves Anne Neville, and she loves him back.¹⁰⁶ Similar to his depiction, is the one in a film of the same name, *Tower of London* (1965). In the 1960's adaptation, Richard is even more sympathetic. It hints on the fact that Richard was not always evil. It was his deformities and society's reaction to them that made him that way.

Secondly, there are depictions which omit the traditional view, and work with what could be called the "what if" reality. One example is the character of Richard III in a 2013 television series based on a historical fiction novel *The White Queen* (2009).¹⁰⁷ Richard has no deformities whatsoever here; he does not want to kill the young princess and is the polar opposite of the traditional Richard. Another example is the British 1980's comedy show *The Black Adder* (1983-1989).¹⁰⁸ This series turns the history known to that point on its head. Richard III played by Peter Cook is overall a positive character. He is a good king and a good uncle. It is his nephew, Edmund the Blackadder, who is actually evil. Edmund wants to kill his brother to get to the throne, but he accidentally kills Richard. Although not being an adaptation, there is a reference to the Shakespeare play. When Edmund goes to sleep one night, the ghost of Richard visits him in his dream.

What connects all of these depictions is that they are purely fictional. A portrayal which is non-Shakespearean and even based on the recent findings appears in BBC's children educational comedy programme *Horrible Histories* (2009-2014).¹⁰⁹ The

¹⁰⁶ Thomas A. Pendelton, "What [?] Price [?] Shakespeare [?]," *Literature/Film Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2001), 136.

¹⁰⁷ Philippa Gregory, whole, *The White Queen* (BBC, 2013).

¹⁰⁸ Richard Curtis and Rowan Atkinson, "The Foretelling," episode (BBC, 1983).

¹⁰⁹ Susie Donkin and Laurence Rickard, episode, *Horrible Histories* (BBC, 2011).

programme consists of different sketches and songs telling and explaining stories not only from the history of the British Isles. In this television series based on children's book series of the same name, Richard is played by the actor and comedian Jim Howick. There are a few sketches focused on Richard III, with one in particular important for this thesis. It is the *Sweet King Richard III Song*. In this musical number, Richard sings about all the things that were told wrong about him and corrects them. Moreover, he even explicitly blames the Tudor propaganda as well as Shakespeare and Thomas More for the villainous picture. Generally, Howick's Richard is one of the few representations that take into the consideration the newer research, mainly because of its educational purposes.

7. The fascination with Richard III

All of the facts and works examined in this thesis thus far show a considerable fascination with the character of Richard III. As one can see, the interest was not present only in Early Modern Tudor times. It carried out even up until the 21st century. There are several possible reasons why people are still fascinated with this long dead medieval king.

First, it is the general fascination with villains. Some say that this fascination reflects the character of the people themselves. Jens Kjeldgaard-Christiansen et al. in their study on perception of villains mention the following: “fascination with the villains of fiction may be individual differences in conventionally immoral, “dark” traits”¹¹⁰. While it is a reasonable idea for why people are intrigued by villains, it is more likely that it is the complexity of villains that sparks people’s interest. They are the ones that have thoroughly thought-out personalities and motivations.¹¹¹ This angle is the case mainly for the literary Richard. In both of the analysed plays, he stands out as a complex character. In the context of his play, this holds even for Legge’s Richard in spite of being previously described as a not fully realized character. Moreover, there is an additional level to the fascination with Richard as a character pointed out by Eugene M. Waith in his article *Concern for Villains*. It is his role as the protagonist in both of the analysed works that brings not only a fascination but almost admiration.¹¹² These days, the level of appeal of a villainous character also depends on, for example the actor portraying them. Using the example from Richard III, where one can feel even more compelled by him once he is portrayed by Benedict Cumberbatch or Ian McKellen who are in real life well received and popular individuals.

Secondly, what adds another layer to this fascination, are the deformities with which he is portrayed most of the time. Interest in deformed characters and unusual looking individuals has been present in society for centuries. A good example of this is the popularity of the so-called “freak shows”. It was a form of an entertainment which

¹¹⁰ Jens Kjeldgaard-Christiansen et al., “Do Dark Personalities Prefer Dark Characters? A Personality Psychological Approach to Positive Engagement with Fictional Villainy,” *Poetics* 85 (April 2021): 101511, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2020.101511>.

¹¹¹ Richard Keen, Elizabeth Powell, and Monica L. McCoy, “Rooting for the Bad Guy: Psychological Perspectives,” *Studies in Popular Culture* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2012): 129–48, 139.

¹¹² Eugene M. Waith, “Concern for Villains,” *Renaissance Drama* 24 (January 1993): 155–70, <https://doi.org/10.1086/rd.24.41917299>, 155.

first appeared in medieval and early modern times but continued until the 19th century. These shows were when: “creatures with physical abnormalities are paraded out on a stage for the abject fascination (simultaneous horror and delight) of the normals in the audience”¹¹³, says Jeffrey R. Wilson in his article on deformities in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. In literature, besides Richard, one can see this fascination with characters such as Cyrano, Quasimodo, or the Phantom in *Phantom of the Opera*.

Moreover, another reason for the ongoing fascination is the unclarity of Richard III as a person. For years there have been disputes over his life and his character. This ambiguity led to many different interpretations, which was visible during this thesis. Even while acknowledging the power of the Tudor propaganda, Richard remained an enigma. There were many efforts for historical revision. For most of the times, it was without any major result, as there was not any source which could be labelled as fully unbiased and truthful. A certain shift was recorded in 2012, after the discovery of Richard’s grave. Siobhan Keenan in her article *Re-Reading Shakespeare’s Richard III* says that this rediscovery inspired the public: “to re-appraise our knowledge of the king and to reinterrogate the negative mythology his career generated in and after the Tudor era”¹¹⁴. A good example for this newly sparked interest was the second season of the series *Hollow Crown*.

Lastly, the fascination could be due to the presence of Richard III in popular culture in either literature, film, or television. These numerous adaptations and retellings have kept the fascination alive for many years, from More’s biography, Legge’s, and Shakespeare’s plays, up until all the previously mentioned audiovisual adaptation. The popularity and legacy of Shakespeare’s play alone plays a substantial part in keeping the notion of this king within people’s minds. This has even crossed the borders of the United Kingdom. One can say that Richard ranks among the most internationally known English kings and queens alongside Elizabeth I, Queen Victoria and Henry VIII. The popularity is not only because of the length of his reign, his significance for the wellbeing of England or foreign politics, but is also due to the many adaptation and presence in popular culture.

¹¹³ Jeffrey R. Wilson, “‘Savage and Deformed’: Stigma as Drama in *The Tempest*,” *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 31 (2018): 146–77, 164.

¹¹⁴ Keenan, “Re-Reading Shakespeare’s Richard III: Tragic Hero and Villain?,” 32.

Conclusion

The main aims of this thesis were to compare different historical and literary depictions of Richard III from the late medieval and early modern times, putting this comparison into perspective with the Tudor propaganda and Tudor Myth and exploring the repeated fascination with this medieval king. The first three chapters presented the needed theory for a better understanding of the problems discussed in the thesis. These chapters explained the origin of history plays in general, stated the historical facts about Richard III and the Wars of the Roses and introduced the idea of the Tudor Myth.

The fourth chapter analysed the chosen historical sources, namely the chronicles *The Rous Roll* as well as *Joannis Rossi Antiquarii Warwicensis Historia Regum Angliæ*, both written by John Rous and *The History of King Richard the Third* by Thomas More. It exemplified the differences between the one written before the Tudor era with those written after. This showed that it was these, and many other chronicles and biographies, which shaped the Tudor myth at its roots. Both Rouse's *Historia Regum Angliæ* and More's biography depict Richard as a deformed villainous monster. One can see that rather than being subconsciously influenced by the myth, it was their willing decision to incorporate the altered version of history just to get into the favour of the ruling dynasty. This was shown especially using the example of the two Rous' chronicles which shift the view according to the dynasty at charge. Lastly, the historical part mentioned the exhumation of Richard's body after the discovery of his grave in 2012. The exhumation and the research made after it, revealed facts about Richard's body which differed from what was known. He did not have any deformities and only had a minor case of scoliosis. The personality can be only assumed, so it cannot be safely said whether he was evil or not.

The fifth chapter was the main analytical part of this thesis. It centred on two theatre plays, *Richardus Tertius* by Thomas Legge and *Richard III* by William Shakespeare. This analysis was divided into three distinct parts focusing on distinct aspects of his character. First were his acts. This part showed the important events and timeline of both plays. Shakespeare, unlike Legge, decided to depict Richard's life prior to his reign. Shakespeare portrayed twelve years of scheming and murders which helped him secure the throne. Richard's two year reign both plays follows similar timeline. One sees the fight for the protectorship over the heir, the marriage to Anne Neville, the murder

of the young princess and his death on the Bosworth field. Secondly, it analysed his most noticeable trait, physicality. Here, there is a considerable difference between the plays. While Shakespeare follows the usual rhetoric of the deformed body, Legge does not seem to explicitly mention it. There are only hints of some unnatural features, mostly mentioned in the heat of passion. Lastly, it is his personality and psyche that was examined. With Shakespeare, the audience witnesses evil and two-faced but also confident and very self-aware person. One can also see the change in his psyche throughout the play, from an ambitious duke to a king filled with doubt and paranoia. Legge's Richard does not lack the characteristics and personality of a villainous character but is overall flat. No evolution or any changes to his psyche is present.

Based on the analysis, it could be said that Shakespeare and Legge were, for most parts, using the same source material, More. Where Shakespeare stays true to his source material on all levels, Legge takes only the events and the timeline. Due to this inversion, Legge unintentionally made a depiction, which is on the physical side the closest to the reality. On the other hand, both Shakespeare and Legge in some way remained true to the Tudor myth. Here the use of it could have been unintentional, unlike in the writings of More and Rouse. By the late Tudor and early Stuart era, the myth was part of the general knowledge, which would mean that neither of the authors had the possibility to know the true version of Richard. There is still the possibility of the authors' own intentions in using the myth and propaganda in their writings for their own sake. Although for example queen Elizabeth knew Shakespeare's plays, there is not a valid of a source to prove this as a fact.

The sixth and seventh chapters are connected to the ongoing interest and fascination with Richard III. Chapter six provided an overview of both Shakespearean and non-Shakespearean portrayals of this king from the 20th and 21st centuries. Chapter seven then focused more closely on the fascination and its reason. One can argue that there are different ways of this fascination. There is first the interest in him as a character. Here the most prominent reasons are the villainous character and the deformed physicality which were and still are intriguing for society. The other part of the fascination lies in the interest in his story and the unclarity of it. Lastly, it is the substantial number of adaptations of a depictions, that keep him and his story alive on the modern times.

In conclusion, the life story of Richard III and its adaptations is a complex topic. This thesis tried to examine a few of the many versions of this king from the early modern era. It did this while also explaining the reasons behind why the image that many people have on their minds, when they hear his name, is the way it is. Richard III is still, even after more than 500 years after his death, followed by the Tudor myth and the propaganda of this dynasty. Even after the discovery made in 2012, his life remains a dividing topic. His deformity-less remains brought Ricardian advocates at least partial satisfaction and provided a different view on the king. What remains are the other aspects of him. Considering how far in the past Richard III lived, it would be rather hard to find an unbiased and fully truthful source for the events of his life and his personality. Until a source like this appears, Richard III will still be deemed a villainous monster by many.

Resumé

Richard III. byl anglickým králem mezi lety 1483 a 1485. Ještě jako vévoda z Gloucesteru se po boku svého bratra účastnil počátečních bojů Války dvou růží, která se mu později stala osudnou. Roku 1485, jako král, umírá při bitvě na Bosworthském poli. Dodnes je Richard III. jednou z nejvíce rozporuplných historických postav anglických dějin. Už od konce 15. století je tento panovník považován za negativního. Je brán jako zákeřný zloduch a vrah. Tuto představu si lidé vytvořili především díky jedné z verzí tohoto středověkého krále, kterou napsal alžbětinský dramatik William Shakespeare. Není to však jediná verze Richarda III. ze světa literatury. Existuje také několik verzí z různých historických pramenů a současných výzkumů. Tato bakalářská práce se tak zabývá zkoumáním různých pohledů na postavu Richarda III. a důvody, proč jejich autoři vylíčili Richarda odlišně. Práce také pracuje s takzvaným tudorovským mýtem a jeho vlivem na analyzované autory.

Tudorovský mýtus je fenomén, který se v období raného novověku rozšířil do mnoha míst společenského života, a to i právě do historiografie a literatury. Tento mýtus se zakládal na mnoha různých tvrzeních, které měli ospravedlnit nárok rodu Tudorovců na anglický trůn. Nejdůležitějším bylo odvozování původu Tudorovců od bájného krále Artuše. Nejznámějším však byl například šťastný a mírový sňatek s yorskou dědičkou, který byl koncem Války dvou růží, nebo také zlověstná povaha největšího Jindřichova protivníka, Richarda III.

Historiografická část analyzovala celkem tři různé prameny. Prvními byly dvě kroniky pozdně středověkého kronikáře Johna Rouse, *Rous Roll* a *Joannis Rossi Antiquarii Warwicensis Historia Regum Angliæ*. První zmíněná byla napsána ještě za vlády Richarda III, druhá už za dob Tudorovců. Právě tato skutečnost je důvodem, proč jsou tyto kroniky v bakalářské práci využity. Třetím pramenem, pak je biografie Richarda III. napsaná Sirem Thomasem Morem. Pokud srovnáme všechny tři, všimneme si, že jeden pramen se v charakteristice Richarda drasticky liší od zbylých dvou. Tímto pramenem je kronika *Rous Roll*. Na rozdíl od Moreovi biografie a *Historia Regum Angliæ*, kde se nenachází jeho tradiční znetvořený obraz, je zde Richard popsán jako chrabrý a dobrý král. Pohled na historické prameny je důležitý už jen z toho důvodu, že nejen Rous a More, ale také například kronikáři Edward Hall a Raphael Holshed, stáli u samotného vzniku Tudorovského mýtu. Byli to totiž tito muži, kteří záměrně měnili

historická fakta pro získání přízně Tudorovské dynastie, a tím tak zakotvovali tento pohled v anglické společnosti. Ten byl skoro nezlomným až do doby přelomového nálezu Richardova hrobu. Po analýze jeho ostatků došli archeologové k závěru, že Richard III. v reálu vypadal od dost normálněji, než se lidé po staletí domnívali.

Hlavní, literárně analytická část se zaměřila na dvě divadelní hry, a to na latinskou hru *Richardus Tertius* od anglického autora Thomase Leggea a *Richard III.* Williama Shakespeara. Práce zde analyzuje samotnou postavu Richarda ve třech rovinách, v rovině dějové, tělesné a v neposlední řadě osobnostní a psychické. Po dějové stránce, se pro období Richardovy dvouleté vlády, obě hry drží dnes už klasické osnovy představené Thomasem Morem. Objevuje se zde smrt krále Eduarda IV a následný spor Richarda s královnou Alžbětou o protektorát nad následníkem trůnu, který je zatím nezletilý. Divák je svědkem uvěznění mladých princů, následníka trůnu a jeho bratra, a později i jejich vraždy v londýnském Toweru. V neposlední řadě nechybí také Bitva na Bosworthském poli a Richardova smrt. Co se však liší je doba kdy samotná hra začíná. Leggova hra se zaměřuje pouze na dobu Richardovy vlády, Shakespeare naopak začíná tu svou zhruba o 12 let dříve při opětovné korunovaci Richardova bratra krále Eduarda IV.

Po stránce tělesné je Shakespeareův Richard věrnou kopií své předlohy z pera Thomase Morea. Richard má klasický hrb a kulhá. Tělesný vzhled je u Shakespeara důležitým faktorem Richardovy postavy. Sám protagonista se hned na začátku hry popisuje jako deformovaný a odpudivý, což reprezentuje poměrně vysokou míru sebeuvědomění. Legge nevyužívá této tradiční fyzické podoby. V jeho hře se neobjevuje skoro žádný odkaz na Richardův neobvyklý vzhled. Jedná se tak o neobvyklý odklon od Tudorovského mýtu, díky kterému se tak Leggův Richard přiblížil reálnému králi. Pokud je v *Richardus Tertius* nějaká zmínka, jedná se z velké části o věc vyřčenou v amoku.

V neposlední řadě je zde Richardova osobnost a psychika. V obou dílech se divák setkává s nespočtem přirovnání a popisů z úst ostatních postav, které se většinou shodují v jedné věci. Richard je zlý, špatný a ničemný člověk. Co je však zajímavější je Richardovo sebevědomí a vnímání sama sebe. Jak už bylo řečeno Shakespeareův Richard si je více než vědom svého vzhledu i své osobnosti. To ho tak činí na první pohled velice sebevědomým. Od Legga se podobného sebeuvědomění nedočkáme, stejně jako se nedočkáme více promyšlené psychiky Richarda. Naopak Shakespeareův Richard prochází

mnoha úrovněmi psychického vývoje od velice sebevědomého vévody po paranoidního krále. Jeho Richard tak celkově působí jako komplexnější postava.

Mnohá zpracování Richardova života souvisí s neutuchající fascinací tímto pozdně středověkým králem, která je ve společnosti stále přítomna. Tato fascinace je třetím bodem bakalářské práce. V současné době se pak jedná například o jeho přítomnost v audiovizuální tvorbě 20. a 21. století. Jde buď o adaptace Shakespeara, ale také o verze, které nevycházejí z díla tohoto dramatika. Lze tvrdit, že tato fascinace má dvě úrovně. Za prvé je to zájem o něj jako o postavu, kde jsou nejvýznamnějšími důvody padoušská povaha a deformovaná fyzická podoba, které byly a stále jsou pro společnost fascinující. Druhým důvodem je zájem o jeho dodnes nejasný příběh a jeho neokázalost, se kterým se pojí velké množství jeho adaptací v populární kultuře.

Závěrem lze říci, že životní příběh Richarda III. a jeho adaptace je složité téma. Tato práce se pokusila prozkoumat několik z mnoha zpracování tohoto krále z období raného novověku. Zároveň se jí podařilo vysvětlit důvody autorů pro jejich obraz Richarda, který se lidem vryl do paměti. Hlavním důvodem byl několikrát zmiňovaný tudorovský mýtus. Richard III. je tak neprávem, i po více než 500 letech od své smrti stále pronásledován tudorovským mýtem a propagandou této dynastie.

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Anotace

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Název práce: Tři životy Richarda III.: Srovnání literárních a historiografických vyobrazení kontroverzního krále Richarda III.

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Klíčová slova: Richard III., John Rous, Thomas More, Thomas Legge, William Shakespeare, tudorovský mýtus, propaganda, historické drama

Tato práce se zaměří na to, jak byla různá dramatická a historická zobrazení krále Richarda III. z 15. a 16. století ovlivněna tudorovským mýtem a dobovou propagandou. Vysvětlí také fascinaci příběhem krále Richarda. V první části této práce budou stručně vysvětleny historické události a postavy, které jsou klíčem k pochopení chronologie všech probíraných děl. Druhá část pak představí vyobrazení Richarda III. ve dvou kronikách kronikáře Johna Rouse, *Rous Roll* a *Historia Regum Angliae*, a také to, které se objevuje v *History of King Richard III* Thomase Morea. Následující a nejdůležitější část se bude zabývat dvěma odlišnými dramatickými ztvárněními známého krále, kterými jsou před shakespearovský *Ricardus Tertius* od Thomase Leggea a *Richard III.* od Williama Shakespeara. V neposlední řadě, práce představí novodobé zobrazení krále Richarda ve filmu a televizi, a s tím spojenou neutuchající fascinaci tímto panovníkem. Práce vysvětlí několik možných důvodů pro tento zájem který je ve společnosti stále přítomen.

Abstract

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Title of the thesis: The Three Lives of Richard III: A Comparison of the Different Literary and Historical Depictions of the Controversial King Richard III

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Keywords: Richard III, John Rous, Thomas More, Thomas Legge, William Shakespeare, Tudor Myth, Propaganda, Historical drama

This thesis will focus on how the different dramatic and historical depictions of King Richard III from the 15th and 16th centuries were influenced by the Tudor myth and period propaganda. It will also explain the fascination with the story of King Richard. The first part of this thesis will briefly explain the historical events and figures that are the key to understanding the chronology of all the discussed stories. The second part will then introduce the depictions of Richard III by the chronicler John Rous in two of his chronicles, *Rous Roll* and *Historia Regum Angliae*, and the one made in Thomas More's *History of King Richard III*. The following and most important part will look at two distinct dramatical portrayals of the well-known king, these being the pre-Shakespearean *Ricardus Tertius* by Thomas Legge, and William Shakespeare's *Richard III*. Last but not least, the thesis will introduce the modern portrayal of King Richard in film and television, and with that the enduring fascination with this monarch. The thesis will explain several possible reasons for this interest which is still present in society.