

Richard II

War and Conflict

- In Act 2, Richard leaves on an expedition to the wars in Ireland and Bolingbroke – hearing the news of his father's death and Richard's theft of his inheritance – returns from exile with an invading army.
- Act 3 centres on the conflict between Richard's and Bolingbroke's forces.

Xenophobia/ Nationalism

- The play uses nationalistic language and imagery, and promotes the superiority of England, which can feel exclusionary. E.g. England as 'this blessed plot, this earth, this realm' or Bolingbroke's distinction that he is a 'true-born Englishman'.
- Xenophobic attitudes towards non-English people, including disparaging references to 'proud Italy' and to the Irish as 'rough rug-headed kerns, / Which live like venom where no venom else / But only they have privilege to live'.

Religious Prejudice

- Discriminatory references to non-Christian religions.
- References to the Crusades and its violent forced conversions as a form of 'Christan service'.
- Includes religious prejudice towards Jews for refusing to convert: 'stubborn Jewry'.
- Descriptions of Norfolk 'in glorious Christian field, / Streaming the ensign of the Christian cross, / Against black pagans, Turks and Saracens' – pagan, Turk and Saracen were all derogatory terms applied to non-Christian religions, and particularly Islam.

Death and Grief

Murder, Executions and Violence

- In the final act, Exton – misunderstanding Bolingbroke's wishes – murders Richard in prison.
- In Act 3, Scene 1, Bolingbroke executes Bushey and Green, supporters of Richard. This takes place offstage.
- Whilst in prison, Richard kills a servant with a dagger.